The calling of the Reformed Church in Mozambique towards gender equality in church and society

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PREFACE

Acknowledgements and dedication

Upon the completion of the present study, I direct my gratitude to God the author and founder of the *missio Dei*. My journey throughout this research has deepened my understanding of gender from the perspective of the *missio Dei*. In doing so, it has increased my interest and awareness for the marginalised and discriminated gender.

The existence of this work was only made possible by the assistance of so many people, whose names cannot all be mentioned here. I would, nevertheless, like to convey my gratitude to the following professors, professional staff, workmates, family members and friends who have played a particular role toward the completion of this thesis:

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To all named and unnamed people, let the present work be considered the result of their legacy, warmly shared with many other people in God's global mission.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the Reformed Church in Mozambique, where I am presently serving, as from September 2017, as the General Secretary for Mphatso Synod. It is my deepest

wish that this study will provide guidance to the Reformed Church in Mozambique, so that it becomes a light that reaches out and transforms the whole of society towards gender equality, with the saving message of Jesus.

Glory, praise and honour be to God the Lord, now and forever!

Rev. Miguel Nobre

ABSTRACT

This study has emerged from the observation that there is not a single ordained female minister in the Reformed Church in Mozambique, which is in contrast with the fact that the female gender has attained significant success with regard to their position worldwide. In comparison to the times when women had no rights at all in the family circle or in the church and society at large, the above-mentioned success of women has been a struggle, fought not only by women, but by men as well (Chiziane, 2014:22).

Though the female gender has made significant strides, the researcher strongly believes that at the present stage much has still to be investigated regarding the field of gender equality, either in church or society at large. The assumption is that the Reformed Church in Mozambique can partake in the *missio Dei* by transforming the church and society towards gender equality.

The study firstly considers the revelational biblical and missiological narrative in order to gain knowledge on gender relationships therein.

Secondly, the study is confined to the context of Mozambican society to determine gender relationships, given that some of the challenges that women (girls) face start or occur within the immediate family circle, which is the nucleus of the society.

Then the history of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, which is now officially 107 years old (Gouws, 2005:19), is taken into consideration to establish a background to gender issues in this church.

In ecclesiastical circles, where gender discrimination would not be expected to occur, women are still being sidelined to this day.

As observed by Magagula (2014), there are no women serving in the pastoral offices of the church and since 1994, when the Reformed Church in Mozambique founded HEFSIBA, the church's pastors training college, not a single woman has been trained so far.

The ultimate purpose of this study is to assess how the Reformed Church in Mozambique can participate in the *missio Dei* by promoting gender equality in the church and society as well to develop a preliminary paradigm in order to help the church in this task.

Key words: *missio Dei*, missiology, gender equality, church, society, Reformed Church in Mozambique

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie vloei voort uit die besef dat daar nie 'n enkele bevestigde vroulike predikant in die gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek is nie, in kontras met die sukses wat die vroulike geslag al in ander velde wêreldwyd bereik het. Die sukses wat vroue, sedert die tye wat hulle geensins enige regte gehad het nie, binne die familiesirkel of in die kerk en samelewing, was 'n aanhoudende stryd deur nie net vroue nie, maar ook deur mans (Chiziane, 2014:22).

Alhoewel vroue al wesentlike vordering gemaak het, glo die navorser dat daar nog veel te ondersoek is in die veld van geslagsgelykheid, in die kerk en ook die samelewing. Hierdie ondersoek gaan van die veronderstelling uit dat die gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek in die *missio Dei* kan deel deur die kerk en samelewing tot geslagsgelykheid te rig.

Hierdie studie oorweeg eerstens die kennis verkry vanuit die openbaringsbybelse en missiologiese perspektief oor geslagsverhoudinge.

Dan die studie tot geslagsverhoudinge binne die Mosambiekse samelewing, aangesien 'n aantal van die uitdagings waarvoor vroue (meisies) te staan kom al binne die gesin, die kern van die samelewing, begin of gebeur.

Dan word die geskiedenis van die gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek, nou amptelik 107 jaar oud (Gouws, 2005:19), oorweeg om die agtergrond tot geslagsake in hierdie kerk te bepaal.

In ekklesiastiese kringe, waar mens nie sou verwag om geslagsdiskriminasie te vind nie, word vroue steeds tot vandag opsy gestoot.

Soos Magagula (2014) noem, is daar geen vroue wat in die herderlike ampte van die kerk dien nie en sedert 1994, met die gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek se stigting van HEFSIBA, die kerk se predikantsopleidingskollege, is nog nie een enkele vrou opgelei nie.

Die uiteindelike doel van hierdie studie is om vas te stel hoe die gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek in die *missio Dei* kan deel deur geslagsgelykheid in die kerk en samelewing te bevorder asook om 'n aanvanklike paradigma te ontwikkel om die kerk in hierdie taak te lei.

Sleutelterme: *missio Dei*, missiologie, geslagsgelykheid, kerk, samelewing, gereformeerde kerk in Mosambiek

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1.1 Background

It is a fact that Mozambique's Constitution (2004) accepts the Bill of Human Rights as a valid instrument for the full and free exercise of basic rights for every Mozambican citizen, but in reality it is all very contentious.

Though women are recognised as dynamic and relevant forces, "their real and free participation either in the church or society is often questioned to the point that voices from within women and from outside, regard gender equality in Mozambique as still a utopia" (De Sousa, 2014:77).

The abovementioned perception is not far from that concluded by Women and Law in Southern Africa, WLSA Mozambique (2001:10), according to which the progress of women in Mozambique is hindered by several factors, as elaborated in the followings sentences.

The first factor has to do with the Mozambican traditional cultural model that clearly discriminates against women in that "a woman (a girl in this case), is raised and educated to accept domination by the male figure, i.e., domination from younger and older brothers in the family, from the father and even from the husband once she is married" (WLSA, 2001:17).

In as far as the cultural factor is concerned, Chitlango and Balcomb (2004:181) confirm the observation made by WLSA (2001:17) that the cultural model has been oppressive towards the status and identity of women in society.

Other traditions or cultural practices that women face include widowhood cleansing and disempowering the widow, in which "the first is based on the belief that the person most affected by the death (in this case the widow), is unclean; the second involves the imposition of decisions on the woman whose husband has died, since she is perceived as being unable to make any concrete decision" (Kapuma, 2012:63).

The above-mentioned cultural factor is in essence an instrument of oppression against women in Mozambique. Statistics seem to reflect that in Mozambique, as in some other Sub-Saharan African countries, women are oppressed and "48% of Mozambican women suffer gender based violence" (Media Fax, 2015:3).

The second is a legal factor, whereby the majority of the legislation of "Mozambique is still driven by the normative principle laid down by the colonial system which restrained the access of women to some fundamental rights, as is the case of bank credit and/or land ownership" (WLSA,

2001:20). This is to say that in the context of Mozambique, a single woman will face serious obstacles in gaining access to bank credit or to land ownership and would be expected to be accompanied by her father or, if married, by her husband.

With regard to the abovementioned legal factor, Casimiro and De Souto (2010:6) corroborate the assertion of WLSA (2001:55) by demonstrating that the informal sector of the Mozambican economy is where the majority of women take refuge and undertake their endeavours.

In other words, Casimiro and De Souto (2010:6) are suggesting that the majority of women in Mozambique are excluded from formal and legal institutions. As a result, most women tend to gravitate to the informal sector where at least they make ends meet in order to sustain their families, having been sidelined by formal economical forces.

The researcher agrees with WLSA (2001:25) that as far as the human rights of women are concerned, the construction of social inequality in Mozambique emanates from a model that discriminates against women, thus preventing them from exercising their basic human rights. Conversely, it must be said that traditional society in Mozambique was a patriarchal society and was endorsed by the colonial power.

Moreover, Chitlango and Balcomb (2004:186) demonstrate the negative impact of the cultural model that underlies society in the southern region of Mozambique in particular, where "women in their menstrual period are not allowed to handle food, to touch clothes and must sleep in a separate place for the occasion". Such practices, apart from discriminating against women, also promote their stigmatisation.

Another factor that challenges gender equality is the religious tradition (Mejia, Osório & Arthur, 2004:15), starting with the custom that only men play leadership roles in religious activities and the case of the Roman Catholic Church and Islam, the clergy is composed of men only.

According to Oduyoye (1983:45), the patriarchal practice in Protestant churches like the Reformed Church in Mozambique is a "heritage laid down by the missionary movement that implanted Christianity in Africa, where the pastor (husband) led the church while the wife of the pastor led the house hold".

It should, however, be noted that Mozambique is not a homogeneous patriarchal system, as will be explained later in this study, Groes-Green (2013:115) acknowledges women's agency by rejecting ideas of all-encompassing patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in some areas of society. Arnfred (2007:156) also speaks of female autonomy and potential power in specific spheres of life.

As regarding the ministry view or practice of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, statistics show that no female pastor or elder has ever been allowed to serve in the church and deaconesses have only been allowed in the church since 1990 (Hendriks, 2012:28). It is also important to note that even if there are women serving as deaconesses in the church, it is still in an inferior capacity, at least if one considers their diminished number in comparison with their male counterparts.

Mombo and Joziasse (2012:184) describe the official theological view of the Reformed Church in Mozambique well by saying that

"the reasons for women not being ordained include specific conservative biblical interpretations within patriarchal societies; in a patriarchal system gender roles are specifically defined and valued differently, which means that men are socialized to be public figures, while the women are socialized to be in the domestic sphere; when this is applied in the church the men are ordained and allowed to use the pulpit, while women remain in the pews".

Paraphrasing Mombo and Joziasse (2012:185), it can be said that the teachings of the Reformed Church in Mozambique "support and give a divine blessing to the patriarchal system". In other words, rather than giving leadership the church simply follows the patterns of society. Theological education is, furthermore, regarded as an economic investment and thus whenever the church has to choose whom they invest in, they will sideline female candidates and invest in men, provided they will be ordained.

At this stage, the abovementioned reality might be an indication of a degree of discrimination against women in the Reformed Church in Mozambique as well as in society at large, which might be contrary to the *missio Dei*.

Vorster (2004:177) claims in his book that society was patriarchal in nature from the earliest of times and that little attention was given to the status of women in society or in the church. This is to say since the Fall, the woman found herself in a position of having no rights at all.

Such lack of rights can be traced back to the Old Testament narratives, at which time women's role was mainly confined to the household. They named the children and were responsible for their children's early education, consequently, mothers were to be honoured (Ex. 20:12), feared (Lev. 19:3) and obeyed (Deut. 21:18). Even the rabbinical writings tended to undervalue women's spiritual contribution (Douglas, 2010:1247).

In the course of time, this situation started to change. The initial changes were brought by Jesus who showed love and respect towards women. Jesus forgave women, healed them, taught them and included them in his teachings. For example: He used a woman searching for a lost coin to illustrate God's search for his lost ones (Douglas, 2010:1247).

As of the twentieth century there has been significant change, with the systematic recognition of the human rights of women promoted by the United Nations Organization (Vorster, 2004:177).

Standing on the shoulders of Vorster (2004:177), Oduyoye (2002:68) explains that since the 1960s, three United Nations-sponsored meetings gave the women's movement a global voice and dramatic visibility.

Although the status of women had started to change, the United Nation's interest in women's issues also brought global attention to the high incidence of physical, sexual and emotional gender-based violence. As a consequence, gender violence in private relationships were exposed and increasingly condemned (Bott, Morrison & Ellsberg, 2005:75).

In fact, Jones *et al.* (2008:49) recognise an emerging picture of the gendered contours of violence not only in private spheres, like sexual harassment, rape, assault and intimidation, but also in the public milieu like schools.

In comparison to the dire situation of women in the past, the present picture is not so negative at all. In the specific context of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, as regarding the exercise of the human rights of women, the term "chigwirizano" or "unity" is very well known to every member of the church and stands for the association of women in the church (Phiri, 2012:25). It is a clear expression thereof that unlike the past, women now exercise some degree of their rights in this church (as well as in other denominational churches nationwide).

Outside the church, in the secular world, the acronym O.M.M. (standing for the Portuguese "Organização da Mulher Moçambicana" meaning the Organisation of the Mozambican Woman) is well known to almost everyone in Mozambique (Anon., 2015a). It is another expression of the recognition of women's rights in society, even including a day for celebrating the Mozambican woman (7 April).

The participation of women as far as church issues are concerned is unquestionable in the particular case of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, to the extent that "chigwirizano" hold annually meetings and women are indeed always in majority at every church gathering and service.

It is critical to note at this point that the activities of "chigwirizano" are not part of the governing board of the church or of the synod. The role of this women's organisation does not receive the necessary recognition and thus operates as a parallel or a sidelined organisation of the church.

Likewise, Ganizani (2015) considers that both cultural and structural factors that sideline women in several circumstances have been transferred to the church environment, where women are disregarded in pastoral ministry, and become a practice in the Reformed Church in Mozambique.

In any case, as supported by WLSA (2004:7), gender issues in Mozambique need to be investigated, especially since the relationship between men and women has been structured in such a way that it reproduces a continuous subjugation of the latter, in society and in the church. A situation that if not well and properly approached, will lead to continued violence against women.

It is for this reason that this study appeals to the calling of the Reformed Church in Mozambique to direct its transformational character towards gender equality that influences the church and all of society.

1.1.2 Problem statement

One form of discrimination against women in Mozambique is the patriarchal system that places women in an inferior position to men and regards them as servants of men.

The above reality is readily apparent within any congregation of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, regardless of the geographical area where the congregation is located. On the audience side, the pews are filled with women, while at the opposite end the front seats and the pulpit are occupied by men. The question of why there are so many women in the pews and not a single woman in the pulpit has yet to be fully answered.

This study engages in the debate on the gender imbalance in church and society, while at the same time it also aims at raising awareness and encouraging responsible participation of the IRM towards gender equality. The possibility to have a positive impact on society is, therefore, very strong.

As previously stated, an initial analysis of gender and gender imbalances can be made simply by attending a Sunday church service, where for some reason the status quo of women in the pews and men in leadership roles is taken for granted even by the rest of society.

Although women constitute about 70 to 80% (Fabião, 2016) of each IRM congregation, they are virtually absent when it comes to leadership positions in the church. "They are seen but not heard. They are allowed to sing and dance. However, it is the men who teach and preach to the congregation".

Discussing gender equality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique is one step in a manifold strategy of tackling the injustices of patriarchy and male dominance, in the church in particular and in society in general.

On the other side, there is a lack of open and consistent discussion and teaching on gender equality within the Reformed Church in Mozambique. As a result, women lack the necessary empowerment to fully participate in church and society as equal partners of men in the light of the redeemed order as recorded by Acts (1:12-26; 2:17-18), where women play a full part in the church together with men: praying, electing a new apostle and receiving the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It would seem that at present there is not enough genderless education that opens up education to all God's people, including women: girls, single mothers, married and widowed women. Neither the church nor society create enough space for women's education and empowerment.

For the specific context of Mozambique, Gove (2014) recognises polygamy and other practices that oblige girls to share a room with an adult male guest as a form of gender-based violence.

Furthermore, as far as gender-based violence is concerned, the United Nations Office in Mozambique, as cited by Media Fax (2014:3), states that the country is one with the highest rate of forced and underage marriages in the Southern Africa region.

According to Media Fax (2014:3), underage marriages are one of the worst manifestations of the violation of the human rights of women. In the case of Mozambique, 14% of girls get married before turning 15 years old.

The other negative aspect to underage marriages is the fact that such marriages are blessed by pastors in the churches. In some instances, the girls are married by younger partners (boys) and in many cases, the girls are married to greatly older men.

The overarching research question of this study is: How must the Reformed Church in Mozambique participate in the *missio Dei* to advance gender equality in the church and society?

The following questions are considered in this research:

1.   What is the situation of gender equality in church and society?

2.   How do women experience gender inequality in church and society and do they want to change the situation?

3.   What guidance does the *missio Dei* offer on gender inequality in church and society?

4.   How can a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* transform the church and society towards gender equality?

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

An electronic search has been done at the Ferdinand Postma Library at the North West-University, Potchefstroom Campus, on the following databases:

1.   ATLAS – American Theological Library Association (religious database)

2.   Library Catalogue

3.   NEXUS DATABASE SYSTEM – Dissertations and Theses.

4.   ISI – Web of Science

5.   SABINET – SA Cat – Publications

From the electronic search of the literature, it is obvious that research work has been done on gender-based violence in Mozambique. The research emphasises the social conditions that produce gender-based violence in Mozambique, ranging from the pre-colonial era, through the colonial era and ending in the post-colonial era (Jacobson, 2006:499-509).

However, in the specific context of the Reformed Church in Mozambique, no research work has been done from the perspective of the *missio Dei* seeking to transform the church and society towards gender equality.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Aim

The aim of this research is to assess gender inequality especially in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and in Mozambican society at large and how the Reformed Church in Mozambique should address it by participating in the *missio Dei*.

1.3.2 Objectives

The purpose of this research initiative is to investigate the importance of the *missio Dei* towards addressing gender inequality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and in Mozambican society.

In order to attain this goal, the researcher endeavours to reach the following objectives:

1.   To describe the situation of gender equality/inequality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and in Mozambican society.

2. To establish how women experience gender inequality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and in Mozambican society and whether they would like to change the situation

3. To investigate the guidance of the *missio Dei* towards gender equality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and in Mozambican society

4. To propose a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* to guide the Reformed Church in Mozambique to transform the church inside Mozambican society towards gender equality

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the Reformed Church in Mozambique is called to participate in the *missio Dei* in order to transform the church inside and Mozambican society in terms of gender equality.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This research is undertaken from within the Reformed tradition and is applied to the specific objectives in the following way:

1. In order to investigate the situation of gender equality/inequality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and Mozambican society, a literature review is done.

2. In order to establish the experience of women on gender equality/inequality in the Reformed Church in Mozambique and Mozambican society and whether they would like to change the situation, empirical qualitative research is done up to the saturation point, using semi-structured interviews with both randomly selected lay women and leaders of women's associations.

   This method was chosen rather than a more formal quantifiable method, because it enables the subjects to be more revealing about personal feelings regarding gender relations in church and society (Jagger & Wright, 1999:63).

3. In order to investigate the guidance of the *missio Dei* in transforming the church inside and Mozambican society towards gender equality, appropriate passages in Scripture are identified and analysed. It is worth to mention that passages dealing with wise women in the Bible were brought forth, namely: Proverbs 31:10-31; the book of Ruth and Abigail in 1 Samuel 25. A literature survey and a revelational analysis of Scripture are performed.

4.   In order to propose a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* to guide the Reformed Church in Mozambique to transform the church inside and Mozambican society towards gender equality, a synthesis and interpretation of the results of the empirical research (step 2 of this methodology) and of the guidance of the *missio Dei* towards gender equality in church and society (step 3 of this methodology) are done.

1.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present research fully complies with the ethical guidelines as set out by the ethical code of the North West-University (NWU, 2016:26).

1.7   CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Unless otherwise stated, all biblical references throughout the present research are from the Africa Study Bible (2016).

The Reformed Church in Mozambique will henceforth be referred to as the IRM, derived from its official acronym in Portuguese "Igreja Reformada em Moçambique", since Portuguese is the official language of Mozambique, by virtue of article 10 of the Constitution (2004). Throughout the present research, the Dutch Reformed Church (from the Dutch Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk) (Paas, 2006:87) is referred to as the DRC.

In the present research, the terms AD (Anno Domini) and BC (before Christ) are used to number years in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. Anno Domini is translated from Medieval as "in the year of our Lord"; based on the traditionally reckoned year of the conception or birth of Jesus Christ. Herein AD counts years from the start of this epoch and BC denotes the years before the start of the era. This dating system was devised in 525 AD by Dionysius Exiguus of Scythia Minor, but was not widely used until after 800 AD (Abate, 1997; Blackburn & Holford-Strevens, 2003:778-9).

Conversely, Richards (2000:15) observes that "because BC is the English abbreviation for before Christ, it is sometimes incorrectly concluded that AD means after death, i.e., after the death of Jesus; however, this would mean that the approximate 33 years commonly associated with the life of Jesus would not be included in either of the BC and the AD timeframe". AD is also referred to as Common Era, abbreviated CE.

In its broadest sense, the term "Protestant church" is used to refer to all non-Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian churches in Mozambique; as per Faris (2014:7). In this research it is especially used to refer to the Christian churches that have originated from non-Roman Catholic mission agencies from predominantly Europe, North America and South Africa. The term excludes

churches known as "independent" or "Zionist" or "Ethiopian" and groups the churches which were members of the Conselho Cristão de Moçambique (Mozambique Christian Council) at the time of the liberation struggle or immediately after.

Throughout this research the term "liberation struggle" will feature. It is commonly agreed that from the earliest contact with the Portuguese, Mozambicans resisted the Portuguese presence in different ways until 1930 when Mozambique became fully integrated into the Portuguese state through the Colonial Act, under the rule of António de Oliveira Salazar. Notwithstanding, in this research the term "liberation struggle" refers to the period running from 1962 with the founding of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (translated Front of Liberation of Mozambique) up to the independence of the country on 25 June, 1975. Likewise, the liberation movement Frente de Libertação de Moçambique will hereafter be abbreviated to "Frelimo".

1.8   PROVISIONAL CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters are provisionally divided as follows:

1.   Introduction

2.   Gender equality in church and society

3.   Women's experiences on gender inequality in church and society – empirical study

4.   The guidance of the *missio Dei* towards gender equality

5.   Proposing a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* to guide the IRM to transform the church and society towards gender equality

6.   Summary, conclusion and recommendations

CHAPTER 2 GENDER EQUALITY IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has explained the rationale behind research on the calling of the IRM towards gender equality in church and society. As set out in the objectives, the aim of the present chapter is to investigate, by means of a literature analysis, the situation of gender inequality in society and church across three distinct periods of history in Mozambique: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial or independent era.

Prior to embarking on the survey of gender relations during the abovementioned three periods and serving as an introductory remark, this chapter starts by dealing with the patriarchal culture of Israel. This culture had a significant impact on Christianity, having been replicated either in church or society. The chapter then proceeds with the debate on gender relations in the pre-colonial era by giving a brief characterisation of the period and setting out the position of women over the same period.

The subsection addressing gender relations in the colonial era surveys three main aspects, namely: the characterisation of the colonial period (the dominion of non-Portuguese foreign capital from 1886 to 1930, the Salazar economic policy from 1930 to 1964 and the climax and crisis of Portuguese colonialism from 1964 to 1974) and the position of women in the same period; gender relations during the liberation struggle period (de facto, the liberation struggle period falls under the colonial era from 1964 to 1974) (Pereira, 2013:24); and the relationship between colonialism and missions.

Then attention is given to gender relations during the post-colonial or independent era (characterising of the period, the position of women in the context of one political party system from 1975 to 1992), the role of the church towards a democratic system and the position of women in the context of a democratic system (from 1992 onwards). The subsection also briefly reviews female power relations in Mozambique, as revealed by sociological and ethnological research (Cumbe, Maconha & Nhapulo, 2013:133).

Finally, this chapter explains gender relations in the specific context of the IRM, with the aim of bringing broader comprehension of the matter. It elaborates on the foundation of the IRM and its development to come to an analysis of the position of women in the IRM as well as their absence in the leadership of the IRM. This subsection then enumerates the challenges of the IRM in the 21st century to reach a conclusion.

2.2   BACKGROUND OF THE PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

In Mozambique (and probably elsewhere) the debate on gender equality in church and society becomes comprehensive when departing from an analysis on the background of the dominating patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture is directly related to social systems that allow men to hold power over women as well as over children and consequently, culture serves to justify gender inequality where the father embraces authority over the mother and her children (Mendez *et al.*, 2013:454).

The reality described in the previous paragraph is not biblically founded, from a missiological point of view, given that from the beginning of humanity God clearly designated both man and woman to share in his mission. Patriarchal society, however, created its own worldview that distorted God's original intent when He made man and woman in *imago Dei*.

Mendez *et al.* (2013:454) define patrilineality or patrilineal society as a "kinship system in which an individual's family membership derives from and is recorded through his or her father's lineage; generally, it involves the inheritance of property, rights, names or titles by persons related through the male kin".

Patriarchal culture was dominant in the ancient Near East and the patriarchal culture of Israel became deeply influenced by the ancient Egyptian culture (Deut. 26:5-10). The Pharaohs of Egypt were regarded to be male deities, a fact that erroneously added to the theory that only men bear the *imago Dei*. According to Labahn (2014:4), the ancient Hebrew lived in a patriarchal culture that disrespected women, except when a woman had the wealth to provide her with high social status and influence in society.

It was amidst this Hebrew patriarchal context that Christianity developed, highly influenced by patriarchy. When Christianity expanded to other parts of the globe, the cultures and societies of those places became highly influenced by Christianity and consequently, by patriarchy. From another perspective, the Biblical tradition of God as Father and Christ as Son has also reinforced male power in societies (Lyons & Thompson, 2002:17-23).

In patriarchal culture the father has the sole authority to decide on key issues of the household, such as decisions over property and land, and women are expected to be subordinate. In ancient Near East patriarchal culture most marriages were prearranged, a custom also practiced in Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes Mozambique (Meyer, 2014:8). After marriage, the woman would usually take up residence in the home of her husband.

In the case of the Israelites, male's kinship can be contextualised in the marriage between Ruth (the daughter-in-law of Naomi) and Boaz. Having left her homeland, Ruth followed Naomi to

Bethlehem and it is there where she met Boaz, a wealthy landowner and a relative of Naomi's dead husband. Ruth met him while gathering left behind grain in his field and upon Naomi's encouragement, Ruth requested the protection of Boaz and he blessed her. Although a close relative had the responsibility to marry Ruth, Boaz went before the elders to plead her case and Boaz could then marry Ruth. He thus became Ruth's kinsman and redeemer (Ruth 4:1-12).

The patriarchal culture dominates and oppresses women and has over the course of time shaped the unequal gender perspectives in many societies and churches, where social and ecclesiastical laws undermine and discriminate against women (Essien & Ukpong, 2013:286). Having laid down the foundation of the patriarchal culture of Israel, which came to influence Christianity, the next section discusses gender relations in Mozambique during the pre-colonial period.

2.3 GENDER RELATIONS IN THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

The previous section has shown that as far as gender relations are concerned, throughout history and elsewhere, women have been more or less subjected and subordinated to men. What may differ is the degree of such subjection and subordination. In this regard Walby (1990:91) aptly adds that masculinity studies have often highlighted males' (particularly the young) orientation towards dominance, violence and selfishness in relation to female peers.

According to Groes-Green (2011:91) and Jones (2000:28), the general male dominance theory was firstly proposed by Western feminists, who stated that females are subordinate to males in every type of society and economic arrangement and society of every degree of complexity. The next section briefly characterises the pre-colonial era in Mozambique.

It is interesting to note at this stage that in the case of Mozambique precolonial society was equally patriarchy orientated. Arnfred (2004:95) observes that historically political powerholders in pre-colonial Mozambique were all men, who ruled over independent chieftainships and or states. In fact, the "Councils of Elders" were primarily composed of village headmen.

2.3.1 Characterisation of the pre-colonial era

Throughout the current research, the expression "pre-colonial" is used to refer to the cultural, social, political and economic relations prior to the impact of capitalism and colonialism. Regardless, the expression "pre-colonial" here is not meant to imply that a specific society was static and unchanging during that period; far from it, pre-colonial societies were dynamic (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:10).

The inhabitants of Mozambique in the pre-colonial period were the San hunters and gatherers, ancestors of the Khoisan peoples, who were also called the Bushmen and basically nomadic

tribes. Some of these nomadic tribes moved out of the region and others intermarried with incoming Bantu tribes. Between the 1st and 5th centuries AD, in fact, waves of Bantu-speaking peoples have been migrating from the Great Lakes (around modern Nigeria). They moved through the Zambezi River basin and gradually reached the plateau and the coastal areas, to eventually become the majority ethnic group in the region. The Bantu were farmers and iron makers (Cumbe *et al.*, 2013:16; Herbermann, 1913:56).

During this pre-colonial era, the inhabitants were not territorially concerned like the Europeans and were rather bound together in terms of a group. As long as sufficient land was available for a specific group of people, they had only very vague conceptions of frontiers and a territory could be defined by the natural set-up, such as rivers or mountains, which were not by any means fixed (Cumbe *et al.*, 2006:20; Guthrie, 1967:50).

Guthrie (1967:51) observes in terms of their social organisation that those pre-colonial inhabitants of Mozambique were often divided into different clans, which formed independent groups from a few hundred to sometimes thousands of individuals. This traditional Bantu clan or lineage was usually headed by a male chief, vested with political and religious powers, and supported by a "Council of Elders".

The smallest group was the family, primarily consisting of a male, a woman (or women) and their children. Other relatives, such as grandparents and grandchildren, may have also lived in the same household or family. The male was usually the head of the family and often married to a large number of wives. He was the household's primary representative before the community, before the traditional court and before the traditional authority. Households living in the same area, valley, hill or village belonged to a specific organisational unit, managed by a sub-chief (Jouanneau, 1995:25).

Clark and Brandt (1984:4) explain that religion in the pre-colonial period was all encompassing, i.e. "the inhabitants integrated religion into all aspects of life; they saw the supernatural involved in everything animate and inanimate; consequently, there was a worship of numerous deities, from lesser gods and goddesses to the Supreme Being; the adoration of the ancestral spirits who could speak to the deities on behalf of the living constituted the guarantee of the social and economic well-being".

The pre-colonial period already saw inhabitants experiencing intercultural contact by virtue of trade, such as that with Arab trading settlements that were established in the 8th century AD and existed along the coastal area and surrounding islands for several centuries. One of the results of this intercultural contact is that Arab settlers brought Islam to the region and Islam remains the main religion near the northern coastal region of Mozambique to this day. By the 14th century AD,

the Arab settlements had grown into independent city-states to the degree that they became the main political and commercial attractions in the region, whereby political control of the coast was centred in the hands of local Arab sultans (MacHaffie, 1992:25; Zahoor, 2000:39).

In terms of trade, the Arab settlers were followed by Europeans. Newitt (1995:45) notes regarding the intercultural contact with Europeans that the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama was the first European to reach modern-day Mozambique. He first landed on the Muslim Island town of Mozambique (current Ilha de Moçambique) in 1498. When he arrived, the central Zambezi River Basin was under the dominion of the Maravi kingdom, ruled by Mwenemutapa (or Monomotapa), which was the highest authority within the African states system in the region.

Vasco da Gama's arrival in Mozambique marked the entry of Portugal into the trade, politics and society of the region and by 1510 the Portuguese controlled trade from the central Mozambican coastal region of Sofala northwards to Mogadishu (current-day Somalia). From then onwards, Portuguese trading posts and military forts displaced the Arabic commercial and political hegemony, becoming regular ports of refreshment on the new Portuguese sea route to the East (Newitt, 1995:50).

The arrival of the Portuguese in Mozambique coincided with the advent of Christianity. The late Pope John Paul II delivered the following message on 17 September 1988, on the occasion of his first visit to Mozambique, in considering the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique:

"History tells us that, along with the Portuguese sailors that had reached the Island of Mozambique, were also a few missionary priests who brought the Good News as their luggage and the Cross as their distinctive mark; later on, history has recorded the name of Saint Francisco Xavier who, after some months of stay on the island, pursued his journey to India; subsequently other missionaries from the Dominican and Jesuit denominations also came, having started the work of evangelization here" (De Sousa, 1991:31).

Saint Francisco Xavier stayed a period of six months on the Island of Mozambique in 1541, on his way to India and the Roman Catholic Church regards the year 1541 as the official beginning of her missionary work in this region (De Sousa, 1991:31).

Apart from taking the sea route to the East, the Portuguese ventured into the interior of Mozambique and in this regard, Brown and Morgan (2006:40) observe that by 1530 "small groups of Portuguese traders and prospectors seeking gold penetrated the interior regions". There, they set up garrisons and commercial posts at Sena and Tete along the Zambezi River. They further expanded their explorations into the interior of Mozambique, with the clear intention of taking

control of the gold mines. As a result, they subdued the inhabitants and forced them to labour on their farms and in their gold mines.

Gómez (1999:25) conveys that throughout the next century the Portuguese staked claimed to huge areas of land as well as to the inhabitants who lived there. During that period, the Portuguese made a marked effort to legitimise and consolidate their trade and settlement positions. They did so by means of policy of *prazos*, which were land grants or concessions that the Mwenemutapa granted to the Portuguese sailors, priests and soldiers in exchange for services rendered, such as military protection. The owners of the *prazos* (known as *prazeiros*) were absolute lords similar to the European feudal lords.

In addition, the *prazeiros* also owned their own armies that were mainly composed of slaves. The *prazos* (or land grants) later on became the real base from which three capitalist companies were created, namely the Company of Mozambique, the Company of Zambézia and the Company of Niassa. As explained in detail in this chapter and according to Reidy (1995:39), Portuguese supremacy continued southwards when they seized control of the port of Delagoa Bay, which would later be named Lourenço Marques (current Maputo). The first colonial governor was appointed in 1572, forcing the Mwenemutapa to recognise Portuguese dominion and rule in 1629.

It is interesting to note that slavery already existed in the region before the arrival of the Portuguese. Human beings were sold and bought by African tribal chiefs and Arab Muslim traders. When the Portuguese arrived, they introduced the new approach to trade of exporting slaves and by 1790 around nine thousand slaves were being shipped out each year. According to Reidy (1995:35), "the slave trade took the healthiest young people, sapping many tribes of their vitality and growth". When the British began to condemn slavery and to pass laws against the slave trade in Western Africa in the early 1800s, the Portuguese opened new routes along the eastern coast of the continent. Although the Portuguese government in Lisbon outlawed slave trade in 1878, in practice it went on illegally for many years (Newitt, 1995:55).

The Portuguese influence in Mozambique gradually expanded during the pre-colonial period, but its practical power was limited and exercised by individual settlers and officials who were granted effective autonomy through the policy of *prazos*. This state of affairs remained up to the 1880s, but the Conference of Berlin that took place in 1885 marked a turning point in this regard.

It has now been established that the inhabitants of Mozambique in the pre-colonial period were the San hunters and gatherers, ancestors of the Khoisan peoples, also known as the Bushmen. Later on Bantu-speaking peoples from the modern Great Lakes (around modern Nigeria) became the majority. In the coastal region, Arab settlers motivated by commerce were the first intercultural

contact and were followed by the Portuguese who moved further into the interior to the extent that they subdued firstly the Arabs and later on the local populations.

This section has also established the subjection of women by both patriarchal and religious ideologies matched with traditional institutions which defined and or limited the rights, options and possibilities available to women. The next section investigates the position of women in the pre-colonial era.

2.3.2 Position of women in the pre-colonial era

As pointed out in the previous section, the inhabitants of the current Mozambique were a mix of the Bushmen and Bantu tribes who migrated to the area as of the beginning of the Christian era, i.e. from the 1st to 5th centuries AD. During this period gender inequality was real and the inferior position of women was manifested by their restricted participation in public affairs as well as in the exploitation of their labour force, as reflected in the socio-cultural organisation of the time (Mumouni, 1980:3).

Before discussing gender inequality as reflected by pre-colonial socio-cultural organisation, it is worth mentioning that even intercultural contact with Muslim traders and Portuguese settlers, as discussed earlier, did not change gender relationships in any significant way. Rather, they reinforced the existent patriarchal orientation.

In fact, Muslim traders who married indigenous women were in a stronger and authoritative position before their wives by virtue of their religion. On another level, Islam gave Muslim male traders the power and the right to have several wives and they asserted their position as the heads of large and dependant family groups. Their religion also defended the responsibility of males for taking care of their wives and children in economic terms, making it a source of shame for a male not to be able to do so or to depend on a wife's income (Bonate, 2006:45; Newitt, 1995:45).

Portuguese settlers, who often had a military or a religious background, came from a predominantly patriarchal Christian culture, either Latin or Mediterranean and in their new African context, they tended to push the virtue of male supremacy (Stoler, 1995:78).

Coming back to the socio-cultural organisation of the pre-colonial period in the region, Shillington (2005:39) observes that from the 10th century AD onwards, Bantu-speaking states began to emerge on the Zambezi River delta. This state formation process was probably due to denser population, which led to more specialised labour division. Their main economic activities were farming, livestock and iron making. Regarding labour division, women became confined to farming

and domestic activities like cooking and men became confined to iron making and livestock activities, which included tending of cattle, hunting and fishing.

The socio-cultural set-up of the region was not uniform. In the southern region, concretely south of Zambezi River, the cattle-keeping tribes depended less on farming and cattle-keeping was the main base of production. This reality established men's control and authority over women in the long term, creating patriarchal communities in the southern region. Upon marriage, the woman took up residence in the family or village of the man and southern tribes became more oriented to patrilineality (Wright, 1984:35).

It was among those southern patrilineal cattle-keeping communities, of pre-colonial Mozambique that the practice of *lobolo* was highly developed and played a significant role towards the subordination of women to men. *Lobolo* is an institution that anthropologists usually call "bride wealth" or "bride price" and implied a payment from the prospective husband or the groom's family to the prospective wife or bride's family. The payment of *lobolo* bore the expectation that the wife would perform all domestic work as well as bear and raise children for the man. Consequently, all the children born of the union belonged to the husband's lineage (De Sousa, 2014:85; Souto, 2007:23).

Under such patrilineal patterns, women were not persons in a legal sense. For example, they could not personally appear before the traditional court, unless represented by their husband or a male representative from their lineage. Originally *lobolo* was paid entirely in cattle, but this progressively changed as the southern region was drawn more and more into the monetary economy. This was due to its proximity to South Africa with its developed and monetary economy. As a result, from the late 19th century AD *lobolo* began to be translated into money and to undergo a great inflation in value (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:25).

This forced more men to leave their native areas in search of wage employment in South Africa that they may earn the necessary funds to pay the traditional *lobolo* and thereby adhere to traditional customs. *Lobolo* also played the significant role in these patrilineal communities of ensuring the stability of a marriage, since the family of the woman would have to pay back the price of the *lobolo* in the event of a divorce. This reality exerted great pressure on the woman to stay with her husband, even against her will.

Consequently, even a woman who was badly mistreated or regularly beaten by her husband or her husband's family would not easily ask for a divorce. Whenever she complained, her parents would always advise her to endure the circumstances and to stay with the husband. The concept of endurance in the face of suffering was also in line with the formal education that girls received upon entering adulthood, during initiation rites. Girls were prepared to be subservient, i.e. to obey

and to submit to their husbands regardless of the treatment they received, including beatings. They learned that polygamy (common in patrilineal lineage) offered them many benefits of companionship and mutual assistance, i.e. a polygamous marriage enabled the wives to support each other in times of suffering or need (Jacobson, 2006:502).

According to Cota (2001:65), a woman who wished to leave an unhappy marriage had very few options: She could not ask for a divorce from the traditional legal authorities, due to the lack of legal personality, and was forced to rely on the good will of her father's lineage. If her father's lineage refused to pay back the *lobolo*, her only option was to flee from her husband's home.

The weak position of women in the patrilineal case was further reinforced by the fact that at marriage, the husband's family was the first place where the conflicts of the couple were regulated who was supposed to offer a reasonable and proportional interpretation of the traditional rules and events. Only if an abuse was clearly unacceptable, amid the great tolerance towards male behaviour and violence, could a *lobolated* woman expect a favourable verdict.

Apart from the abovementioned deteriorating effects, Kuper (1982:29) indicates the following two negative aspects of *lobolo* on women. The first regards the general principle of obedience and submission to the husband, which induced the gender domination already attached to any kind of marriage and present in daily life and informal unions. Moreover, *lobolo* created the opportunity to develop an attitude that treated the wife as property. The second is that a *lobolated* woman always faced the real risk of being dispossessed from the couple's goods upon the death of the husband.

In the northern region (north of the Zambezi River), the occurrence of Tsetse fly disease was a serious challenge to the development of livestock. It suffices to note at this stage that this disease swept through the region, destroying large numbers of wild and domestic animals. Male activities like tending the cattle and hunting became practically unsustainable in that region and the main aim of tending the cattle was to complement the diet of the community (Howard, 2008:12). Consequently, northern communities depended primarily on agriculture, a female activity par excellence.

Since the base of economics was entirely agricultural, as food producers women detained a certain degree of autonomy and authority over the land that they cultivated as well as over food granaries. This gave women, in the long term, relative degree of control over men and brought about that at marriage, the man took up residence in the woman's family or village. This created matrilineal communities in the northern region, where the ancestral lineage is drawn through the maternal line (Jouanneau, 1995:30).

Apart from the abovementioned economic level of autonomy in the northern matrilineal communities, female independence from men was especially manifested in the initiation ceremonies of the girls. De facto, this process has been entirely controlled by women, even in patrilineal communities. Regarding initiation rites, both males and females went through informal and formal education. The first was transmitted by parents and elders by means of a socialisation process, the latter was transmitted by means of initiation rites (Seroto, 2011:79).

For the purpose of this research, it suffices to note that the initiation ceremonies prepared girls for their future roles and included domestic, agricultural and marital duties. Sex education in particular received much attention. In fact, girls were instructed in ways to give their husbands sexual satisfaction to the detriment of their own sexual pleasure. They had to practice specific exercises with their mentors as part of their preparation to enter adulthood and marriage (Cota, 2001:81).

Sometimes female initiation rites involved clitoridectomy or other forms of female genital mutilation, thought to provide greater sexual pleasure for men. Usually, the husbands for the girls in both lineages were selected by the family members chose and these husbands tended to be much older.

Women's autonomy over the land, food and initiation rites within matrilineal organisations made it possible to extend their influence onto religious ground and they also enjoyed some degree of political leadership. Women acted as mediums between the communities and the ancestral spirits. They had, for instance, a relatively extended control over the rain shrines. Because of this, in Chewa matrilineal societies women were looked upon as the source of lineage and sometimes became tribal chiefs (Chifungo, 2015:148).

In Chewa matrilineal societies females were deemed sacred vessels of life and responsible for the continuation of their community. Since they bore children, they were dignified as givers of life and compared to the land or soil that gives life in the form of plants. Older women gained influence from the power they wielded power as mothers-in-law, greatly respected by their sons-in-law and daughters-in-law and aunts. They were consulted on marital matters as well as illness, misfortune, drought or war.

Due to their matrilineal orientation, the bride wealth or *lobolo* did not really exist in the northern region of the Zambezi River. The husband's family would, however, sometimes give small gifts to the wife's family at the time of marriage, but done out of the husband's family free will (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:30).

In the matrilineal communities, whether anything was paid or not, all children born from the union belonged to the woman's lineage. As stated earlier, regardless of the kinship or lineage system to which a woman belonged, the customary law placed women under the authority of men. This was because in these matrilineal communities women were largely represented by their senior brothers or uncles, in the traditional court, just like in the patrilineal customary law (Recama & Bonde, 2010:131).

Souto (2007:33) states that child marriage was common in northern matrilineal communities; a practice that also weakened the position of women. Sometimes females were promised in marriage even before birth and would then begin to live with their betrothed at a very early age. Chilundo *et al.* (1999:55) observe in this regard that because of the early age of marriage, a girl could not have given an informed consent even if she had been asked. Equality between spouses was impossible under such circumstances.

Polygamy weakened the position of women in the matrilineal communities. Cumbe *et al.* (2013:25) interestingly note that there was an economic reason behind the polygamous marriages into which women were forced: polygamous marriages formed the basis for the effective exploitation of the female labour force.

Cumbe *et al.* (2013:25) agree with Jacobson (2006:505) in indicating that polygamy was the institution that allowed men to increase their wealth and status. The more wives a man had, the more land could be cultivated for him, the more food could be produced for him and the more children he could father, all of whom could assist their mothers cultivate more for the man. It was quite rare for a man to live together with all his wives, instead he would have wives in various villages and live for a time with each of them.

This form of wandering marriage also became common in southern Mozambique, when men started to work as migrant labourers in South Africa. Sometimes those men were able to arrange several wives living in different villages and none of the women could ever be sure if she was the only wife (Jacobson, 2006:502).

Another cause of polygamy in both lineages was female infertility. A woman's failure to bear children was considered a legitimate ground for divorce and in patrilineal communities the wife's family would have to return the *lobolo*. Oftentimes, in the case of infertility, the family of the woman merely provided a second wife for the man. The second wife was provided without the payment of *lobolo* and was usually the sister of the infertile wife or a close relative (Cumbe *et al.*, 2013:25).

Infertility of a woman was equally enough evidence for divorce in matrilineal cases or else the man was free to marry a second wife. Like in the patrilineal communities, the woman's family

would provide the second wife (also the sister of the first woman or a close relative). Under certain circumstances, the woman preferred polygamy and in such cases, it was usual for a senior wife selected her junior. Oftentimes, the senior wife would choose a relative or even a sister that she liked.

Then, Webner (1991:33) aptly notes that many times polygamy brought collateral effects like rivalry, envy and even bewitching among common wives in a polygamous marriage. Junior wives were usually hated by senior wives, since younger, junior wives were often the husband's first choice and favourite.

Women had no inheritance rights in the northern matrilineal communities, because legally they were not considered persons and in patrilineal systems a wife, property and children were taken over by a senior member of a husband's lineage upon his death (Jacobson, 2006:502).

This section has discussed gender relations in the pre-colonial period in Mozambique. It has been disclosed that whether in matrilineal or patrilineal communities, women were subordinate to men and forced into early and polygamous marriages. This manifested itself in the political sphere by their absence in political positions and decision-making processes, while in the economic sphere it manifested as the exploitation of the female labour force. They did gain some influence as food producers and controllers, while elderly women wielded influence as well as consultants in marital and religious matters.

Cota (2001:73) observes that unlike in southern patrilineal communities, the northern matrilineal communities' marriages were less stable and divorces were relatively common. This was due to the stronger bond between the woman and her family, provided the husband did not pay a bride price. It was reinforced by the woman's continued residence in her parent's village, after marriage, whereby the husband's position as an outsider in the family or village also led to a stronger relationship between a woman and her family. Whenever women were beaten or maltreated, they could easily divorce and were supported by their families facilitated by the lack of bride.

Despite the variations of women authority in patrilineal and matrilineal communities, men tended to control all positions of power in both systems. Women in general were subordinate to men in pre-colonial Mozambique and this was manifested by their limited participation in public life, especially in relevant political positions and decision-making processes due to limitation brought about by a patriarchal ideology. Women had very limited or no access to power, which was reinforced at economic level by the division of labour (Chingono, 2015:1; Pereira, 2013:40).

It has been established that throughout the pre-colonial period, the position of women depended on the social organisation of the community. In the southern patrilineal communities, women were

dominated by men and in the northern matrilineal communities women only enjoyed a certain degree of economic independence. The next section seeks to investigate gender relations in the context of a new organisation of society, i.e. under colonial or capitalist relations.

2.4   GENDER RELATIONS IN THE COLONIAL ERA

When the Portuguese arrived in Mozambique, the local inhabitants were organised in traditional institutions and were guided by several traditions and practices. Colonial (Portuguese) relations in Mozambique did not completely destroy (African) traditional practices and institutions, instead the Portuguese regime went on supporting African traditional rituals of succession in an attempt to enhance the image and legitimacy of their newly appointed régulos (African chiefs) and colonial authority. The process became known as "Africanisation of European Institutions" and as a result, ancient traditions persisted throughout the colonial period (Isaacman, 1972:30).

Yet at the same time and especially via Christianity, colonialism went on undermining some manifestations of traditional gender relations such as matrilineality and polygamy. From this perspective, the new colonial relations gave women some limited political space, power and freedom (Chingono, 2015:3).

A general characterisation of the colonial era in Mozambique is provided below and followed by a discussion on the position of women throughout this period.

At this stage, it must be noted that it was during the colonial period that the liberation struggle for the independence of Mozambique took place and interestingly enough women participated in the armed struggle. As such, it is only logical to also analyse the position of women during the liberation struggle.

2.4.1   Characterisation of the colonial era

According to Ralvo, Gleditsch & Dorussen (2003:525), "colonialism – defined as the conquest and control of land and goods – is not an European invention but an old and pervasive feature of human history". At different stages of human history, huge and different empires have dominated vast number of peoples and all kinds of out groups. The last and most recent historical accounts of colonialism reflect a consensus that Europeans were the most active colonial actors of the past few centuries. In this regard, they were engaged in the conquest of most of the globe and in the control and exploitation of the natural resources for the ultimate benefit of their empires.

One cannot discuss the beginning of the colonial period in Mozambique (if not elsewhere in Africa) without a special reference to the Berlin Conference. In fact, if earlier the Portuguese influence

was limited and exercised through individual settlers and officials, after the Berlin Summit things changed radically.

In contrast to earlier European expansion mainly manifested on establishment of trading posts in support of trade monopolies, from the 1870s imperialist colonisation became an active policy aiming to ensure a global role for European nations. Propelled by the impetus of the industrialisation process, several European states engaged in the conquest and control of new territories and divided among themselves almost the entire land surface of the globe (Ralvo *et al.*, 2003:526). The division of Africa took place in the German city of Berlin in 1885-1886.

At the Berlin Conference, European powers that claimed to control any territory in Africa were urged to exercise effective administration. The Conference of Berlin defined new ways of relationship between European powers and their territories (or colonies) in Africa.

After the Conference of Berlin, the Portuguese increased their efforts to extend effective rule to the remote parts of the vast regions that they had claimed. Portugal had strengthened its grip on Mozambique (and Angola) in the Southern Africa region and translated into the delimitation of the current official borders as well as in economic, administrative and military occupation (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:6; Cumbe *et al.*, 2013:18).

The initial colonial settlement during this period was done through military war. Despite the superior weaponry of the Portuguese army, the occupation process in current Mozambique took more than three decades (from 1886 to the 1920s), due to resistance within several parts of the territory. The Portuguese army put an end to the resistance from different tribes throughout the region in the early 20th century (Pereira, 2013:45).

The Conference of Berlin divided Africa into different territories or countries in 1885-1886, but the traditional set-up of the African tribes was neglected. In some cases, several tribes or ethnic groups were joined together into one territory and in other cases, one tribe was scrambled into two or more. This occurred according to the land that each European power claimed to control at that time (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:75).

For instance, the Nguni tribe had settled along the Zambezi River basin after fleeing from Shaka Zulu in current South Africa. The Berlin Conference divided this tribe into three different territories, namely Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi. Presently, the three Nguni tribes from these different countries assemble annually to celebrate their common cultural values. A second vivid example is of the Shona ethnic group, which is found in Mozambique as well as in Zimbabwe. A third example is of the Swahili tribe, with one group living in northern Mozambique and the other in southern Tanzania.

From another perspective, in the division of Africa, the Conference of Berlin grouped several tribes or ethnic groups into the same territory. The southern region of Mozambique is the native region of the different ethnic groups of the Chopes, Rongas, Changanas and Tsuas; the central region house the ethnic groups of the Ngunis, Shonas, Nsengas, Chewas, Senas and Tawaras and in the northern region the Makondes, Makuwas, Kimwanis, Swahilis and Lomwes can be found. Each group enjoys its own customs and language (Pereira, 2013:57).

The abovementioned ethno-linguistic diversity made it difficult to find a lingua franca upon independence from Portugal and as a result, the Portuguese language was adopted as the official language, given that it was the only language spoken throughout the country (although not by everyone).

In Mozambique (and Angola) the extension of Portuguese administration also brought about a confrontation with Protestant mission. Portuguese nationalistic cultural pride and a traditional preference for Roman Catholicism were the two important factors that hardened intrinsic anti-Protestant tendencies. According to Paas (2006:113), in the early 20th century this began to make life difficult for Protestant missionaries and the churches they had established, as discussed in this chapter.

Regarding the colonial period chronology, Cumbe *et al.* (2013:18) and Chilundo *et al.* (1999:10) both divide this period into three phases: The first concerns the dominion of non-Portuguese capital, running from 1886 to 1930; the second is related to the Salazar economic policy, running from 1930 to 1964; the last regards the climax and crisis of Portuguese colonialism, from 1964 to 1974. These three distinct phases are discussed in detail below.

2.4.1.1 Dominion of non-Portuguese foreign capital from 1886 up to 1930

According to Máximo (2001:32) and Newitt (1995:70), since the 16th century Portugal had a tentative presence in Mozambique and then Africa was divided up by European powers amongst themselves at the Berlin Conference in 1885.

The Berlin Conference mandated that each colonial power that had claim to a particular region in Africa also had to show a permanent presence and administration there. This resulted in more settlers, more taxes and also more wars (Cruz da Silva, 2011:39; Sheldon, 2002:45).

After 1885-1886, the Portuguese increased their efforts to extend effective rule to the remote parts of the vast regions that they had claimed. This meant the delimitation of the frontiers of the country, in the case of Mozambique, which was successfully done in the subsequent years. Effective rule also meant a direct military, administrative and economic occupation of the country.

Souto (2007:30) observes that by that time Portugal was not an industrialised country and its economy was largely based on commerce, which meant that there was no excess capital for investment in the colonies. The cost of the direct occupation and administration of Portugal in Mozambique (and other Portuguese colonies) were very high and unsustainable and as a result, Portugal used the strategy of concessions. This explains how non-Portuguese foreign capital entered Mozambique.

With the policy of concessions, Fage, Roberts & Oliver (1986:495) note that Portugal "shifted the administration of much of Mozambique to large private companies, like the Mozambique Company and the Zambézia Company (both in the central region) and the Niassa Company in the northern region". Those companies became mostly controlled and financed by foreign capital. These companies were strongly involved in the establishment of roads and railroad lines to South Africa, South and North Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe and Zambia) and Nyasaland (modern Malawi).

Although slavery had been legally abolished in Mozambique by the early 20th century, the abovementioned companies, also known as chartered companies, introduced a labour policy from which they supplied a labour force (often cheap and forced) to the plantations and mines of South Africa and nearby colonies.

The Zambézia Company took over a number of smaller *prazos* holdings and established military outposts to protect its property. Other chartered companies also detained a certain degree of military and administrative autonomy in the regions under their auspices. Apart from railroads, the companies also built roads and ports to bring their goods to market. An example of this is the modern day Beira Corridor complex that congregates a railroad, a road and a pipeline linking Zimbabwe with the Mozambican port of Beira (Fage *et al.*, 1986:496).

As a consequence of the concessions policy, the northern region became under the direct administration of the Niassa Company and this company was predominantly dominated by French capital. The central region came under the direct administration of the Mozambique Company, highly dominated by British capital. It was only the southern region that was under the direct administration of Portugal as a colonial power.

The concessions policy in Mozambique prevailed until the late 1920s, then the coup that took place in Portugal in 1926 changed the situation and had direct implications on Mozambique as a colony. After 1926, the new regime in Portugal (headed by António de Oliveira Salazar, discussed ahead) needed rigorous and direct control over the resources in the colonies, which called for a unified territory policy. Under the new corporatist regime of António de Oliveira de Salazar, which sought stronger and unified control of the Portuguese Empire's economy, concessions of the

companies were not renewed upon expiry. This is how the concession of the Niassa Company was terminated in 1929, just to mention one example (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:29).

Administrative and political centralisation; reduction of rights and duties of non-Portuguese companies; the establishment of a Portuguese monetary zone and the promotion of cotton crop were some of the measures introduced by the new regime (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:29).

This stage did not bring any significant implication or change to gender relations. It was during the next phase that colonial relations impacted in significant ways on the formulation and interaction of gender relations in Mozambique, relying on a highly integrationist conception of Portuguese empire and nation, as discussed below.

2.4.1.2　Salazar economic policy from 1930 up to 1964

António de Oliveira Salazar was a Portuguese politician and economist, who briefly served as Minister of Finances and Minister of Colonies after the 1926 coup. It was in his capacity as Minister of Colonies that he prepared the Colonial Act, which was approved in 1930. He served as prime minister from 1932 to 1968, and his Colonial Act had a profound impact on this second phase. As opposed to the previous phase, this instrument (the Colonial Act) centralised the administration of the overseas territories (i.e. colonies) and was headquartered in Lisbon, the capital city of Portugal (Ramos, Vasconcelos e Sousa & Monteiro, 2009:79).

The main goal of the Colonial Act was "to affirm the rights of sovereignty, the defense of the overseas assets, the administrative unification and the progressive nationalization of the economy", as opposed to the concessions policy discussed earlier. The Colonial Act also emphasised the need to bring the indigenous peoples into Western (Portuguese) civilization (Meneses, 2009:162).

Salazar based his political philosophy around a close interpretation of the Roman Catholic social doctrine and inspired by such interpretation, he announced the formation of the *Novo Estado* (New State). As a result a new constitution was proposed by a group of lawyers, businesspeople, clerics and university professors, many of whom selected by Salazar himself. The new constitution was approved in the national Portuguese constitutional referendum of 19 March 1933. The new constitution in effect established an authoritarian and anti-parliamentarian government, a corporatist state representing interest groups rather than individuals (Kay, 1970:63).

Evaluations of Salazar's regime have varied. Some analysts have praised Salazar's outcomes, while others have criticised him and denounced his methods. The American socialist author Raby (1991:150) describes it as a regime of para-fascist inspiration. In his opinion, Portugal's fascist period began in 1933 with the official establishment of the Estado Novo and ended with the

Portuguese coup of April 1974. Portugal's label as fascist had declined, however, after the defeat of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy in World War II.

Contrary to the abovementioned perspective on Salazar, Paxton (2004:98) suggests that the main problem with fascism

"is that it was widely mimicked; in fascism's heyday in the 1930s, many regimes that were not functionally fascist, borrowed elements of fascist decor in order to lend themselves an aura of force, vitality and mass mobilization; therefore, having borrowed some fascist elements, Salazar crushed Portuguese fascism after he had copied of its techniques of popular mobilization".

Concerning the Colonial Act of 1930, this research has identified three interconnected major implications for Mozambique. The first relates to gender relations, the second has to do with missionary work relations and the last is connected to labour relations. These three factors are closely interconnected in that they have all impacted negatively on women.

Actually, the first major implication of the Colonial Act in the field of gender relations, as manifested by the corporatist New State in Portugal, was related to the close link between Portugal and Roman Catholicism and its impact. Legally grounded in the paternalist Roman Catholic family, the foundation of the New State in 1933 excluded women's participation in the public life of the nation, either politically or economically (Ramos *et al.*, 2009:79).

A critical analysis on the abovementioned paternalist orientation of the New State in Portugal points towards a total exclusion of women's participation in the national public sphere in Mozambique. The Portuguese colonial ideology for gender issues was rarely mentioned, which also manifested in the colonial regime's own understanding of colonisation that is set out in the following reading from the Portuguese official bulletin (1940):

"To us Portuguese, colonization is essentially to lift the indigenous populations to our own level of civilization, by teaching them our religion, our language, our customs…We want to transmit our mentality to the peoples of the colonies; we are not interested to take away their riches."

According to Kay (1970:212-215), the policy of transmission of the Portuguese mentality to the peoples of the colonies became known as assimilation or "portugalisation". It meant to transform the peoples of the colonies to become Portuguese, except for the Atlantic colony of Cape Verde (seen as an extension of Portugal) and the Asian colonies of Goa and Macau (considered as having their own forms of civilisation). Assimilation was a process that would allow Africans to be gradually integrated into the Portuguese language, culture and citizenship (i.e. to become assimilated or Portuguese), but sadly the percentage of assimilated African population never reached one per cent.

In Portuguese and French colonies, the assimilation process also became known as "direct rule". The British adopted the "indirect rule", aiming at creating distance to the African. One form of creating distance was to promote the local languages, which in several instances became the official languages, together with the English language. Since the main focus of colonialism was economic gain, British and French colonial officials had actively discouraged Christian mission work in Muslim areas and as a consequence, Islam became consolidated in some British colonies (Paas, 2006:131).

The assimilation process in Mozambique would later come to be endorsed by the Archbishop of Lourenço Marques (modern Maputo), who stated that "colonization was about civilization, Christianization and 'portugalisation' of the indigenous populations" (Gouveia, 1960:2). "Portugalisation" turned out to be, among other things, the forced use of Portuguese as language of instruction in mission schools, a counter attack to Protestant missionaries who were not of Portuguese origin and whose teaching was often in local languages. This approach leads the argument to the second major implication of the Colonial Act: the missionary work relations.

Concerning missionary work relations, the Colonial Act of 1930 advanced that the Portuguese Roman Catholic Mission overseas was the instrument of civilisation and national influence. Paas (2006:113) observes on this aspect that Portuguese cultural nationalism, known as lusitanianism, did not permit the Protestant mission method of using local languages in education and missionary work and all communication was to occur in the Portuguese language, which had a hugely negative impact on Protestant missionary and educational work. Protestant missionaries worked at learning the local languages in part to communicate better with the people in the field as well as to translate the Bible into African tongues.

The tendency of favouring the Roman Catholic Church was later confirmed by the Concordata, an agreement signed by the Portuguese State and the Vatican on the 7 May 1940. In that agreement the Portuguese State pledged to teach the Roman Catholic religion in state schools and also provided for a missionary endeavour that would provide public money and other facilities to all Roman Catholic missions in the Portuguese empire. Protestant missions were permitted to engage in education, but without any subsidy and on condition that Portuguese be the language medium (Paas, 2006:114).

Another relevant element in the context of mission was that of gender relations matching the Christian ideal, which were taken for granted as an aspect of the civilising, Christianising and "portugalising" mission. The conception of gender embedded in the civilising mission only became explicit, however, when it was challenged by African traditional practices like matrilineality and polygamy. The matrilineal kinship system challenged Christian norms, in that the woman dominates the family and should the marriage fail, the husband was to leave the household (or

the village) and the woman could remarry. Both polygamy (one man marrying two or more wives) and matrilineality (a woman as the head of the household) were unacceptable by Christian standards and yet men took pride in polygamy, while women were proud of matrilineality. As a result, men and women fought the changes brought about by Christianity (Arnfred, 2004:108).

Gender relations under matrilineality are opposite to a Christian monogamous marriage, which is stable and the man is the head of the family. The colonial administration, marred with Christianity, deemed patrilineal societies better suited than matrilineal ones for rapid social adaptation and economic change. As a result, the Portuguese colonial administration supported and reinforced the patrilineal institutions. In supporting patrilineality, the colonial regime implicitly favoured the practice of *lobolo*, where marriages are relatively stable and where the man is the head of the family.

It is also relevant to note that the colonial regime, matched with Christianity, clashed with female initiation rites. Prior to colonialism and Christianity, women enjoyed a strong education during initiation rites on sexuality and the way of giving pleasure to their husbands. Under the new Christian and colonial ideology, sexuality was no longer accepted in its own right.

The general attitude of the Portuguese colonial power was a vivid condemnation of female initiation rites (due to their focus on development and education of female sexuality). Both the colonial administration and the Catholic Church considered female initiation as immoral and offensive to human nature (Medeiros, 1995:5). Explicit celebration of female sexuality, described as indistinguishable from prostitution, was considered obscene and repugnant.

The attitude of the Protestant mission regarding female initiation rites was equally unpermissive. The writings of Henri-Alexandre Junod, a clergyman of the Protestant Swiss Mission in southern Mozambique, describe customs related to female sexuality as vile and immoral. According to him, "it was bad enough to think of male sexuality; but to confront education of female sexuality would be beyond the pale" (Arnfred, 2004:112).

On the one hand, the colonial regime and its Christian perspective was heavily challenged by African practices manifested by matrilineal kinship system, polygamy and the bride-price (*lobolo*). On the other hand, the colonial regime and Christianity expected to civilise the indigenous people and to liberate women subjugated by the practices of polygamy, *lobolo* and matrilineality.

Arnfred (2004:11) argues that the colonial regime matched with Christianity resulted in the reinforcement of the paternalistic approach. This manifested itself in a division between public and private spheres: the husband acting as the natural head of the family, worker and breadwinner, while the wife and mother became the "queen of the home". This was the

ideological point of view on gender relations, but from a practical perspective gender relations matched that of colonial labour relations in that women remained the main work force in family agriculture and in feeding the family. This brings the argument to the final category related to labour relations.

It would be good to keep in mind at this stage that the new Portuguese economic nationalism was deeply influenced by the 1929-1934 world economic recession (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:35). The combination of the world economic crisis with the new centralised administrative system over the colonies in Portugal had deep implications for labour relations.

According to Souto (2007:32), the 1929-1934 world economic recession was the result of the increase of production after World War I in almost all industrialised countries. Production exceeded demand and drove the cost of goods as well as raw materials down. All African colonies (including Mozambique) became severely affected by the decrease in raw materials demand.

The cost of peanuts, maize, copra, sugar and sisal sharply fell in Mozambique and only cashew and cotton that maintained their previous cost (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:36). The Portuguese colonial regime introduced the compulsory production of cotton by peasants in 1938, which greatly grew in demand in the subsequent years that saw the break out of World War II (1939-1945). This called for extensive exploitation of the work force in Mozambique and suffice it to say that the work force was primarily constituted by women.

Jacobson (2006:54) agrees with Chilundo *et al.* (1999:111) that the increasing colonial exploitation in Mozambique initiated a continuous revolt particularly against compulsory crops. As a way of protesting against the compulsory production of specific crops in the southern region, many peasants migrated to South Africa and Swaziland. In the central region, peasants migrated to North and South Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In the northern region, peasants migrated to Tanganyika (modern Tanzania) and Kenya. The migrants to neighbouring countries were mainly men, leaving the entire workload on women's shoulders.

The late 1950s saw the rise of a range of political organisations in Africa as a result of the intensification of colonial exploitation. In Mozambique, however, political organisations had always been illegal (Costa, 1996:109). The few student associations founded in Mozambique kept their political character secret and their operations were restricted to their areas of origin, with some contacts abroad.

The nationalist struggles in South Africa, North and South Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Tanganyika encouraged Mozambican migrants working in those countries towards a vigorous anti-colonial strategy. According to Chilundo *et al.* (1999:245), the development of Mozambican political

organisations abroad was the result of internal repression in Mozambique. In the colonies under British control, political organisations had not been repressed. The continuous revolt of the peasants in Mozambique from 1937 to the 1960s became the founding structure of the anti-colonial struggle.

By 1961, three political Mozambican organisations were founded abroad: União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique (Mozambique National Democratic Union), hereafter abbreviated "UDENAMO", was formed in South Rhodesia; União Nacional para Moçambique Independente (National Union for Independence of Mozambique), hereafter abbreviated UNAMI, was formed in Nyasaland; and finally Mozambique African National Union, hereafter MANU, which was formed in Kenya. Following the Kenyan example of KANU (Kenya African National Union), the first two movements were named in Portuguese language, but the last one received an English name (Souto, 2007:17).

Protests against Portuguese colonial presence meanwhile grew stronger, not only within Mozambique and or Africa, but also outside in Europe and America. The World Council of Churches (WCC) contributed much towards the universal outcry against Portugal. Paas (2006:114) opines that the motive that propelled the WCC (founded in 1948) to a certain extent was the will to defend classical Protestantism that was suffering under Portuguese nationalism and Roman Catholicism, although in general the WCC defended religious liberalism.

The end of World War II had a significant impact on the world, with the establishment of a new political order as 1948 known as the "cold war". This was an international bipolar system with two antagonist blocs, namely capitalism and communism. The supremacy of democratic regimes over dictatorships, on the international stage of the nations, created serious difficulties and challenges for the authoritarian Portuguese "Estado Novo" (Costa, 1996:110).

Conscious of this fact, the Portuguese regime needed to find a new strategy regarding the colonial territories to guarantee its continuous presence. As such, the Colonial Act was amended in 1951 and the phrase "colony" became replaced by "oversea province". Such amendment, however, were merely theoretical. There was no real change in practice. The Portuguese also went to amend the previous missionary agreement towards a full religious freedom policy in 1971, but again the new policy did not take away the main conditions of that missionary agreement that favoured the Roman Catholic Church (Paas, 2006:115; Pereira, 2013:45).

The war for liberation in Mozambique started in 1964 and over the course of the war, Mozambican women participated actively side by side with men. Due to the relevant emancipatory factor for women and its historical importance to Mozambique, the liberation struggle is deemed an

important point of analysis. The Portuguese colonial empire started earlier and was disbanded later than other European empires.

In fact, after World War II, the colonial system was subject to growing dissatisfaction and it was probably because of this that the United Kingdom launched a process of decolonisation of its territories in the early 1950s. Belgium and France followed suit around the 1960s, except for the Soviet Union and Portugal. Portuguese overseas rule remained until 1974. The first and the last dates mentioned here (1964/1974) lead this argument to the next section.

2.4.1.3 Climax and crisis of Portuguese colonialism from 1964 up to 1974

The climax of Portuguese colonialism can be well understood against the background of Salazar's rise to power (premiership), which was facilitated by Salazar's public image as an honest and effective Finance Minister after the 1926 coup in Portugal.

Meneses (2009:150) observes in this regard that before the coup, Portugal had been atrociously governed: bankrupt, ridden with poverty and disease. Ruling Portugal before 1926 had been very difficult and having found a country in a total chaos, Salazar successfully reformed it. Salazar was able to hold onto power for such a long time by virtue of public recollection of his successful leadership, in comparison to the chaos that characterised Portuguese life before 1926.

Under Salazar's leadership, Portugal was living a glorious period as a colonial empire by 1945. Portugal had an extensive colonial extension based on the doctrine of "pluricontentalism", a conception of the Portuguese empire as an unified state that spanned multiple continents. Portuguese overseas territories in fact comprised of Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Guinea Bissau, Angola (including Cabinda) and Mozambique in Africa. The empire-controlled Goa, known as Portuguese India, in South Asia, in the Far East, Macau and East Timor were also under the control of Portugal. Internationally, Portugal was relevant and the country's overseas colonies made that possible. Portuguese colonialism had reached its climax and in general, the defence of the Portuguese colonial empire and nationalism was consensual (Matos, 1953:57; Meneses, 2009:150).

By the late 1950s, however, a new Portuguese generation had emerged that had no collective memory of the previous state. The new generation started to question the military institution itself and was demoralised by a prolonged war without solution. The youth was gradually contesting the colonial war, especially since part of the Portuguese youth was being incorporated into the war in Mozambique and other Portuguese African colonies. Even the Roman Catholic Church started questioning the military solutions defined by the regime and the legitimacy of the war. The

Portuguese opposition continued and progressively questioned the foundation of the colonial policy (Souto, 2007:66).

In maintaining the colonial empire, the Portuguese official propaganda pretended to defend the interests of the West as a whole and yet the Portuguese increasingly clashed with public opinion in the West, while in the colonies the resistance of Africans was growing. Armed revolutionary movements and scattered guerrilla activity reached Mozambique in 1964 (as well as Angola and Guinea Bissau). In Guinea Bissau, however, the Portuguese army and naval forces were able to suppress most of the insurgencies effectively by means of a well-planned counter insurgency campaign using light infantry, militia and special operations forces (Souto, 2007:23).

Throughout the colonial period, the general conditions of the local peoples remained harsh and health services were precarious. The introduction of compulsory crops intensified the colonial regime's exploitation and exportation of raw materials through forced labour of the local peoples, who suffered inferior legal status. This situation propitiated a fertile environment for the increasing revolt against colonial regime, from both men and women.

The opposition to colonisation and gradual freedom of the press increased friction inside and outside Portugal. In 1964 the liberation war in Mozambique marked the crisis of Portuguese colonialism in this region and in 1968 Salazar was incapacitated on health grounds (brain haemorrhage) and replaced by Marcelo Caetano. Meneses (2009:608-609) observes that despite the injury, "Salazar lived two years more after 1968; when he unexpectedly recovered lucidity, his intimates did not tell him that he had been removed from power, instead allowing him to 'rule' in privacy until his death in July 1970".

The Estado Novo collapsed during the coup, which came to be known as the Carnation Revolution of 1974, four years after Salazar's death. Marcelo Caetano went into exile in Brazil and António de Spínola became the new prime minister. The post-coup event was marked by a progressive dialogue between the new leadership of António de Spínola in Portugal and the war liberation movement in Mozambique, represented by Frelimo. This led to the ceasefire agreement between Portugal and Frelimo, signed on 7 September 1974 in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia (Pereira, 2013:67; Souto, 2007:70). The collapse of Portuguese rule in Africa was a result of the combined effect of Western public opinion and African resistance. Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe became independent nations in 1975 (Paas, 2006:115).

The present section characterises the colonial period in Mozambique, the next seeks to investigate the position of women in the colonial era.

2.4.2   Position of women in the colonial era

The position of women in the colonial period was directly related to labour relations brought with the arrival of Portuguese imperialism to the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, based on capitalist relations. The implantation of capitalism soon became characterised by an intensive colonial exploitation, which called upon the introduction of compulsory crops to the benefit of the Portuguese economy.

In the new model of capitalist relations and as a legacy of the New State regime that ruled Portugal from 1926, women were excluded from any form of political and/or economic agency. This, despite the fact that it was the food and the production of women that largely underpinned the Portuguese imperialist economy (Jacobson, 2006:503).

According to Seddon and Zeilig (2002:78), the intensive colonial exploitation in Mozambique subjected the population to forced labour in different dimensions: Firstly, the population helped build Portuguese public infrastructure (roads, buildings and bridges) for little or no remuneration at all; secondly, they laboured long hours in the Portuguese plantations, also with little monetary reward; and finally, they were forced to cultivate compulsory crops like cotton, cashew, sisal and rice which they sold to the benefit of the Portuguese economy at very low price.

The intensive practice of forced labour, with little or no remuneration at all, mostly in Portuguese Mozambique and Angola overseas provinces became known as *chibalo*. This is the concept of debt bondage or forced labour without payment that except for the Portuguese settlers and a few assimilated Africans, all males of a certain age (i.e. considered adults) were subjected to. The recruitment of the labour force became very centralised and was directly operated by the colonial regime (Jacobson, 2006:507).

Recruiting provided *chibalo* workers for capitalist concessionary companies (namely Mozambique, Zambézia and Niassa) that flourished since they had access to an underpaid and sometimes even unpaid labour force. Foreign investment in the Portuguese overseas provinces was outlawed by the regime that Portugal may benefit directly. Large-scale male migration into neighbouring countries was one way of fleeing and/or protesting against *chibalo*. Many adult men migrated to neighbouring British colonies and South Africa, where they would at least be paid for their labour (Jacobson, 2006:507).

The colonial period saw the suffering of men and women alike under the oppressive rule of the colonial regime, since both were recruited as *chibalo* labourers. At the end of the day, however, women were hit harder by its repercussions. It is obvious that mass male migration was devastating on the women left behind, since they had to fill the gap left by men. Women's

increased suffering came as a result of the added burdens they had to bear, when taking into consideration that women also retained their main responsibility of food production and managing the household that included taking care of the children, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking food, washing clothes and cleaning the house.

In rural areas women were obliged to clear new fields in men's absence (away on forced labour or migrated). Women had no alternative but to perform tasks that in the past had been exclusively performed by men, like cutting trees, removing heavy stumps and ploughing (Isaacman, 1996:53).

Women living in areas where peasants were required to cultivate cotton or rice, much of their time had to be spent tending those crops and there was little or no time left over to cultivate for the subsistence of their families. When they were rounded up to perform forced labour, there was no one to work on the family plot, prepare the food for the family and care for the children (Ortner *et al.* 1974:29; Souto, 2007:45).

In their desperate attempts to avoid starvation, women were forced to work on their own fields very early in the morning and then go to tend compulsory crops at the plantations until very late. If a woman's cotton or rice fields were not kept sufficiently clean or if she was not seen working there enough, she was badly treated and/or beaten by the African agents of the crops concessionary companies or by the African police attached to the Portuguese colonial administration (Souto, 2007:50).

In the urban areas Portuguese colonialism also subjected women to new forms of oppression. There, where strangers became neighbours by force of the proximity of their houses, colonialism eroded the support mechanisms of traditional extended family, kinship ties and the "economy" of affection. Consequently, women became exposed to greater vulnerabilities and insecurities, like prostitution. Having initially flourished in the major urban areas in which the colonialists lived, over the course of time prostitution spread countrywide, including railway stations like Ressano Garcia and Chinavane (southern Mozambique). At these places, the returning miners from South Africa were deluged by women eager to relieve them of their earnings (Sacks, 1982:1).

Andrade, Osório and Trindade (2001:40) and Chilundo *et al.* (1999:60) point out that the sexual exploitation of women worsened with the arrival of large numbers of Portuguese troops and their deployment throughout the country. Soldiers roamed African suburbs and locations at night looking for Mozambican (African) women.

Prostitution was probably the major way an African woman could earn money during the colonial period. Abused women in southern Mozambique, for instance, ran away to the cities to attempt to earn money through prostitution to pay back the *lobolo* price. Prostitution offered single women

(running away from abusive husbands or whose husbands migrated) the only opportunity to sustain themselves and their children. During the colonial period, urban life encouraged prostitution (Jacobson, 2006:509).

Cumbe *et al.* (2013:50) agree with Costa (1996:50) by stating that in urban areas the majority of women were not skilled and there were very few jobs available for people with no skills. Even the few jobs that did exist paid very little and forced women to work under tough conditions. Women were permitted to work primarily in the cashew and clothing industries, earning almost nothing. Despite a provision in the Labour Code requiring equal pay for equal work, the Portuguese colonial administration merely disregarded it.

Religious relationships also perpetuated the inferior position of women during the colonial period. Christianity and Islam in Mozambique both reinforced patriarchal orientations. The Christian preference towards patrilineal kinship system, where the male is the head of the household, reinforced the existing practice of *lobolo* in the southern region. Islam introduced bride-price practices in marriages, especially in the northern region, where it had never before been practiced and existing tendencies towards polygamy and younger child marriages were reinforced (Pereira, 2013:65). Like never before, Islam forced women to cover their faces and become more subservient. Furthermore, Muslim divorce system permitted men to discard their wives at their free will, without giving women the right to divorce their husbands (Oduyoye, 2002:98).

In light of the above, it could be concluded that the status of women in society declined and worsened during the colonial period. The inferiority of women, which was an accepted percept in the pre-colonial period, became reinforced in the colonial period. Although mass migration of men provided women with greater economic opportunities, the additional tasks imposed on the African population in the rural areas at the same time fell almost entirely on their shoulders. The previous status of women as economic agents diminished considerably, because their vital part in production became systematically undervalued with the continuous loss of access to land in favour of capitalist companies. This also contributed to the dramatic decline in the nutritional intake of the family (Isaacman, 1996:53).

Apart from *chibalo*, the colonial period also saw the oppression of women increase because of both Christianity and Islam. Women fleeing from abusive husbands became sexually exploited, with the rise in prostitution due to the arrival of large numbers of Portuguese troops (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:60; Jacobson, 2006:503).

The continuous revolt against the colonial system and the lack of a gender policy became fundamental in women's emancipation with the breakout of the armed struggle of 1964. Throughout the fight against the Portuguese colonial regime in Mozambique, women themselves

brought forth issues of gender equality as a priority and positively influenced the creation of a women's wing within Frelimo, namely Destacamento Feminino (DF) or Female Wing. The next section surveys gender relations during the liberation struggle period in Mozambique.

2.4.3 Gender relations during the liberation struggle period

This section starts off with a general characterisation of the armed liberation struggle period in Mozambique, which opposed the Portuguese colonial army and the Mozambican guerrilla movement, led by Frelimo. Then an understanding of the position of women under the same period is provided. Before embarking on the position of women in the independent period, the relationship between colonialism and missions is briefly addressed.

2.4.3.1 Characterisation of the liberation struggle period

The war for independence in Mozambique was the alternative to a peaceful transition into independence. Mozambican tribes and chiefdoms attempted to resist the Portuguese colonial occupation; but their traditional weapons of arrows and animal leather as shields were no match for the most sophisticated weapons of that time and the Portuguese put an end to traditional resistance in the early 1920s. Unlike the territories under British administration, in Mozambique political activities became strictly prohibited under the fascist regime of Portugal.

Mozambicans who had migrated to the neighbouring British territories progressively came to grow in political consciousness and since the political activity was not repressed in the British territories, several groups claiming independence of Mozambique were formed abroad: UDENAMO in South Rhodesia, UNAMI in Nyasaland and MANU in Kenya (Borges, 2001:45).

These groups never achieved their objectives for independence, however, partly due to these groups' individualistic and tribal model of operation. Each group demanded independence for a specific region of the country or for a specific tribe, for instance, MANU was demanding independence for the northern Makonde tribal group (Pinto, 2009:65).

Their attempts to negotiate a peaceful transition to independence failed several times and on 16 June 1960 many civilian Mozambicans negotiating for independence were killed by the Portuguese army in what became known as the Mueda Massacre, in the northern region of Mozambique. The number of the people killed differs, ranging from around twenty (figure advanced from the Portuguese regime) to five thousand (figure advanced from MANU, the movement that sought negotiations on behalf of the local people). The Mueda Massacre was preceded by a number of other massacres, which made it clear that independence in Mozambique would come through an armed struggle and not peaceful talks (Borges, 2001:45; Mondlane, 1995:49).

The three groups mentioned above met in Dar-Es-Salaam (capital city of Tanzania) on 25 June 1962 and merged into one movement, namely Frelimo. Frelimo would hold its first congress from 23 to 28 September 1962, at which Dr. Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane and Rev. Uria Simango were elected Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Frelimo respectively. The conference also clearly defined that the armed struggle in Mozambique was the only means to achieve independence of the whole country, due to Portugal's persistence in maintaining its presence in the territory and its violent and armed response to the previous negotiations (Borges, 2001:45).

Approximately two years after the founding of Frelimo, the liberation struggle in Mozambique started on 25 September of 1964 in three provinces: Tete, Niassa and Cabo Delgado. The war started in those three provinces for a reason: Niassa and Cabo Delgado shared their frontier line with Tanzania, while Tete had an extensive frontier line with Zambia. Since the founding of Frelimo in 1962, Tanzania (already independent by that time) provided logistical, military and diplomatic support to Frelimo. Military bases, clinics and schools (all operated by Frelimo) were established in Tanzania. International travelling documents for Frelimo militants were issued by the Tanzanian government. The example of Tanzania was followed soon after by Zambia's independence in 1964 (Borges, 2001:101; Paas, 2006:115; Pinto, 2009:98).

Apart from Tanzania and Zambia, other African independent countries supported Frelimo's liberation struggle. Algiers, for example, trained a significant group of soldiers that joined the front later. Among the first group of soldiers trained in Algiers, was the first President of independent Mozambique, Samora Machel. He died in a plane crash on 19 October 1986 (Borges, 2001:109).

Borges (2001:101) and Jacobson (2006:501) introduce an interesting debate in noting that African liberation movements were deeply involved along the front between Western interests and Soviet-communist interests. Mozambique became the stage for competing world powers to test their weaponry. Frelimo received significant logistical support from the communist bloc, a natural and strategic source of support. Communist countries that openly supported Frelimo included the former Soviet Union, China, Cuba, former East Germany and Vietnam. This was strategic support in the Communist bloc quest to advance in (Southern) Africa.

Regarding Western interests, the struggle for the independence in Mozambique began during the time when the fascist regime of Salazar in Portugal was a valued and important ally of the United States and NATO forces. Similarly, the Portuguese colonial regime was valued as an important ally in the fight against the advancement of communism in Africa. As a consequence of the alliance with the United States and NATO, Portugal gained considerable aid in terms of armaments to fight the guerrilla movements in the colonies (Jacobson, 2006:501).

It should be noted at this stage that the Protestant churches in Mozambique had developed as marginalised minorities, given that the majority of them were established and eventually developed in the context of the Portuguese Empire of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is also interesting to note that although the Portuguese had been established on the African continent somewhat longer than any other European power, in economic terms Portuguese colonies in general and Mozambique in particular were grossly underdeveloped in relation to the neighbouring British colonies and South Africa (Santos, 2012:98). It is probably because of this that the Portuguese were known for their "particularly harsh form of colonialism" (Sheldon, 2002:45; Urdang, 1989:15; Vieitez, 2000:93).

It was against this background and minority position that Protestant missions played a relevant role with regard to the events that led to the liberation struggle and later on to the independence of Mozambique from Portugal. Since the early days, the Portuguese colonial authorities in Mozambique and probably elsewhere throughout the Portuguese colonies strongly suspected the Protestant churches of being a front for British and South African political and commercial interests and possibly territorial expansion. The Calvinist theology of the Protestant missionaries and their anti-Roman Catholic bias made them automatically suspect to the Portuguese. Protestant churches or missions were regarded as a front for the expansion of other imperial and regional powers or as promoting Protestant ambitions, totally different from the Portuguese aspirations based on the Roman Catholic philosophy. Finally, the Protestant churches were deemed as a front for the aspirations for independence of the African population of the colony (Faris, 2014:30).

De facto, the contribution of Protestant missions was widely recognised due to their educational support to Mozambicans during the colonial period. The Vice-Chairman of Frelimo, Rev. Uria Simango, was a Protestant minister from the Presbyterian Church (Nkomo, 2004:59).

Another example is Eduardo Mondlane, who from an early age became fully integrated and educated in the Protestant environment. After completing his primary education at a Swiss mission school, it was a Protestant church (Swiss mission) that sponsored his entire secondary and university studies first in South Africa (University of the Witwatersrand), then in Portugal (University of Lisbon) and the United States, where he obtained his Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) in Sociology from Northwestern University in Chicago in the 1950s. After graduating, Eduardo Mondlane served in the United Nations with the Trusteeship Department. He resigned from his post at the United Nations, he was elected Chairman of Frelimo at its founding in 1962 (Faris, 2014:25).

According to Faris (2014:25), Mondlane used his experience at the United Nations to forge alliances with several groups in order to confront the power of the Portuguese state and its many

allies. Faris (2014:26) observes that in the course of his involvement with Frelimo, "Mondlane found himself alienated from many in the church, primarily because of his decision to be engaged in an armed struggle; however, he not only remained within the church, but permanently pushed the church to engage with the world around in order to respond prophetically to the call to justice in the face of colonial oppression".

The Carnation Revolution of April 1974 in Portugal, which defeated the fascist Estado Novo (as discussed earlier), came to play a significant role. The new revolutionary leadership in Portugal became engaged in negotiations with the liberation movements in Africa and on 7 September 1974 a cease fire agreement was signed in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, by Frelimo leadership and the Portuguese colonial regime government. The following year (1975) Angola, Mozambique (concretely on 25 June 1975), Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe became independent nations (Paas, 2006:115).

Throughout the liberation struggle gender or women's emancipation became a goal on its own for Frelimo. During the armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial power, Mozambican women who participated in the struggle brought the issues of gender equality to the agenda. They successfully influenced the creation of a female wing within Frelimo's guerrilla army. The argument on the participation of Mozambican women in the armed struggle and their status throughout the struggle is discussed next.

2.4.3.2 Position of women during the liberation struggle period

By virtue of the timeframe, the liberation struggle period (i.e. from 1964 to 1975, before the country's independence) falls under the colonial period. Throughout the colonial period, both women and men were involved in various forms of resistance against Portuguese colonial rule. The liberation struggle was one form of resistance against the Portuguese colonial regime.

From the beginning of the war, women supported the guerrilla struggle conducted by Frelimo against the Portuguese army in Mozambique. Although not directly on the front lines, women supported in terms of transport of weapons and other materials necessary on the battlefield as well as the production and preparation of food. Over the course of time, women claimed the right to become soldiers and to fight the Portuguese army alongside the men. The Destacamento Feminino (Female Wing), hereafter abbreviated to DF, was created in 1966. Later the DF was supplemented by the creation of a non-military women's organisation called Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (Organization of Mozambican Women), hereafter abbreviated to OMM. The chief purpose of the organisation was to facilitate the mobilisation of the population toward support of the war of Frelimo (Casimiro, 2001:45; Santos, 2012:45).

It is worth recognising that the non-discriminatory strategy of female inclusion in the struggle by Frelimo marked a new and relevant era regarding the relationship between men and women. It was a new drive that recognised women as valid and important partners of men, totally contrary to the previous pre-colonial and colonial era set-ups.

In the eyes of men, however, women's emancipation was not peaceful at all. Some husbands prevented their wives from participating in the war to the extent that some women were beaten. Circumstances like these were reported to Frelimo leadership. Frelimo leadership could have urged men to not fight their wives on this, but instead persuaded them to join Frelimo and fight the Portuguese together with their wives (Arnfred, 2004:114).

Although the majority of the female soldiers were uneducated and from the peasant class, they came to be respected by their male counterparts. This was in part due to women's own organisation and determination to participate directly in the struggle.

The following two accounts below, from women who participated in the liberation struggle, have the purpose to bring their feeling at that time; the first belongs to a war veteran lady aged seventy five years while the second account is from a seventy nine years old lady veteran:

"When I joined the liberation struggle in 1970, it was like a dream for me; I had not attended any formal school by that time; in the first two years, I and my colleagues were mainly serving as guardians of children at the camp; in the subsequent years, we became more involved in the battle scenes; although not directly in the fire lines, we backed the troops by carrying different material to the fire lines".

"My uncle convinced me to join Frelimo in 1973; I left grade 2 of formal school; when I reached the liberated zones, I undergone military training and after that, I worked as a teacher; many soldiers who joined Frelimo had no any formal education; they were willing to learn; I and two other teachers, performed our duties in the afternoons; a year later, when the ceasefire was signed in Zambia, I could not believe that the war was over".

The period which highlighted the position of women during the struggle against colonialism coincided with the last stage of colonialism in Mozambique. Before embarking on the independent era, the following final and general remark on the relationship between colonialism and mission is worth making at this stage.

2.4.4   The relationship between colonialism and missions

The current subsection has randomly captured the sovereignty of God as explained in Romans 8, as a way of portraying that whatever happens in the world has a direct relation with the Creator;

i.e., nothing happens without the knowledge of the Creator. The Bible even teaches us that some bad circumstances from human perspective, at the end are likely to turn into good circumstances, when God intervenes.

Colonialism is horrible but God is so powerful and in control of the history of the universe that he is able to turn bad circumstances for good. This is called the sovereignty of God. As Romans 8:28 states, "we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to his purpose for them". The sovereignty of God was demonstrated when Israel lived under a series of colonial powers like Persia, Greece and the Roman Empire. God's sovereignty means that He is in control even in difficult times. One of the primary reasons for the spread of the Gospel in the early church was after all a result of the difficult times of the persecution of believers.

Although Mozambique (and Africa) has experienced the tyranny of colonialism, some long-term benefits to Mozambique (and Africa) can be identified from European colonialism. The colonialists brought advanced medicine, better systems of education, technology and advanced communications. The colonialists also provided the opportunity for Christian missionaries to preach the Gospel and show God's mercy and love.

From the above perspective, one can probably conclude that colonialism was a mixed blessing for missions. Indeed, in the period after the Conference of Berlin the number of converts in Mozambique (and in Africa in general) grew significantly. Yet the cause of growth was not colonialism itself, since Mozambicans (Africans) probably did not perceive it as a positive factor. The Conference of Berlin, however, indirectly contributed to the growth in that it paved the way for stability and order in the missionary work (Njoku, 2005:220).

The controlling and moderating presence of the colonial powers surely prevented mission from becoming "unduly disruptive and even explosive". In addition, the relative peace and order that resulted particularly from the *Pax Britannica* facilitated safe travel and communication by both missionaries and catechists, aiding the spread of the Gospel and dramatic growth of the church. The growth was seen in Nigeria after 1888 (i.e. post Berlin Conference) and in all places where the British colonial presence was strong. British rule covered the whole of Malawi by 1891. Christianity saw dramatic growth in Ghana after the British victory over the Ashanti in 1896 and in South Africa after 1910, with the union of the Cape Colony, Transvaal and Orange Free State. This early colonial period (1885) to the end of World War I (1918) is oftentimes described as the heyday of missions. In Mozambique the effect was more felt from 1930, when Portugal issued the Colonial Act that led to the effective occupation of the country (Njoku, 2005:220).

It is very interesting to note that the indirect blessing brought by colonialism for the expansion of Christian mission in Africa can be compared to the role played by the Roman Empire when it paved the way for the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem (by implication the birth of Christian mission). In fact Palestine (homeland of the Messiah) and all other places under the Roman Empire enjoyed relative peace and order, with the most sophisticated legal and communications systems of that time.

Alexander the Great greatly influenced the context into which Jesus Christ would be born. During the dark times of the Israelites, it was Alexander the Great who conquered the majority of the countries neighbouring Greece. Greek became the lingua franca of the time and the Jews adopted the Hellenistic spirit by learning the Greek language. The success of Alexander the Great brought Hellenistic civilisation, education and culture into the large areas he conquered, including Asia Minor (Turkey), Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Persia (Iran). Hellenistic culture and the Greek language served to communicate Christianity in the New Testament (Schreiber, 2011:6).

Because of the relevance of both the Greek language and culture, the Ptolemaic dynasty ruling Egypt at that time allowed the Hebrew Scripture to be translated into Greek. The new translation became known as "The Septuagint" (derived from seventy), since it was translated by 70 scholars (Archer, 1996:11).

Alexander the Great had promoted and achieved, like never before, significant development in terms of education, culture, communications and infrastructure at the time. It was in this context that the Saviour was born, i.e. the most developed environment of the time.

It is worth mentioned that in colonial Africa (including Mozambique) Christian missions reached unprecedented success, to the extent that Marxists accused missionaries of collaborating with colonialists to reduce religion to "just a reaction to material deprivation".

The Marxist point of view ascribed the success of Christianity in Africa to Christianity serving the interests of the colonialists and its direct link with the colonial machinery of oppression. As a consequence, the Marxists accused the missionaries of sweetening and softening the harsh impact of colonialism on the continent to keep Africans obedient subjects and useful workers (Fiedler, 1998:218-234).

In its analysis, the Marxist theory foretold the collapse of African Christianity at the end of colonialism. Since this prediction did not come true, they labelled the post-colonial period in Africa as neo-colonialism to enable them to continue applying their theories to the growth of Christianity in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World.

In this regard, Fiedler (1998:218-234) successfully demonstrates that missions and colonialism were not collaborators, due to the following distinct facts: missions are older than colonialism, since from its very beginning Christianity has been a missionary religion and within the context of Africa, missionaries like David Livingstone had reached many areas before any colonialist; and secondly, after the end of colonialism neither church or mission died and church membership even grew significantly. It might well be that missionaries at times put the colonial system to their own use or cooperated with it, yet at the same time missionaries resisted the cruelties and injustices of colonial rulers. Like colonialists, missionaries were children of their times, but their agenda was older and different from the agenda of the colonialists. It was "the agenda of the Kingdom of Christ, a kingdom not of this world, but with very significant effects on it".

It also remains true that the colonial principle distorted and undermined the message of the Gospel. Having realised the disadvantages, many missionaries played their roles as leading critics of colonialism, a fact deeply recognised by many Africans who fought the colonial system. The first state President of independent Mozambique (Samora Machel) publicly paid homage to Protestant missions during a speech in 1982, despite being intolerant towards the church (specifically the Roman Catholic), as follows:

"Here, in the Province of Gaza, the Protestant church was a centre for the struggle against colonialism; the Protestants helped a lot, they educated us in order to know the value of a human being; ever since the Portuguese effected the total domination of our country but the Protestants constructed churches and there they taught us about our history, our value as human beings and our identity. They taught us that we were Mozambicans, Africans, and not Portuguese…For this, obrigado protestantes! (thank you, Protestants!)" (Arnfred, 2004:117).

2.5   GENDER RELATIONS DURING THE INDEPENDENT ERA

Now the investigation turns to gender relations in the context of Mozambique as an independent country. It is set out in three subheadings: The first provides a characterisation of the independent era in Mozambique; the second analyses the position of women in the context of a one-party state (1975-1992); and the third reviews the position of women in the context of a democratic system (1992 to the present date).

The transition from the context of a one-party state to a democratic system is bridged by a section dealing with the church, given the significant role the church played towards a democratic system in Mozambique.

2.5.1   Characterisation of the independent era

Political independence in Mozambique was deeply influenced by the coup that took place in Portugal on 25 April 1974. By late September, a ceasefire was signed in Lusaka, capital of Zambia, between the new government in Portugal and the liberation movement of Mozambique. The country became an independent nation on 25 June 1975, after an armed struggle of 10 years and adopted Portuguese as its official language (Langa, 2013:61; Mário *et al.*, 2003:57). Thus far, Mozambique had been approached as a province of Portugal, like all other Portuguese colonies.

It is worth keeping in mind that Mozambique is situated on the east coast of Southern Africa and borders on Tanzania to the north; Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the west; and South Africa and Swaziland to the south. Linguistically speaking, therefore, and also by virtue of its Lusophonic nature (i.e. use of Portuguese as official language), Mozambique is oftentimes considered as an island in that the country is entirely surrounded by Anglophonic countries (i.e. all the abovementioned surrounding countries use English as their official language).

The new nation became known as República Popular de Moçambique (People's Republic of Mozambique), Frelimo became the ruling party and Samora Moisés Machel became the President of the Republic. The Communist orientation of the party was very clear from the beginning. Frelimo was the fusion of three different movements. In 1975 there were no other parties or political organisations, apart from Frelimo and OMM was the one and only women's organisation (Macagno, 2009:34).

Presently, the country is divided into eleven provinces including the capital city. In fact, on its own, the capital city Maputo also stands as a province and the political and economic centre of the country. According to the Instituto Nacional de Estatística (2015:21) (National Statistics Office), the current population of Mozambique stands at 25 million people, of whom 45% are under the age of 14 years and only 4.6% are over 60 years old. At birth, life expectancy is 53.5 years.

Although Portuguese is the official language, the majority of Mozambicans speak a variety of Bantu languages (Langa, 2014:61). The country is host to a number of religions: 32% Catholic, 21% Protestant, 19% Muslim and 32% traditional African religions.

The independent era in Mozambique can be divided into two distinct stages. The first spans from 1975 to 1992 and is mainly characterised by a one-party model of government. It is interesting to note that in the 1970s other African independent countries in the region, like Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi were also running the same model of government. The second stage of independence runs from 1992 to the present date and the model of government is a pluralistic democracy. This

second stage was preceded by the collapse of the Communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union (Gómez, 1999:43; Santos, 2012:32).

During the first years of independence, however, Mozambique consolidated the relationship with the Communist bloc. Mozambique received expertise from the Communist bloc in the military arena and in social fields, like education and health, Mozambique also received significant aid from the Communist bloc. Mozambican students were trained in different Communist countries in the East and health specialists (mainly from Cuba) worked in different hospitals in Mozambique.

The communist model governance of Mozambique was hardly surprising given the military and logistical aid Frelimo received from the Communist bloc throughout the struggle for the country's independence. Because of the support the Communist bloc provided, they expected Mozambique to follow their rules and that was indeed the case. Mozambique adopted a strictly centralised model of administration (Jacobson, 2006:503).

Santos (2012:75) recalls that soon after independence one of the immediate tasks of the new Frelimo government was to construct *o homem novo*, meaning a new decolonised Mozambican person, on political grounds and from an economic perspective, the new non-elected government decided to transform the country from an overwhelming dependence on subsistence agriculture to a modernised economy. Large-scale agricultural production was to be combined with the industrial sector, supported by Communist countries.

It must be emphasised that the previous international aid supporting agriculture of the colonial period had been terminated. Now the government operated on bilateral agreements with Communist countries like East Germany, Bulgaria, Vietnam, North Korea, China, Cuba and the Soviet Union (Buleza, 2008:45).

The government's priorities in this new orientation of agriculture were state farms, agricultural cooperatives and irrigation schemes by means of machinery imported from Communist countries. The government was encouraging and influencing the whole of civil society towards a Communist lifestyle. Whereas previously the churches had strongly influenced society, according to Jacobson (2006:503), from this new perspective the transformation of society was to be entirely steered by education.

During that period just after independence, the role of civil society and other organisations like churches had been practically abolished. Contrary to practices in place throughout the pre-colonial and colonial era, traditional authorities were no longer respected. Instead, a new and a wide movement towards national unity was consolidated. The traditional authorities were forced to conform, although unwillingly and they became strong supporters of the civil war waged by the

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Mozambique National Resistance, hereafter Renamo (from Portuguese abbreviation of *Resistência Nacional de Moçambique*) (Andrade *et al.*, 2001:9).

However, the civil war between Frelimo and Renamo literally paralysed the ongoing political and economic change of the early years of independence. The Mozambican civil war profoundly manifested the ambiguous position of women, as explained in the next section

2.5.2   Position of women in the context of one political party system (1975-1992)

First of all, it should be noted that the period under scrutiny practically coincides with the 16-year civil war that broke out in Mozambique. The civil war ended in 1992 and thus began in 1976, just a year after gaining independence. Renamo was indeed founded in 1976 (Gouws, 2005:89; Hanlon, 2010:68).

If the civil war started in 1976, it would be logical to assume that the preparations for its commencement had started at an earlier stage, i.e. 1975. It could then be concluded that the ceasefire signed in Lusaka on 7 September 1974, marking the end of colonial rule in Mozambique, was in reality a shift and a change of scenario. The end of a colonial war meant the beginning of a civil war.

Since there was the widespread euphoria over independence, it would be safe to say that the cause of the civil war was due to a combination of friction inside Frelimo and popular dislike of the new model of government. The chairman of Frelimo, Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, was assassinated in Dar-Es-Salaam on 3 February 1969 upon opening a letter that turned out be a letter bomb and Frelimo accused the Portuguese colonial police as having perpetrated the assassination of the chairman. The death of Dr Eduardo Mondlane in 1969 brought acute internal friction within the movement. Soon after the assassination of Frelimo's chairman, the vice-chairman, Rev. Uria Simango fled and took refuge in Egypt. The dictatorial stance of the ruling party from 1975 and the banning of the traditional authorities also paved the way towards general discontent (Fry, 2001:78; Macagno, 2009:45).

Whereas women's direct involvement in the liberation struggle brought new and significant changes to male/female gender relations, the independent era did not hold similar promise for the male/female gender relationship, at least from women's point of view. Arnfred (2004:116) is of the opinion in this regard that Frelimo's post-independence politics became focused on the state and the economic plan, not on women.

The government created estate farms and cooperatives during the independent era and women were requested to work hard on those farms and cooperatives. Working hard on the farms is what they had always been doing (and most increasingly during the colonial period) and as always, in

parallel to maintaining their tasks and responsibilities as mothers and wives. It was this kind of politics (work on the farms and cooperatives) that was presented as women's emancipation during the early years of independence in Mozambique, when in actual fact it was merely continuing the double workload for women (production and domestic work) under a different ideology. While the woman was described as the queen of the house (with women's productive role maintained and increased) during colonialism, during the independent era the main image was that of the woman soldier and producer alongside the domestic roles of wife and mother (Arnfred, 2004:116).

This Frelimo's policy on women as wage workers was inspired by the Communist-Soviet theory of women's emancipation. According to Communist-Soviet perspective, the emancipatory effect of women as wage workers was conditioned by state-organised alleviation of domestic tasks by means of crèches and kindergartens. Yet such facilities to alleviate the workload of women were not in place in Mozambique at that time.

However, the one-party model government initiated health and education provisions never before available for Mozambican women in particular and for society at large. Women actually became very active and dynamic forces in health campaigns, such as immunisation programmes, and these campaigns also brought significant change to health conditions and during the first years of independence child mortality reduced drastically (Cliff & Muller, 1986:37).

Probably for the first time in the history of the country, Mozambican women were given an opportunity to control the size of their families. This was done through health programmes that supported birth spacing for women, by means of family planning. Contrary to previous experiences, the system for first time encouraged female education and the number of girls that enrolled in schools increased radically, in some cases the number of girls even equalled the number of boys at schools (Gómez, 1999:45-59).

The government's approach to addressing gender inequality was challenged by traditional norms. Though marginalised, they continued to perpetuate women's inferiority introduced during the colonial period. This became manifest specifically in the private or familiar sphere of life. The oppression of Mozambican women in the family circle was to be addressed through the radical strategy of employing women in the public and productive spheres on equal terms with men, as set out by Frederich Engels, as a way of lifting women's identity and status (Urdang, 1989:34).

According to Santos (2012:28), the reorganisation of Mozambican society in the late 1980s was characterised by an emphasis on the changes to the initial political model combined with the economic crisis and the war. These changes enabled social practices and representations that had previously been inhibited to emerge into public view and be legitimated.

The abovementioned transformation initially showed the promise of developing a legal and non-discriminatory system regarding gender relations, but over the course of time the reality on the ground made gender policy ambiguous. In spite of the agenda on women's emancipation, Frelimo's moral worldview was basically patriarchal. This moral approach was presented in official speeches as "socialist ethics" (Machel, 1982:40).

The ambiguity manifested in several aspects. The labour model grew from the Soviet-socialist inspired ideal of women in traditionally male occupations, but with their domestic tasks highly alleviated. In Mozambique, however, women were responsible for both the domestic chores as well as agricultural production. The "socialist family" was presented as the ideal and no distinction was made from the Christian (patriarchal) family. Female sexuality was basically dealt with in negatives terms: Women were blamed for prostitution and campaigns against female initiation rites became very common (Arnfred, 2004:119).

The abovementioned critical point of view on Frelimo was due to a lack of a clear understanding on the real conditions of gender relations in Mozambican daily life. The post-independence was also very beneficial to women, participating in wide range of programmes of education and mobilisation at different levels (local, provincial and national).

The civil war, however, brought an ambiguous legacy to the position of women. From a general perspective, women were amongst the most vulnerable victims of the war and yet from a different perspective, women also became unintended beneficiaries of the civil war in some aspects. By weakening both the state and the traditional family, the war created unprecedented opportunities for women to break free from patriarchal control.

With regard to the majority of women breaking free from patriarchal control, especially decisive were the responses found by women in order to survive in a context of war. Some women successfully managed to see and seize golden opportunities in their predicament and they prospered, especially and mostly as informal and free entrepreneurs. A few women even became engaged in civil society activism, setting up victim support networks and participating in peace building campaigns, but then it is also true that many other women succumbed to their own fate (Chingono, 2015:1).

It can be described as creative tension in the sense that while destroying society, the war had also positively initiated the process of gender transformation, social fragmentation and civil society activism. The context and environment of Mozambique that emerged from the civil war, with regard to the position of women, was very different from the context and environment of the immediate post-independence Mozambique.

The civil war claimed approximately one million lives, either as a direct result of the war or from the collateral destruction; the displacement of one and a half million people (within the country and as refugees in the neighbouring countries of Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania) and the massive destruction of schools, clinics, bridges and other infrastructure amounting to approximately US$15 million (Hanlon, 2002:86; Safer World, 1994:18).

During the civil war, whole families suffered massive displacement and there was recruitment of young men and women by both sides in the conflict. There are records of psychological torture of young boys and girls as a means of forcing their enrolment into Renamo. Women and men in the areas under the control of the government were seriously at risk of death from beatings, whenever those areas came under attack by Renamo. These circumstances led to many civilians (children, women and men) being captured and left to their own fate.

The following account is a memory of a lady that was kidnapped in 1986 by one of the conflicting sides, not worth to mention at this stage: "In 1986, I was 14 years old; I was coming from school and suddenly, the whole village was full of soldiers; I was taken by the soldiers and they forced me to become the wife of their commander; it was very shocking to me; I conceived my first child at the age of fourteen and the second at the age of sixteen years old; when the civil war ended in 1992, I had four children; it is a time that I do not want to remember".

Vines (1992:45-47) agrees with Jeichande (1990:36) in asserting that during war women and girls face an additional risk of sexual violence and rape. Sexual violence and rape against women, specifically when perpetrated at war time, serve as an instrument to subjugate people and can be perpetrated by any of the members of the conflict. The brutalities suffered by women were not only from one side parties in Mozambique, but from both Frelimo government soldiers as well as from Renamo soldiers. There are records of women and girls accused of supporting Renamo and as a result raped by Frelimo troops in "punishment" and vice versa.

It is interesting that the "accusation" mentioned above was not a formal action conducted by a credible entity. In many cases they were opportunistic accusations made by soldiers as a way to reach their sinful goals of sexual violence and rape. This is to say that the accusations were arbitrary and the accused women never had an opportunity to defend their cases. The final result being that women's bodily integrity was used instrumentally by both conflicting sides (Hanlon, 2010:230).

Some of the displaced people spent long periods of their refuge (even up to a decade) under the provision of humanitarian agencies. Different forms of discrimination against women and girls were identified in the refugee camps. Firstly, the entities involved in the emergency relief often replicated patriarchal patterns regarding the nature of family relationships. For example, relief

agencies or entities would register women for food and other goods distribution only through a male head. This forced some women and/or girls to find a head male in order to be accommodated at a relief camp (Makayana, 1990:34).

It is easy to conclude that under reasonable circumstances this may have been simply for the sake of food distribution. But under worse circumstances women and/or girls may have been forced to (re)marry a head male. This is because fleeing during war time is never an orderly process, the family disintegrates and each member of a family may flee to a different destination, ending up in different refugee camps or destinations. Displaced people just find themselves at the final destination of refuge, usually without a single belonging from home and dislocated from their family.

There are records of some families who used the opportunity to "marry" (hand over) a young girl to the camp personnel in exchange for food and goods, which led to dishonest camp personnel "owning" more than one woman/girl. The handing over of young girls to camp personnel were illegal marriages practiced under refugee camp circumstances, where shortage of food and famine are commonplace. Dishonest parents handed over their daughters (girls) to dishonest camp personnel in order to be in the privileged position of obtaining more food from the personnel (or "sons-in-law") than other refugees (Makayana, 1990:34).

Women who had demonstrated outstanding organisational abilities during educational and health campaigns, were merely disregarded or sidelined once at a refugee camp. The confidence women built up in the first years of independence, as legacy of their participation in the liberation struggle, became broken and their identity and status changed radically.

It is clear that these circumstances gave rise to a shift in gender relations, from an emancipatory environment where women worked side by side with men to a discriminatory model in the camps under the supervision of humanitarian agencies, either within the country at several camps for displaced people or abroad. Life abroad (at a refugee camp) or within the country (at a displacement camp) were often the same, as long as people depended on humanitarian agency for survival.

Altogether, it can be said that the civil war in Mozambique, especially as of the mid-1980s, drastically changed the discourse and practice around women's agency and identity for the worse (Jacobson, 2006:506).

As can be plainly seen, it would be no surprise that during this period the new form of organisation undermined the relationships between women and men built during the first years of independence. The war increased women's insecurities, vulnerabilities and pauperisation. As

refugees, they were exposed to new forms of violence and some were forced to become informal traders, sex workers or beggars. The specific response of each individual woman, i.e. her survival strategy and achievements, was determined by her educational background, age, marital status and personal life history.

The abovementioned effects of the war gave rise to a political emergency characterised by a multi-dimensional crisis with profound human suffering and with an increasing contestation around the state.

Moreover, Hanlon (2010:95) clarifies that in the late 1980s Renamo had established its presence in wide areas of the country from north to south. Be that as it may, it became clear at this stage that neither side was able to achieve a military victory.

Andrade *et al.* (2001:21) observe that in the course of the conflict the country reached an impasse that forced the government to redefine its development strategies and to seek out new political and economic alliances. It was under this new development strategy that the Mozambican government, led by Frelimo, requested the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for membership in 1984.

Jacobson (2006:402) indicates that after several negotiations, the country's membership was accepted and as a result the government launched its first *Programa de Recuperação Económica* (Economic Recovery Programme) at the beginning of 1987.

The programme contained a series of rigorous structural adjustment measures, following the model recommended by both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. From 1987 Mozambique joined a great wave of neo-liberalism, which had been launched some years previously in some capitalist countries around the world (Andrade *et al.*, 2001:21).

The structural adjustment measures also reached the political sphere. A new pluralistic constitution was developed in 1987 and adopted in 1990, which enshrined a pluralism of political parties and established a new economic and social order. Consequently, there was a period of negotiation and the war came to an end on 4 October 1992 with the signing of the General Peace Agreement in Rome, between Frelimo government and Renamo leadership (Andrade *et al.*, 2001:21).

Chingono (2015:1) and Osório (2001:98) assert that the war indirectly empowered some women by creating conditions that made it relatively easier for them to challenge the patriarchal system, as illustrated by the following four aspects: First, when male breadwinners were absent (on the battle field, at refugee settlements or even dead), women were forced to find alternative means to support their households and in this way some women became family heads; in the second

place, the traditional economic power of men over women was seriously undermined, due to the degradation of the country's economy; thirdly, the war imposing political and economic liberalisation as a prerequisite for its end demanded new political, cultural and social values that allowed women to easily abandon oppressive traditions; and finally, women were strongly empowered by virtue of their participation in the wartime informal economy as well as in religion-based support groups, which they would use in the period immediately following the war.

It can be concluded that the socio-political challenges caused by the war was a kind of a mixed blessing for women. While it contained new possibilities for women's emancipation, at the same time it also contained seeds for their further and future subjugation; "ironically and unintentionally, Renamo's counter revolution promoted Frelimo's feminist revolution" (Chingono, 2015:2).

The war led to increased gender violence, vulnerability and insecurity, while at the same time it undermined the oppressive structure of patriarchy. Different women did different things to survive the war. Some became more vulnerable, while others were empowered (especially as informal traders and peace activists).

Both parties to the conflict (the Frelimo government and Renamo) also became convinced that neither party could achieve military victory and in 1984 Mozambican State President Samora Machel signed the Nkomati Accord (although not efficient) with South African Prime Minister Pieter Botha in an attempt to isolate Renamo from South Africa's (international) support. These circumstances paved the way for the church to emerge as a third party in the conflict and play a reconciliatory role as mediator between the Frelimo government and Renamo leadership. This reconciliatory process occurred separately, i.e. the Frelimo and Renamo leadership were not approached at the same time (Castro, 2012:58).

The Frelimo government became aware in the late 1980s of the unsustainability of the war, given the collapse of the Soviet Union by far the main military support of the Frelimo government. Renamo was also gradually losing its main logistical support from South Africa, described as Renamo's main supporter, since South Africa was also going through significant political change in the late 1980s that led to the freeing of Nelson Mandela in 1990 (Hanlon, 2010:55).

Prior to 1980 Renamo's main supporter had been Rhodesia, which was no longer the case when Rhodesia gained independence in 1980 and adopted the name of Zimbabwe. The last factor that led to negotiations between Renamo and Frelimo is the death of President Samora Machel in 1986, who was described as a conservative. The new leadership in Mozambique under President Joaquim Alberto Chissano, described as moderate, found favourable ground for deep political change. Mozambique adopted a pluralistic constitution in 1990, a significant step toward change in the organisation of society (Casimiro, Andrade & Jacobson, 2005:77; Pinto, 2009:44).

During the heyday of the Mozambican civil war some women became actively involved in self-help support groups: supported by the church. They prayed, sang, danced and demonstrated for peace. It is logical to conclude that the moral and physical effects of the 16-year civil war are still present in the collective memories of the majority of Mozambicans today, including those who did not experience it directly or those who were born after the political settlement.

The current section has discussed the position of women in the context of one-party system in Mozambique, in which the church played a significant role in approaching both parties of the conflict and led to the end of the 16-year civil war and the democratic system in Mozambique. The next section discusses the role played by the church.

2.5.3   The role of the church towards a democratic system in Mozambique

It has been established that throughout the colonial period the Roman Catholic Church had a privileged position in Mozambique, since it represented the official religion of the colonial state. The birth of the new nation in 1975 brought significant changes in the relationship between the church and the state. The new government led by Frelimo became intolerant of the Roman Catholic Church in particular and the church in general. Verson (2015:36) opines that the Frelimo government's intolerance towards the Roman Catholic Church could be easily understood on the grounds of its official ties with the colonial regime before independence.

Regarding the extended intolerance of the government towards the church in general, however, Castro (2012:57) indicates the Communist and atheist orientation of the new government in Mozambique as the main reason behind the scenes. Intolerance of the church was the modus operandi not only of the communist regime in Mozambique, but of any communist regime elsewhere.

The civil war became unsustainable in the late 1980s. The end of the socialist bloc, headed by the Soviet Union (main supporter of the Frelimo government), and the unprecedented political changes in South Africa (main supporter of Renamo) made it clear to both sides to the conflict that a military victory by either party would not be possible. It was against this background that the church found fertile ground for approaching both sides for negotiation.

Verson (2015:45) observes that at the beginning of the talks the church became involved by means of representatives from The Mozambique Christian Council, abbreviated to CCM (from the Portuguese Conselho Cristão de Moçambique). The CCM is an ecumenical board that congregates all Christian churches in the country. Over the course of the time, however, the peace talks mediating board came to be solely represented by the Roman Catholic Church.

The main cause of shifting from an ecumenical board to the Roman Catholic Church was based on security grounds, raised by both sides. At first the church leadership met with both parties to the conflict in Kenya and then the three parties (i.e. the two parties of the conflict plus the mediating board) came to meet in Botswana. There it was decided that the peace talks would have to continue in a neutral country, since Kenya supported Renamo and Botswana supported the Frelimo government (Verson, 2015:55).

According to Casimiro *et al.* (2005:80), one of the discourses bannered by the Roman Catholic Church in proposing peace talks was in support of the cry of Mozambique Women whose children were dying in the war. The concept of Mozambican women having a relatively independent civil agency, different from the political, was practically non-existent. As a consequence, women were not involved in the actual process of peace negotiation.

Progressively, from 1990 to 1992, the talks continued in Italy as agreed by both the Frelimo government and Renamo. The practical way of involving the church in Italy was through the Roman Catholic Church, to which both parties to the conflict agreed. The community of Santo Egídio became the Roman Catholic representative in the mediating process (Costa, 1996:50).

It was the first time in the history of Mozambique's independence that the church became heartily involved in the public life of the people. This involvement led to the signing of the General Peace Agreement in 1992, in Rome.

This was the starting of a new stage regarding public life in Mozambique, the beginning of a democratic period. The reconciliatory role played by the CCM towards the end of the civil war became widely appreciated and recognised by the entire Mozambican society, including the Frelimo government and Renamo. The CCM became a significant partner of the government in Mozambique as of 1992, with a voice in the destiny of the country (Pinto, 2009:15).

The current habit of opening public meetings with a sermon or a blessing is a real consequence of the role played by the church in the past. It became common to summon the churches, through the Christian Council of Mozambique, for a vigil on peace issues.

As explained above, the positive role of the church (as far as Protestant missionaries are concerned) already started during the colonial period. The church would once again step to the fore at the peak of the civil war to seek reconciliation between Frelimo and Renamo. Having explained the role of the church towards a democratic setup in Mozambique, the next section details the position of women in the context of a democratic environment.

2.5.3.1 Position of women in the context of a democratic system (from 1992 onwards)

This section seeks to investigate the position of women in a context of pluralism of ideas, commonly called democracy. Democracy is a government by the people, i.e. "a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly, through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free election" (Abate, 1997).

This period naturally links with the previous (i.e. independence and/or civil war period) by virtue of chronology. As already established, the first stage of post-colonial Mozambique (or the early independence period) was committed to the emancipation of women. The Frelimo government pursued a broad-based strategy during this period that involved educational, legal and constitutional changes aiming to promote and protect the rights of women. According to Urdang (1989:21), women were encouraged to work on state and collective farms, but at the same time they remained responsible for their own households.

Unfortunately, Frelimo was committed to its initial success and promise as experienced during the liberation struggle and as a result, Frelimo was not able to lead to bring about the total empowerment of women. The family thus continued to be the oppressive unit for women it was during the colonial period, with entrenched patriarchal values and practices. Because of a disconnection between Frelimo's policy on women and its political practice, the expected gender revolution did not take place. By the time the civil war started, approximately a year after the independence of the country, women had not yet enjoyed equal rights to men (Arnfred, 2014:2; Urdang, 1989:34).

It is generally agreed that the democratic period in Mozambique started in 1992, with the signing of the General Peace Agreement in Rome on 4 October, between Frelimo government and Renamo leadership and under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. Officially, the Roman Catholic Church was represented by the Community of Santo Egídio. The date also marked the official end of the 16-year civil war in Mozambique. The country held its first multi-party elections in history in 1994, two years after the signing of the General Peace Agreement, under the auspices of the United Nations, and since 1994 to the present day 4 October is celebrated in Mozambique as *O Dia da Paz* (The Day of Peace), a public holiday, (Andrade *et al.*, 2001:21; Pinto, 2009:95).

According to Moyana (2015:10), the first multi-party elections held in October 1994 were generally acknowledged as the turning point in the country's conflict-ridden history. Frelimo was elected as the ruling party, with the majority seats in the Parliament, seconded by Renamo as the major opposition party.

The early democratic period in Mozambique is, however, rightly described as a transitional period from the civil war and as a result, the period was also characterised by one of the most unintended consequences of the war to women. The war forced women to become not only passive victims (for some women), but also active agents of change and of peace building (for others). Hall (1990:37) compares the roles adopted by women to that of women in the United Kingdom during World War II, where they took over male financial responsibilities on their families.

The destruction of formal employment and farming during the civil war undermined male control and dominion over women. Consequently, women were forced to devise their own living strategies through informal entrepreneurship. The position of some women in the family shifted from dependent to independent household heads and with this new status in the family, such women explored, expressed and experimented new identities and ideas. They challenged the traditional gender identities and influenced their replacement with a new and liberal reality. This led to the empowerment of some women, who became active agents of change (Chingono, 2014:5).

The liberalisation programmes of the 1990s contributed positively towards women's transformed roles, since the liberalisation of the economy and the country meant a rejection of authoritarian and centralised control from the state. This new reality in Mozambique for the first time enhanced the role of the individual in society. By giving up its control of public life through collectives and one-party structures, the state opened up space for different civil society groups to freely exercise their rights and more significantly, for women to take the initiative and to fill social, political and economic voids. Those programmes also presupposed immense hardship and suffering for women (Baden, 1997:31).

The above paradigm shift in the position of women, a quiet gender revolution, manifested with changes within the main oppressive unit of the family structure. There was an increase in the single women-headed households, marital instability increased as well as sexual permissiveness and child prostitution (Chingono, 2014:5).

With its economic basis undermined by the war, the patriarchal family was no longer the main family structure. New forms of cohabitation, which did not exist in the previous context, emerged and especially in households headed by females. The breakdown of the family and of public institutions thus affected the previous interrelations in the community between kin, friends and neighbours. This led to new forms of family and association in place of the previous kinship system and extended family ties. Field research in this regard by Chingono (2014:8) reflects that out of 60 households approximately 5% were female-headed by widowed mothers and about 13% were female-headed by divorced or separated women. In some instances, a "family" was constituted of formerly unrelated boys and/or girls brought together by war.

The negative impact on women is directly connected to the liberalisation of state enterprises in the 1990s. In collaboration with the World Bank, Mozambique imposed restrictions on public spending and deregulation of former one-party state enterprises (including the cashew nut, cotton and tea industries). As demonstrated by Elson (1997:95), across Sub-Saharan Africa the above measures have always reflected an impact specifically on women. In many cases, such women were either heads of households or single women without the financial support of a male partner.

In this regard Hanlon (2002:98) supports Elson's (1997:95) assertion that the liberalisation programmes in Mozambique especially affected urban women's employment. In fact, as far as cashew-nut sector was concerned, soon after independence 90% of the labour force was comprised of women. The restructuring of the cashew nut sector basically mean the closing down of the sector, leaving the 90% female labour force unemployed.

Humanitarian programmes gave way to large-scale reconstruction schemes such as roads, bridges, schools and clinics buildings in the 1990s. These programmes replicated and in several circumstances they even reinforced gendered stereotypes of women's work that harkens back to the colonial period. Women were merely ignored or sidelined and as a result, a persistent depressing familiarity in the marginalisation of the great majority of these women was noted (Jacobson, 2006:500).

Deeply wounded by the war, the most viable option for the state was to liberalise the country's economy that was previously strongly centralised. One immediate consequence of such liberalisation was the appearance of the informal sector of the economy. Many women did not let the opportunity go to waste and joined the informal sector, since they were forced to look after themselves and, as heads of families, to take on formerly male responsibilities.

The newly created informal sector of the economy represented the only decent source of livelihood for many women. Their remarkable persistence was rewarded by increasing economic independence and political economy. Living autonomous lives and not dependent on their husbands, they made decisions on how to use their income money and labour. Not bound by the morals imposed on dependent and married women, they gained greater opportunity to explore their sexuality and their needs (Chingono, 2014:6; Cornell, 1998:50).

Over the course of time, apart from ownership of small shops, women ventured into areas such as large entrepreneurial activities, small and medium scale trading and smuggling. Many goods from neighbouring countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi were imported or smuggled in by women. In several Mozambican villages and towns most of the popular and prosperous unlicensed commercial houses were owned by autonomous women.

The degree of involvement of men in women's business was either very low or non-existent. In order to keep control of their business, they placed their trust in their female extended family female members and mutual associations as well as on their adult children, rather than relying on men. Unlike the previous pre-colonial or colonial periods, financial autonomy allowed women to defer marriage, to leave unhappy marriage and to express themselves more confidently (Chingono, 2014:6; Pinto, 2009:47).

In light of the above, it can be concluded that democracy permitted informal female traders a much stronger basis for moving toward an emancipatory status than ever before. Through women's continuous action around production and consumption, primarily in the informal sector, they started to lay claim to economic rights and citizenship. This new economic set-up redesigned gender power relations and ownership of informal enterprises enhanced women's security and freedom. Women not only expanded their political space, in claiming their rights, they also carried on the gender revolution initiated by Frelimo (through their experience during the liberation struggle and widely encouraged in the first years of independence).

This feminist revolution faced many challenges in that traditionalists, Christians and members of government, men and women alike, expected these economically independent women to return to their traditional roles of being submissive wives, sisters and aunts and not to strengthen their new independent paradigm. The new attitudes, behaviours and freedoms of these women came under serious attack and they were labelled as either "unAfrican" or as a form of Western cultural domination.

They were accused of promoting social decadence, marital breakdown, infidelity, social degeneration, juvenile delinquency and prostitution. Some Christian critics even went as far as to claim that natural disasters in Mozambique, such as floods and droughts, were God's judgment over women's excesses and freedoms. These patriarchal pressures brought some effect: some women succumbed to the pressures, while others continued to resist the reversal of their wartime experiences and democratic gains (Chingono, 2014:7).

Marital instability was another unintended consequence of the war and closely related to the mortality rate of men during the war, by far higher than of women. The declining number of men in communities in the early democratic period (or immediate after the war), either killed on the battlefield or refugees in neighbouring countries, produced a skewed population ratio of women to men. In some communities there were 1500 women and only 300 men (Rodriguez, 1983:134).

Keen (2010:203) is of the opinion that the division among women, manifested along class, age and the rural-urban divide, still remains a challenge to women's emancipation nationwide. Prior to democracy (i.e. during the war), women were not a homogeneous social category and as a

group they were neither revolutionary nor conservative. They were, therefore, socially differentiated and were affected by the war in different ways.

It is true that women from different social classes had different war experiences. Women from the high ranks of government and society who lived in protected houses or areas experienced the war vastly different than poor and unprotected rural women. The former had security guards with access to weapons like pistols or AK47 rifles for self-defence, while the latter had no access to security and their houses could easily be burnt or smashed down by one of the conflicting sides in the course of a confrontation.

Consequently, some urban upper class women prospered by charging unfair rents when lodging displaced rural women taking refuge in the protected areas. The war amplified the division between the rich and the poor and precipitated the polarisation of wealth and class within the same gender. This reality brought made it either very difficult or impossible for women from different social classes to work together for the common cause of gender equality.

Keen (2010:203) observes that apart from women's social class, there were also other divisions among women based on their age and this determined their options, their opportunities, their constraints and their strategies. In general, young children and the elderly were the most vulnerable during the war, because they could neither run for their lives nor walk to safer places. In short, they could not look properly after themselves. Young children and the elderly constituted the majority of beggars or donor dependents.

More than two decades after the beginning of the democratic period, this research has concluded that women continue to face several challenges. As aptly noted by Domingues (2010:3), unemployed women, either in rural or urban areas, live in grinding poverty. They lack the finances, skills and knowledge for effective organisation and success in business and in the feminist revolution. With national leaders locked in a political power struggle with opposition parties, there has never been a supportive environment or sufficient gender-sensitive counselling services for women traumatised by the war. The poor representation of women in the public sector in general and in government and parliament in particular, has weakened women's position in society.

In spite of all the above developments, there are considerable opportunities to build on the changes in gender relations in order to promote opportunities for women and gender equality. In fact, one of the instruments that brought increasing attention to gender relations in Mozambique as well as global policy concern was spearheaded by several women's movements as from the 1990s. As part of women's increasing awareness of their status, the role played by Mozambican women has emerged significantly throughout the country in the form of non-governmental

organisations. These organisations have decided to act proactively on behalf of women in particular and society at large (Casimiro *et al.*, 2005:145; Huber, 2007:94).

Pinto (2009:47) aptly notes that prior to democracy, there was only one women's organisation, namely the OMM. Other organisations with different interests have emerged since 1992, such as the Renamo Women's League, Business Women and Women on Legal Career. The first two organisations (the OMM and Renamo Women's League) have a strong political orientation. The OMM is in fact a political organisation of women affiliated to Frelimo, just like the Renamo Women's League.

The other two organisations are professionally oriented. Business Women advocates gender equality in business, while Women on Legal Career promotes gender equality and justice. Apart from their specific responsibilities and orientation, all the above organisations are committed to promote a nationwide awareness of citizenship regardless of gender, social status, political affiliation or ethnic group/race (Bunch, 2008:102; Castro, 2012:50).

Jacobson (2006:507) recalls extreme instances where Women on Legal Career had to fight for their rights, early in the post-conflict period. Women representatives from political and judicial branches successfully campaigned against legislation that proposed a system of individual land ownership that excluded women. The campaign achieved some success in legislation modification, having preserved land access for women-led groups and women-led families.

This feminist movement in the post-conflict period motivated and encouraged other social groups, such as the youth, to form their own non-governmental organisations with specific goals and identity (Pinto, 2009:109).

It is important to explain that even Mozambican feminist movements recognise the continuing gap of awareness and empowerment of women between the rural and urban areas. More than two decades after the signing of the General Peace Agreement, the levels of violence against women in several ranges of society continue and have gained new dimensions (Jaquelina, 2013:45).

Violence against women in the domestic environment has now reached all the social classes, from poor families in the rural areas to the elite families in the cities. Violence involving poor families in rural areas often goes unnoticed, while violence in rich families is immediately made public.

The most dramatic cases involved two daughters of two former State Presidents of Mozambique. Josina Machel, aged 41, daughter of the first State President (Samora Machel, who ruled from 1975 up to 1986) was left blind in one eye in October 2015, as a result of physical aggression by her boyfriend. Valentina Guebuza, then aged 36, daughter of the third State President (Armando

Guebuza, who ruled from 2005 to 2015), was fatally shot by her husband at their home on 14 December 2016 (Anon., 2015b; Media Fax, 2016).

This section has surveyed the position of women during the democratic period in Mozambique. It has been established that the democratic period was the phase that immediately followed the 16-year civil war. As such, the position of women during this period was the result of a mixture of the war experience and of the liberalisation experiences of the 1990s.

The civil war's undermining of the economic power base of patriarchy and hegemony of its legitimising ideology created opportunities for some women to attain relative economic and political autonomy from the domination by men. Ironically, the tendency towards the breakdown of the traditional family and the inability of men to provide for (and hence control) women led to a silent gender revolution.

Forced to be innovative and enterprising in order to survive, some women emerged stronger and with a more critical attitude on gender relations. The position of these women improved, accelerating women's emancipation that had been initiated during the liberation struggle. The liberalisation process of the early post-conflict period and the end of an authoritarian state reflected women's rejection of the coarseness, hardness and submissiveness of their mothers' generation and desire for a more glamorous, feminine and independent identity. Therefore, women expanded both political and economic power. They experimented with Western fashion and liberally explored their sexuality and pleasure.

In this section it has also been established that an effective liberation of women may only be achieved when they are empowered and allowed to have significant representation in policy making and governance. This, however, contrasts with the reality raised by Chingono (2014:6) in terms of women's lack of skills and knowledge for effective success in their feminist revolution.

In consequence and as a way of living their autonomous life, some women choose the opportunity to explore sexuality and needs in a different way. This reality leads the argument into the next section. The following scholarly work points out an exception and the reality of female power relations in Mozambique from the lens of ethnologists and sociologists.

2.5.3.2 Female power relations

Throughout the previous argument, the general perception regarding women is that they have progressively challenged the traditionalist set of society with different interests. Some women have succumbed to the patriarchal pressures of society and others have successfully broken through the traditional set-up that expect them to be subservient sisters, mothers or aunts, while there also those who continue to struggle to rebuild their lost identity and status. The concept

raised in this section may point out the exception of the context in which women possess significant erotic power. This reality has arisen from sociological and ethnological works and is worth highlighting at this stage of the chapter.

General and academic discourses in Mozambique have unquestionably in the past often portrayed women in transactional sexual relationships as powerless and vulnerable victims of economic inequalities and patriarchal privilege. This perception regarding women as subject and subordinated to men is also supported by Mernissi (1991:77), according to which the idea of female subordination in Mozambique includes areas like sexual relationships.

In recent years, however, scholarly research in this regard has established that women's choice to engage in cross-generational and transactional sex is part of an economic strategy within unequal playing fields. Arnfred (2007:143) successfully argues that in Mozambique as well as in other parts of Africa, women exercise a certain power as long as sexual eroticism is involved. This power exercised by women is easily noted within the patrilineal communities of Mozambique, which are socially active in the southern region. Although a minority, they are still very strong mainly in the urban areas.

On the other hand, he emphasises that such female power is constructed through a structured cultural process practiced within patrilineal communities. The process is wisely framed, practiced and maintained through girls' initiation rites, a practice widely practiced in the country. It is through women initiation rites that girls in Mozambique and in many other parts of Africa are taught the secret discipline of female authority over men, while appearing submissive to men in the public sphere (Jennifer, 2010:95; Radcliffe-Brown, 1987:57).

In turn the ethnologist Groes-Green (2013:103) not only agrees with Arnfred (2007:143), but goes even further. He notes that even in the heavily patriarchal communities of Mozambique, there is room for female assertiveness and keeping men subordinate by means of their erotic powers.

Groes-Green (2013:115) acknowledges that in urban areas of the southern region of Mozambique there is a social consensus of women agency opposite to patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. In urban areas, this women's agency is circumscribed in familiar spaces. Mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces and aunts work together through initiation rites to keep men under their subordination and control. Consequently, men who get married under these circumstances enter a system of dictatorship from the wife's family.

Rogério (2014:75) indicates a direct impact of this kind of female power relationship in the urban areas of southern region. The impact is related to the behaviour of men in that young men willing to marry prefer to find a female mate from outside an urban area.

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In this regard, Rogério (2014:76) agrees with Gonçalves (2010:20) in explaining that in rural areas of southern Mozambique the preliminaries to a wedding have changed in recent times. Upon considering marriage, a young man must make sure that the female mate does not come from an urban area to avoid future problems in the family. There is the perception that young men are avoiding marriage to young women from the southern region, especially urban areas. This idea Arnfred (2007:156) confirms by acknowledging female autonomy and potential power in this specific sphere of life.

All in all, there is an increasing awareness of this strategy of women dominating men from the familiar circle. Even in the northern rural matrilineal communities, the central position of women has been revealed. In a rural environment, fundamentally based on subsistence production as far as food is concerned, cooking and distribution of food have a different status. In these communities food is the female domain and the basis for female authority. Men and women are both work in the field; but at harvest time the products from the fields are stored in the granaries of the older women, the grandmothers (Arnfred, 2007:149; Chacha, 2004:141).

Being the ones in control of the granaries, it is the older women who decide what to take out, when to take out and for what purpose. Elderly women find a great source of satisfaction to live with their daughters and feed her children, since in matrilineal organisations men move into the wife's familial circle. Young married women do not get their own granaries right away. The food must be controlled, cooked and distributed by the older women. Control over food is not only power, but also an obligation to generosity (Arnfred, 2007:149; Richards, 1995:45).

Richards (1995:50) observes that in commanding the labour of their sons-in-law, the mothers-in-law consider it a privilege to feed them well. Young married man must wait outside the house of his father-in-law early every morning, ready for the work in the field, in a posture of humility and availability.

It is the researcher's opinion that, these realities cannot be ignored, but need specific attention. Their inclusion here serves two purposes, namely the rise of their awareness and the intention of raising further questions for study and research.

This section has investigated the existence of female power in both the patrilineal and matrilineal communities of Mozambique. Such power portrays women as possessing a dominant position in familial circles. In the southern urban region (patrilineal environment), women are trained through initiation rites to use their erotic power in order to exercise control over their husbands, who become less abusive and less violent. In the northern rural region (matrilineal environment), women do exercise such dominion by virtue of their natural control of food storage.

Without the prejudice of acknowledging other Christian denominations or religions, it should be kept in mind that the discussion of gender relations in the next section is the context in which the IRM functions.

2.6   GENDER RELATIONS IN THE IRM

In discussing gender relations in the IRM, the present subheading will be comprised of the following sections: firstly, an analysis on the establishment of the IRM by missionaries from the DRC; secondly, the scrutiny of the development of the IRM throughout the time and under different forms of government (colonial, communist and democratic); and an analysis on the historical background to the position of women in the IRM. This approach will focus on the absence of women in leadership positions in light of both theological and cultural justifications.

2.6.1   The establishment of the IRM

The establishment of the IRM is closely related to the missionary work of the DRC. The Dutch presence in Southern Africa and other regions in Africa became very much known as of the 1600s, due to predominantly commercial motives. Yet there was also Christian missionary commitment; born out of the Reformation and out of a successful war of independence against Spain. "The Republic of the Seven United Netherlands" soon developed as a mighty naval force, chiefly directed at trade. The force was not under the direct control of the government, but under the rule of several private trading companies. Conversely, Portuguese sea power became increasingly challenged by the Dutch (Paas, 2006:61).

For the purpose of the current research, it suffices to note that in 1652 Jan van Riebeeck and others, in the service of the United East Indies Company (or VOC from Dutch Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie), established a lasting and growing settlement in the Cape region (South Africa). This provided in their need for a refreshment station for provision with fresh food for their ships on route to East Asia. They grew fruit and vegetables and built a hospital for sick sailors. The Dutch bought fresh meat from the local population. Since the gardens and cattle of the local population were not sufficient to supply the VOC settlement and passing ships, the Dutch settlers became farmers (or *boers*, from the Dutch) and brought their religion to Africa (the Cape). The majority of the *boers* were members of the Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), originally from the main Protestant church in the Netherlands. As explained under concept clarification in Chapter 1, in English literature this church is often referred to as the DRC (Paas, 2006:66, 87).

After its implantation, the Synod of the Cape of the DRC was looking for a new field for missionary work. This missionary activity was prompted in the last half of the 1800s by the revival of the DRC

in the Western Cape. At the north of the Limpopo River, the most practical way found for mission work was to join hands with the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This church was already well established in Malawi. Chifungo (2015:147) confirms such activity in observing that the missionary work by the DRC in Malawi began in the late 1880s. By that time, the entire DRC mission was supported by the Mission Board of the Western Cape Synod and extended to the Portuguese East Africa (hereafter Mozambique) and North Rhodesia (modern Zambia).

Gouws (2005:19-30) is of the opinion that the history of the IRM starts at Mlanda (central Malawi) in the early 1900s. It was from Mlanda that South African missionaries (from the DRC) made their first contacts in central Mozambique, leading to the establishment of several mission stations there. Mlanda was (is) situated right next to the border between Malawi and Mozambique (just 2km from the border). People from both sides crossed and still cross the border freely. In fact, no immigration crossing procedures are observed for the inhabitants living close to each side of the border.

DRC missionaries based in Mlanda had been crossing the border to Mozambique, evangelising the local population, from 1902. Those missionaries were granted official permission by the Portuguese government in 1908 to start a mission station in Mozambique, in the Mphatso area of the current Angónia District, Province of Tete. On the occasion of the IRM centenary in 2008 celebrated in Vila Ulónguè, headquarters of Angónia District, 1908 was strongly emphasised and acknowledged as the year of the establishment of the IRM (IRM, 2008). Paas (2006:88) confirms Gouws' (2005:19) assertion that missionary activity in Mozambique was established by the DRC in 1908.

The permission mentioned above was a written approval issued by the General Governor of Mozambique, based in Lourenço Marques (current Maputo). It determined that the DRC mission in Mozambique was to be established in the Mphatso area. The permission was granted on the condition that the mission could not be erected or operated within 20 miles of any Roman Catholic Church or mission. It is worth mentioning that the permission granted by the Portuguese government came at the end of a long bureaucratic procedure in the context of the Roman Catholic Church being the official church operating in Mozambique (IRM, 2002).

The establishment of a mission station by the DRC in the Mphatso area was not accompanied by a continuous progress of the missionary work in the subsequent years. Its development saw several setbacks from either the Portuguese colonial regime or the Roman Catholic Church, which had several privileges as the official church of the regime. The DRC was regarded as an outsider and had to overcome a number of serious obstacles. This section has briefly explained the establishment of the IRM in the Mphatso area, in the actual District of Angónia of Tete Province, the next investigates the challenges that faced the development of the IRM.

2.6.2 The development of the IRM

There might not be any special merit in observing that the foundation of the Mphatso mission by the DRC in 1908 was a joyful fact not only for the DRC and the local population, but surely also for heaven, except that it fulfilled the very words of Jesus spoken just a few instants before his Ascension and recorded in 1 Acts 1:8 in places like Mphatso: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, end to the ends of the earth."

The missionary working strategy used by the DRC in Mozambique was much the same as the approach taken in Malawi, according to Cross (1981:207), i.e. the Gospel was spread in the native language of the recipients. By 1911 around 150 people were gathering daily at Mphatso station to be educated and to hear the Word of God. The Mphatso station led to the establishment of several outposts in the neighbouring areas, each one run by a local evangelist.

Two more mission stations were founded in 1911, namely the Mwenzi mission (northwards) and the Benga mission (southwards) and both approximately 50 miles away from the Mphatso station. The founding of these stations was mostly the result of the increasing number of new converts around Mphatso. The new converts were turning away from ancestral spirit worship and other practices contrary to the Word (Hastings, 1979:55).

From the early period of the establishment of the IRM at Mphatso area in 1908, the missionary work was progressing so well that in 1913 Mphatso was established as a congregation of the DRC. The following year (1914) the Chiputo mission (northwards) was opened, a mission area of the DRC in Mozambique located approximately 140 miles from the Mphatso congregation (IRM, 2008).

It should be mentioned that the Protestant mission was also developing well in the southern region of Mozambique, where the Protestant missionary activity was already well established by the Methodist and the Swiss Churches. In fact, Protestant missions were much more advanced than the Roman Catholic in the southern region of Mozambique. The Bible had already been translated into two of the native languages of southern Mozambique, namely Xitswa and Ronga, by Protestant missionaries. The quick development of Protestant missions in Mozambique resided in part in their inclusive linguistic approach, whereby evangelisation was done in the native language of the people. This was contrary to the policy of the Roman Catholic Church that excluded many Africans, because it was done in Portuguese (Chilundo, *et al.*, 1999:17; Nahoma, 2005:66; Saffioti, 1989:28).

The development of the IRM experienced new challenges and significant setbacks in 1915, however, mostly due to the poor relationship between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The antagonism between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism went all the way to the 16th century, both trying to counteract the other along the lines of Reformation and Counter Reformation. It was a religious struggle that replicated itself on the African mission fields. Generally speaking, Roman Catholic colonising countries favoured Roman Catholic mission to the extent that some even banned Protestant missions in the territories under their control and in turn the culture of Protestant colonising powers was more compatible with Protestant missions. Yet there were some exceptions on both sides (Paas, 2006:129).

Paas (2006:129), for example, observes that in Angola specifically and to a lesser extent in Mozambique, Protestant mission was allowed. In Congo Free State (modern day Democratic Republic of Congo), however, King Leopold of Belgium expressly prohibited non-Belgian Roman Catholic missionaries to enter the territory. Prior to 1900 French colonial rule prohibited Protestant mission in their territories. When the French turned anti-clerical at the turn of the century, the diplomatic relationship came to an end, including the subsidies to the missionary work in the colonies.

The Protestant side had more exceptions. While the Protestant churches suffered in the French, Portuguese and Belgian territories, the Protestant colonising powers did not prohibit Roman Catholic missions in their territories and the Roman Catholic missions received the same subsidies and consideration in the territories under British rule (Hastings, 1994:227).

In this regard, Paas (2006:130) records that the histories of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in Africa showed several instances of mutual mistrust and a spirit of competition, which the colonial states used to their own political benefit. Being the products of the Enlightenment and of Secularism, Christian mission was not the first priority of the colonial states of the 19th and 20th centuries, but a balance of power and a maximum of economic profit. Colonial states were conscious that Christian mission would probably disturb the balance of power and diminish the profits.

Protestant missions turned critical to their own governments, evident in their sympathy and support to African movements for independence. They also severely criticised the educational model followed by Portugal and France for the local population, which was the assimilation of language and culture to the detriment of the local people's language and culture. Protestant missions advocated a contextualised model of education and maintenance of the local culture and language. Colonial rulers began to mistrust Protestant missions and became friendlier to Roman Catholic missionary activities, because they more in line with colonial paternalism and autocracy (Gómez, 1999:42; Macagno, 2009:55).

In the researcher's own and humble opinion, it is of greater value to reach out to people in their own language and culture, rather than excluding them. In fact, mother-tongue evangelisation has a fundamental place in the engagement of the Gospel and culture. God does not speak in a sacred language after all, but in ordinary language that everyone may hear Him and realise that the Gospel is for all people: every tribe, every tongue, every nation and every language (Revelation 7:9).

However, in excluding the language and culture of the local population, the Roman Catholic could convey the message that their language and culture were superior to the language and culture of the local population. As God-given instrument, no language or culture is superior or inferior to the other.

The establishment of the DRC in 1908 was followed by quick expansion, as already explained. Up to 1914 the DRC had successfully established one congregation at Mphatso and three mission stations at Mwenzi, Benga and Chiputo. This brought significant discontentment from the side of the Roman Catholic Church, strongly allied with the Portuguese colonial regime.

In 1911 the National Institute of Missions was founded in Portugal. The main objective of the Institute was to stop the quick expansion of Protestant missions in Mozambique and in other colonial territories. This was the first of several obstacles and difficulties for Protestant missions in Mozambique. The Roman Catholic Church became somewhat arrogant and intolerant towards other denominations and Protestant missions were repressed by the Portuguese government (Pinto, 2009:33).

Taking another perspective, the intolerance and arrogance should be interpreted under the continuous antagonism between the Gospel and the forces of darkness that would oppose the expansion of Christian mission. The seed and/or birth of Christian mission seriously disturbed the rulers of the Roman Empire. When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem (Judea), Herod the Great (ruler of Judea) was furious. In order to protect his position and power, he planned to kill Jesus Christ. Based on the wise men's report of the birth of Jesus, Herod the Great sent his soldiers and killed all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were the age of Jesus, i.e. boys two years old and under (Matt. 2:16-18).

From 1911 the Portuguese colonial regime actively cooperated with the Roman Catholic Church to the detriment of Protestant missions. Due to this discriminatory policy, by 1920, the number of pupils in Catholic missions exceeded that of the pupils in the Protestant missions. Protestant families revolted against the use of Portuguese as medium of instruction in schools. Writing in their native language, Xitswa, they manifested and expressed their ancient heritage and equality with other peoples and languages (Chilundo *et al.*, 1999:20; Pinto, 2009:33).

The abovementioned antagonism between the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant churches had critical implications that undermined a consolidated development of the newly established IRM. The relationship between the IRM and the Roman Catholic Church around the Mphatso area became problematic and acute from 1915, involving legal and land conflicts. The culmination of the conflict was the closure of the Mphatso congregation and the three mission stations in Mwenzi, Benga and Chiputo by the Portuguese regime in 1922 and the evacuation of all the missionaries. This was followed by a long exile period of 50 years, from 1922 to 1972, during which no missionaries were allowed in Mozambique. The four congregations already established fell on the shoulders of the evangelists and elders (Gouws, 2005:50-56; Nahoma, 2005:33).

The discrimination of Protestant mission in Mozambique was consolidated when Portugal signed two protocols (1940 and 1941) with the Vatican. The Portuguese colonial regime and the Vatican signed the "Concordata" in 1940, which invested the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique with great authority and transferred all the responsibility of the primary education of the local population to the Roman Catholic Church. In 1941 the "Missionary Act" was signed and the Roman Catholic Church began its expansion campaign. From then onwards, other Protestant churches were persistently sidelined (Golias, 1993:36; Macagno, 2009:55).

Under the Missionary Act the training of teachers for the missions came under the Roman Catholic Church, which was another way of discriminating against Protestant missions. Since the Roman Catholic Church was the official training body, the educational system of the Protestant missions was paralysed. It was in effect a polite ban of the educational system of the Protestant missions.

Gouws (2005:58) explains that during the period of exile, mentioned above, the IRM operated underground and without missionaries or pastors. Not a single local pastor had been trained up to that point. Several attempts to reopen the mission were made and authorisation for local believers to gather at Mphatso was granted in 1970.

This was a very difficult period for the local believers who felt somehow abandoned. Progressively, members from the Mphatso (congregation), Mwenzi and Benga (missions) became integrated into the border congregations of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian of Malawi (hereafter abbreviated CCAP). The Malawian example was followed by the Reformed Church in Zambia by taking pastoral care of Mozambican believers from Chiputo mission. The integration was mainly for Holy Communion purposes, given that the existing evangelists and elders could not administer this sacrament (Gouws, 2005:59).

During this difficult period, Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP Malawi grew deeply concerned over the IRM brethren. There was of course an umbilical birth between the IRM and Nkhoma Synod of the

CCAP Malawi, given that both have been established by the DRC (Chifungo, 2015:147; Gouws, 2005:280).

Another important development within the IRM was the opening of the Shangaan ministry in southern Mozambique in 1972. The missionary work in southern Mozambique was supported by the DRC Synods of Northern, Western and Southern Transvaal. As explained before, the period of exile of the IRM started in 1922, when the missionary work was closed in the Mphatso area. The opening of the Shangaan ministry in 1972 by the DRC in the southern region marked the end of the first exilic period (of 50 years) and the beginning of the second (Pedro, 2008:15).

According to Gouws (2005:80), the second exilic period covers 20 years and ran from 1972 to 1992. This period captures the following major moments: the establishment of the Dutch missionary work in southern Mozambique, the reopening of the Mphatso area for missionary work and the IRM's registration after Mozambique independence.

The main feature of the first exilic period of 50 years (1922 to 1972) has been described as the evacuation of the missionaries. The IRM operated underground without missionaries or pastors, during this period, guided only by the elders and evangelists.

The main feature of the second exilic period of 20 years (1972 to 1992) was the continuous antagonism against the IRM: firstly, from the Roman Catholic Church allied with the Portuguese regime up to 1975; and secondly from the communist and atheist government of Frelimo from 1975 to 1992 (Gouws, 2005:51). Taking into consideration the previous two sections of the exile altogether the IRM spent 70 years in exile, from 1922 to 1992.

Back to 1972, it has been described that in the southern region the missionary work had successfully started with the Shangaan ministry. The picture was also encouraging in the central region, provided that in the same year (1972) Nkhoma Presbytery of CCAP Malawi was officially granted permission for missionary work in the Mphatso area and the closed congregation and mission stations were reopened. As a result, three more congregations of the IRM were successfully founded around Mphatso in 1973, namely Msanja, N'Zewe and Mawi. Together with the Mphatso station founded in 1913, a total of four congregations had been established (Gouws, 2005:52; Pedro, 2008:39).

Despite the second period of exile, of 1972 to 1992, there was some hope for growth and development with Mozambique's independence from the Portuguese colonial regime in 1975. The euphoria connected to the independence of the country did not last long, since the new government in Mozambique vigorously implemented Marxist-Communist ideals and this brought several constraints. The communist orientation affected the citizens of Mozambique itself and

also the country's relationship with its neighbours, especially Malawi, Rhodesia and South Africa, all of whom were anti-communist at that stage.

Upon the independence of the country, the Word of God was facing hostile ground in Mozambique. Before independence, the only denomination the Portuguese regime favoured was the Roman Catholic Church. After independence, the Word of God was confronted by an atheist regime. Soon after independence the Nkhoma Presbytery of the CCAP Malawi broke off official links with the IRM, once again leaving Christians in the Mphatso area to their own devices. This was a direct consequence of hostile political relations between Mozambique (pro-communist) and Malawi (anti-communist).

The atheist's orientation of the new State President in Mozambique, Samora Machel, although reared in a Christian environment in Gaza, became very clear. From his first presidential speech on 25 June 1975, he expected "the Church in Mozambique either to become part of the new system or to disappear" (Gouws, 2005:87).

The atheist orientation was manifested in several ways. The new government passed law nationalising all private hospitals and schools with decree number 12/75 on 24 July 1975. The main institution affected with the abovementioned decree was the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the rule of the Portuguese of almost 500 years, they had been the privileged providers of education through missionary schools. The nationalisation policy of 1975 meant that all educational facilities that belonged to the Roman Catholic Church reverted to the government. The new government also bore down heavily on all other churches' activities (Golias, 1993:9; Hastings, 1979:213).

The new government was not making matters easy for the church. Church assemblies did continue, though severely restricted. The church was not allowed to collect tithes. Christian education for citizens under 18 years was not permitted, since in Mozambique the right to propaganda was the sole privilege of the state. Religion, especially Christian doctrine, was considered counter propaganda from Western countries (Gouws, 2005:88).

In the midst of such difficult times, nine members (elders and deacons) in the Mphatso area were appointed to the leadership of the IRM. Having decided to establish a synod, this leadership group called for a synod assembly that took place on 27-29 January 1977 (Gouws, 2005:90).

Rev. D. Chikakuda (June 20, 2008) recalls that in that way the Mphatso Synod of the IRM was founded at an assembly where not a single ordained pastor was present, only elders and deacons. New leadership for the recently established synod was elected as well as two

candidates for theological training. It goes without saying that no women filled any of the leadership positions.

The two candidates for theological training were sent to Justo Mwale Theological College in Zambia in 1977. Zambia was selected on the grounds that the Chewa language was one of the college's mediums of instruction. Not fluent in English (the official language in Zambia) and from the Chewa ethnic group, the two candidates were sent there for pastoral training (IRM, 1977).

Baulene (2004:30) notes that at that time Ricatla Theological College near Maputo had already been established by the protestant Methodist Church. Since the IRM candidates selected for pastoral training were not fluent in Portuguese, they could not attend a college where the medium of instruction was (is) Portuguese.

According to Gouws (2005:143), the two candidates returned from Zambia in 1980 and they were ordained in the same year. Rev. David Chikakuda (retired in 2008) and Rev. Fanwel Kasamba (deceased in 2006) will go down in the history of the IRM as the first two ordained pastors that were trained in Zambia and also the first two pastors of the IRM.

New leadership at synodical level enabled the IRM to officially register with the Ministry of Justice in capital city of Maputo in 1977. Soon after registration, the IRM progressively expanded to Maputo in 1978 with a prayer house. The IRM was accepted as member of the CCM in 1982 (IRM, 1977).

The atheistic period in Mozambique ended in 1992 with a new constitution that led towards the signing of the General Peace Agreement between the Frelimo government and Renamo leadership. According to number 3 of article 12 of the revised Constitution (2004), "the religious confessions are free in their organization, function and in the exercise of cult; and they must conform to the laws of the State".

From 1992 onwards the IRM is firmly consolidated in which the DRC played a pivotal role, as it did at the beginning. Again it was the DRC that sent missionaries to the IRM, namely to the central, southern and northern regions. As Gouws (2005:143) observes, 1992 marked the end of 70 years of exile. Rev. Pieter Botha (a DRC missionary that worked with the IRM) asked to conclude the synod assembly in 1992 with a prayer in which he quoted Jeremiah 29:10-14, which turned out to a prophetic precursor to the end of the time of exile for the IRM.

Rev. Pieter Botha called it "the time to reconstruct the household of God that has laid in ruins for 70 years…This Synod was proof that we had entered a time of peace and blessings". In Rev. Pieter Botha's opinion God had broken the bondage of 70 years. Henceforth, God would be

leading the IRM into a new era of rebuilding and reoccupying the country for God's glory (Gouws, 2005:143).

Rev. S. Bessitala (28 April, 2016) cites Rev. Pieter Botha as having played a crucial role in the development of the IRM. He served as the liaison person between the DRC and the IRM from the late 1970s to the late 1990s. Rev. Pieter Botha passed away in 1999. And according to his will, he was buried in the Mphatso area in Vila Ulónguè, on the grounds of Hefsiba (Hefsiba, 2012:10).

The IRM's 70 years of exile speaks of the Prophet Jeremiah's account of the 70 years of exile of the Jewish people in Jeremiah 29:10, which occurred approximately 608 to 538 BC. Rather than reflecting on the punitive causes of the captivity, however, the comparison here serves the purpose of reflecting on the fruits of the return of the captives and rejoicing in the faithfulness of God. After 70 years, God told them He would have them return to their home in order to build the house of God in Jerusalem (Ez. 1:1-3).

DRC missionaries returned in 1992 and resumed the unfinished work their missionary ancestors had started very long ago. As promised in Jeremiah 29:11, God had his children (the missionaries) return to build his church (the IRM) with hope: "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and hope."

More than ever before, the IRM gained hope for the future and its growth became a reality. The rebuilding of the household of God within the IRM was consolidated by the establishment of Hefsiba – Christian Training Centre (hereafter Hefsiba) in 1994 at Vila Ulónguè, Angónia District. At the time, the IRM constituted the one synod of Mphatso. Once again, the fact that the first lecturers at Hefsiba were missionaries (Revs. Hermanus Taute and Wessel Bester) from the DRC reinforces the pivotal role of this church in Mozambique.

The support of the DRC for the establishment and development of Hefsiba was truly crucial. The Mphatso Synod moderamen visited the Mission Office in Cape Town as well as the Reformed Theological Schools in Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom in June 1994, (Taute, 2003:15).

The main objective of the visits to those schools was to establish a full theological school in the Mphatso area (Vila Ulónguè), which courses could be accredited by a theological school or University in South Africa. Taute (2003:16) observes that at that stage both the Bloemfontein and Pretoria Theological Faculties were not prepared to accredit Hefsiba courses, which did not encourage further contact.

Fortunately, Potchefstroom's Faculty of Theology, in the person of Prof. Fika van Rensburg, made work of the request. The registration of a new degree in BA Theology was requested from the

South African government. The request paved the way for accredited Bible schools to register their students at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and approval was granted in 1996 (Taute, 2003:20).

From 1996 to the present day, Hefsiba is an accredited theological school with the Potchefstroom Faculty of Theology of the North West-University (the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education). Under this accreditation, Mozambican theological graduate students from Hefsiba are pursuing their post-graduate studies either at North West-University or Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

As stated by Pedro (2008:80), since its establishment in 1994, Hefsiba has trained more than 70 evangelists and pastors from the IRM as well as from other Christian denominations in Mozambique. In one way this theological school has contributed to the growth of the IRM in particular, in that all current ordained pastors presently serving within IRM have been trained at this theological school.

Other important undertakings of the IRM in the context of its development were the founding of *Novo Synod* (New Synod) in 1996 in the southern region (the regional headquarters is Maputo) and Thumbine Synod in 2002 in the northern region (the regional headquarters is Milange). The Mphatso Synod was the first to be founded in 1977 (with regional headquarters in Vila Ulónguè) and the formation of a general synod on 24 June 2004 marked a visible unity within the three synods of the IRM (Gouws, 2005:134).

Since its formation, the General Synod of the IRM has met four times (2004, 2008, 2012 and 2017). The most recent assembly occurred from 4-7 September 2017 in Milange, regional headquarters of the Thumbine Synod. Each synod was represented by 12 delegates, a total of 36. The first three assemblies were held every four years, but it was decided that as of 2012 the general synod would meet every five years (IRM, 2017).

According to the 2017 General Synod Meeting, the IRM has been really consolidated. Presently the IRM is served by 70 pastors, distributed as follows: Mphatso Synod 27 pastors; Novo Synod 20 pastors and Thumbine Synod 23 pastors. The whole IRM counts only one retired pastor, namely Rev. David Chikakuda. Given that there is a total of 82 congregations in the IRM, it is clear that there is still a need to train more pastors. In addition, the number of Christians is growing steadily. Each Synod has several missionary zones, where the IRM evangelises regularly and once there are sufficient converts (more or less 50), the zone turns into a congregation (IRM, 2017).

In Mozambique, as in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, women constitute the majority of the population - not only in society, but also in the church. According to the National Statistics Office of Mozambique (INE, 2012:34), the last national population census that took place in 2012 indicates that the population of Mozambique has practically doubled, if compared with the time of the civil war.

The census of 2012 reported that the population numbered 24.6 million, of which more than 50% are women. A similar picture presents itself within the IRM, provided that 65% of the members are women (IRM, 2012).

Women also constitute the most active single group of church members within the IRM. Despite this, they are a much neglected group in the church in terms of leadership roles and ministry. As witnessed by the researcher, all the delegates to the 2017 General Synod (i.e. delegates from the three Synods of the IRM) were men. Women were confined to the kitchen, preparing meals and not even permitted to appear in the meeting room or in the cafeteria.

Unlike in several parts of the Reformed world, the IRM is still grappling with the debate over whether women should be allowed to be ordained as elders and deacons. The issue on women ministers has not even started yet! During the 2017 General Synod, there was a deep debate around the ordination of elders and deacons. According to article 45(1) of the IRM Constitution, "The office of elder must be occupied by individuals of the masculine sex…" and so far women are only eligible to serve as deaconesses, as expressed in article 53(1) (IRM, 2017).

The current section has discussed the establishment of the IRM by the DRC and its development under the Portuguese colonial regime, then under an authoritarian, atheist and communist regime and finally under a democratic system. The next section seeks to investigate the position of women in the IRM.

2.6.3   The historical background to the position of women in the IRM

Until 1995 the IRM was composed of only one synod, as explained earlier, namely the Mphatso Synod in the central region of the country. The name derives from the first congregation established in the IRM by the DRC, in long ago 1908. The original Christians of the IRM were from the Mphatso area and predominantly from the Chewa ethnic group, which remains the case to this day in relation to the Mphatso Synod.

Originally, the Chewa ethnic group was matrilineal and women Chewa enjoyed a certain degree of political and religious leadership. In addition, Chewa women were seen as a source of lineage and consequently regarded as vessels of life. They were responsible for the continuation of the community (Longwe, 2006:69; Phiri, 2000:23).

In the course of time, the matrilineal society was discarded in favour of a patrilineal and patriarchal type of leadership and society. Phiri (2000:36) identifies three factors that contributed to this shift. The first was the introduction of the slave trade in the 1800's, whereby men preferred to marry slave women. These slaves were more submissive to their husbands in comparison to free Chewa women, who were not subordinate.

In order to secure husbands and the survival of their marriages, Chewa women themselves began to emulate the submissiveness of slave wives. Inevitably, this meant that husbands became more powerful at the expense of their wives.

The second reason was the decline of the matrilineal system itself, because of increased foreign influence of other patriarchal societies. Groups like the Swahili from the east coast of Africa and the Nguni from South Africa settled among the Chewa, after defeating them, and the Chewa began to adopt the patriarchal marriage system of the conquerors (Clarke, 2012:45).

The third and final contributing factor was the arrival of the missionaries in the final quarter of the 19th century. As indicated earlier, the Christianity that came to Africa was in the form of a male-dominated religion. According to Phiri (2000:43), missionaries' culture had a marked impact in the churches they planted. Their own cultural views on women contributed towards maintaining a patriarchal theology and consequently, this pushed women away from leadership positions.

According to early missionaries' culture and practice, the wives of the missionaries were very much in the background. Oftentimes, the wives were mainly reduced to the role of teaching girls and women on home crafts or at most they were also involved in some charity work. Phiri (2000:23) opines that it would seem that the "mother church" itself, the DRC, has only allowed women deacons in 1982 and elders in 1990.

Longwe (2006:19) and Phiri (2000:23) agree by recalling that early missionaries sidelined the long tradition of female-led traditional cults that they found on the ground upon their arrival. In the words of Longwe (2006:19), as quoted below, the missionaries did not recognise that in the Chewa context it was often the women who took on leadership in religious matters:

"Fertility was therefore at the core of the Chewa female initiation ritual. As the guardians of the ancestral customs, the women counsellors ensured that all necessary precautions were taken and taboos were observed to ensure that nothing endangered the life of individuals and society".

It must be noted that the missionary practice was not a blind imposition on Chewa women, the missionaries were confident that their views on women were biblically legitimate. It is probable that they based their views on their understanding of Genesis and the Pauline Epistles (Phiri, 2000:49).

The combination of the abovementioned factors constitutes the background against which the Mphatso Synod, the "mother" synod of the IRM, built its leadership relations and as a result, it has always been characterised by the absence of women in leadership positions. As the IRM developed into three synods, the absence of women in leadership shown in the Mphatso Synod replicated mainly within the Thumbine Synod, since the dominant culture was matrilineal. Within the southern Novo Synod, the patriarchal influence from the Mphatso Synod was reinforced, given that the predominant culture there was already patrilineal.

From the author's own experience, it is really interesting to note that even modern missionaries have replicated the approach of early missionaries, as illustrated by the context of Hefsiba, founded by DRC missionaries in 1994. Given the founding year, it would seem logical to view the founders as modern missionaries. In this regard, elder N. Nkhoma (April 21, 2017) observes that early missionaries reached the Mphatso area on donkeys, but since the end of the civil war in 1992 modern missionaries reach(ed) the Mphatso area by car and sometimes by aircraft.

Since the inception of Hefsiba, the wives of missionaries have been involved in a teaching that has come to be known as Formação das Esposas dos Pastores (literally translated "Training of the Wives of Pastors"). Indeed, according to the school policy, all pastoral students who enrol for pastoral training are encouraged to attend the school in the company of their families, i.e. wives and children. From the researcher's own experience, the training of the wives of the pastors itself is patriarchal in nature. They are trained in separate classrooms from their husbands and even their mentors or teachers are strictly women.

The content of their curricula is totally different from that of their husbands. The separation reminds of the traditional initiation rites where women (in separate places) were taught, among other things, how to please their husbands. The researcher interprets this type of segregated teaching at Hefsiba as a way of providing women with just enough education to be good pastors' wives and for home management.

On the other hand, this teaching focused on home crafts is replicated in the church as a whole by the wives of the pastors. Once their husbands are ordained, these women replicate the exact same teaching in the new congregations where they serve. The impact of this is so strong that the wife of the pastor is in charge of the women's association. The destiny of each woman is practically in the hands of that woman, a woman who has been moulded for home crafts and probably to please her husband (pastor). The missionaries' practices, as far as education is concerned, have shown this gender division setup. Men are the breadwinners and women the home keepers, anything contrary comes up against tremendous opposition.

Van Koevering (2005:28) is quite correct in describing the missionaries' perspective as representative of a patriarchal orientation. Convinced of their biblical foundation, their views have characterised their practices over the course of the entire history of the church. Since the arrival of the missionaries in the Mphatso area, this stand of patriarchal orientation in the church has been the reality, despite the fact that the majority of members in the church are women. They are also very active in Bible study groups, prayer meetings and the church's charity work.

It is necessary to observe at this stage that the legacy brought by missionaries is directly influenced by their cultural practices, since the missionaries were not entirely dissociated from their cultures. It portrays the very unfortunate picture of the IRM seeming loss of the potential contributions to its leadership structures.

Because women's leadership is especially characterised by the embracing of diversity, it is process-oriented, focuses on the bigger picture and shares information in a participatory way with a special concern for human relationships.

Paraphrasing Montefiore (1978:15), by leaving women outside of priestly ministry and leadership, the church only deprives itself of resources for a deeply significant pastoral wisdom. The absence of women in leadership roles within the IRM has raised theological and cultural arguments; the next subheading deals with the lack of women leadership within the IRM, from a theological perspective.

2.6.4   The theological justification for the absence of women in the leadership of IRM

The previous subheading has established that originally matrilineal societies like Chewa turned patriarchal, influenced by the introduction of slavery, the arrival of other ethnic groups and the advent of Christianity. All these factors have reinforced the patriarchal orientation of the IRM throughout its establishment, development and consolidation.

The study now takes a theological perspective on the biblical foundation of the absence of women from the majority or all leadership positions in the structure of the IRM. This absence of women at different levels within the leadership structure of the IRM is easily noticeable, not least at presbytery and synod assemblies where women will only be found in the kitchen preparing food for men (Gouws, 2005:240).

Nahoma (2005:45) offers an account of the debate on whether women should be allowed to enrol at Hefsiba, the newly founded theological school of the IRM in Vila Ulónguè, on synodical level in 1996. The issue was referred for further investigation and two years later, the synod's representative on the Theological College Board tabled a report to the synod stating that female students should be admitted under some conditions.

The conditions specified that women should be admitted only where the synod concerned in the sending had some special ministry in mind for women, but not with a view towards ordination. Since its founding in 1994 to the present day, no woman has been sent for pastoral training at Hefsiba. The motivation behind the IRM leadership (entirely composed of men) against women ordination was biblically supported, with special reference to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15.

According to Ponce (1993:137), these fundamentalist interpretations of Scripture not allowing the ordination of women regard them as people of second class status, having been created after man. As such, it makes women submission to men divinely instituted, unconditional and non-negotiable. Consequently, women may not be ordained as ministers and by implication rule over men.

In the case of the IRM, the use of the Bible seems to be at the centre of the problem and especially in their understanding of specific Pauline passages. The abovementioned 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15 have been authoritatively interpreted and not sensitive to the epistles original context.

As rightly clarified by Moloney (1981:28), what must stand of at the heart of the Pauline discussion is his overarching theology of the Christian life as being a life in Christ. This is found in Galatians 3:27-28: "And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."

It seems that many pastors and specifically the leadership (men in the synod) of the IRM do not agree and refuse to follow Maloney's suggestion as the lens through which to view other Pauline utterances regarding women, always viewing it from a patriarchal perspective.

According to Ngewa (2009:51), the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 may fall into two categories: the historical or traditional view and the progressive view. Interpreters who line up with the historical view insist that women should never be ordained and serve as pastors, elders and overseers in the church. Those who adopt the progressive stance contend that women's ministry should not be limited. For the sake of this work, a close examination of both views is needed in order to form a sound opinion about what Paul is teaching.

Scholarly debate discussing the use of the imperative in 1 Timothy 2:11 (women should learn quietly and submissively) and the prohibition in 1 Timothy 2:12 (do not let women teach men or have authority over them) concludes that they are simply different ways of expressing the opinions of Paul, shaped by the Holy Spirit and bearing apostolic authority. Both have to do with the type

of female behaviour that would bring honour to God in Ephesus (Barclay, 1975:40; Ngewa, 2009:52).

In the opinion of Ngewa (2009:53), the context there was public worship and Paul's first instruction was that women were to allow overseers to teach them. It seemed that some women refused to be taught by the church leaders, claiming that they knew better. Taking this interpretation as correct, this passage informs how much authority Paul accords a teacher of the gospel. In today's language, such a person may be regarded as dictatorial, not in terms of his or her attitude to others, but in terms of the insistence on the truthfulness of what they are passing onto others.

Ngewa (2009:54) discusses that "the truth was a deposit that had been entrusted to Paul, who had passed it on to Timothy, who was to entrust it to others". The truth was to be passed on accurately, granting authority to those to whom it was entrusted. Therefore, in the context of Ephesus, women were instructed to leave such authority in the hands of men appointed as teachers over the congregation. 1 Timothy 2:12 is stating that rather than seeking to teach, women were called upon to be quiet (Lloyd-Jones, 1992:39).

Presently, the truths taught by Paul and Timothy have been graciously preserved in the New Testament records, which has become the church's authority. However, this shift in authority onto the Bible (New Testament) does not mean the disrespect of the authority of those who proclaim the Bible's message. It is interesting to note that in 1 Timothy 2:13 Paul's argument goes back to the account of creation and the fall in Genesis 2 and 3, where God created Adam before creating Eve and Eve was also the first to fall for the serpent's deception.

In the opinion of Ngewa (2009:54), the point is that Satan had deliberately set out to deceive Eve. Having listened to him, she disobeyed God (Gen. 3:13), which brought long-lasting consequences. Regarding the point that Adam was created first, Paul is not denoting men as natural leaders. It is difficult to prove that men possess God-given talent for leadership and it goes without saying that some women have more leadership qualities than some men.

Consequently, Paul may not have been talking about the ability to lead or about one sex being superior to the other, at the risk of contradicting his own words about the equality of men and women in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

In the context of Ephesus, it would seem that Paul is likely regarding men as leaders from an orderly perspective. Paul's focus is good order in family and larger groups, because that is the order God established from the beginning (Ngewa, 2009:55).

The mention of Eve being the first to sin, illustrates that what happened in Eden was also occurring in Ephesus where for some reason, women were easier prey for false teachers. The leaders

spreading false teaching in Ephesus were men. Like the serpent in Eden, they were the deceivers and many Christian women in Ephesus were among the ranks of the deceived (2 Tim. 3:6-7).

In the context of the IRM it should be clear that the universal principle on authority and leadership is that God has established a chain of command so that his people live orderly lives, this chain gives leadership to men.

In different cultural settings, the principle will be applied differently. The instruction about women not to teach is not universal, but specific to Ephesus. Many African women are good teachers and it is wrong for the IRM to apply the instructions of Paul literally.

2.6.5   The cultural justification for the absence of women in the leadership of IRM

The previous section has established that theological perspectives supported by the IRM were actually specific instructions applied in the context of the church in Ephesus and not universal principles to be applied at all times and in all cultures. It is very unfortunate that the understanding of the Bible is often clouded by cultural viewpoints. The current section investigates the absence of women in leadership roles in the IRM from a cultural perspective.

At this stage it would be good to explain that culture is far more than just music, dance, artefacts and the like. It is one's worldview, which is fundamental to one's understanding of own identity, one's origin and one's destiny. Culture comprises everything that defines and shapes people. In turning to Christ as Lord, people are turning to him everything that is in them, all that is about them and all around them that has defined and shaped them (Bediako, 2006:4; Casomo, 2010:130).

Salvation in Christ does not only encompass the souls of the people, but also their cultures at the deepest level. Saved Christians need to allow Scripture to become the interpreter of their identity in the specific concrete sense of who they are in their cultures and traditions.

The present section has investigated the cultural justification from the background of the Chewa people, since the IRM was first established among the Chewa ethnic group. According to Wakahiu, Gichure and Njageh (2015:420), the Chewa "are a Bantu people of central and southern Africa; their language is called Chichewa; internationally, they are very well known for their masks and their secret societies, called Nyau, as well as their agricultural techniques".

They are a matrilineal society in which their property and land rights are inherited through the mother. The father, the mother and their children make up a family of dependents called Mbumba, while the elder brothers of the mothers are called Nkhoswe. During the initiation rites of the Chewa people, the Nkhoswe act in the capacity of mentors to the sons of their sisters.

Phiri (2000:50) observes that according to Chewa tradition, the village was led by a headman (*Mfumu*) or a headwoman (*Mfumukazi*), a position which was inherited, like in many African cultures. Village headmen and/or headwomen were subordinate to regional chiefs (*Mwini Dziko*), who were themselves subordinate to paramount chiefs.

Under Chewa rule, subordination meant the regular payment of tribute as well as the readiness to fight in time of war. A considerable part of the Chewa ethnic group came under the dominion of Nguni, who were of Zulu or Natal/Transvaal origin. In Chewa traditional culture it is often believed that women are a source of evil, a perception derived from the biblical narratives of Eve leading Adam into sin (Chifungo, 2015:153; Galgalo, 2012:40).

Ponce (1993:140) calls this "the sexist myth", according to which women are seductive by nature and should not unnecessarily come into contact with men, lest they lead them into sin. Because of this, Chewa women and girls sit separately from men and boys in gatherings (political meetings, meal time, etc.).

This custom has been replicated in the churches, including the IRM, in the course of time. The main reason behind the separation being that women with their seductive nature may disturb men when the Word of God is preached (Chifungo, 2015:153; Mouton & Mwaniki, 2015:360).

Paraphrasing Phiri (2000:110) the situation is only exacerbated by rumours, such as those spread about a woman who started working at the synod's office and twice became involved in relationships with married ministers working with her. In this way, women are regarded as sources of sexual danger to men and heaven forbid that they should, as part of their pastoral duties, minister to men.

Phiri (2000:113) tells of cases where men objected even to the idea of a female minister accompanying a married male elder and sharing a car when going on visitations or to meetings.

In other words, the patriarchal set-up of the church still makes some men averse to the idea of female ministers. In their view, pastoral visitations may not include any women and they use Scripture to defend their viewpoint and to discriminate against women.

The current section has elaborated on the cultural justification for the absence of women in leadership roles in the IRM. The next surveys the real challenges that face the IRM in the context of the 21st century.

2.6.6   The IRM in the 21st century

The previous subheading has established that the IRM was founded and developed within the Chewa ethnic group, where traditionally women are seen as a source of evil. This idea derives

from the biblical narrative of Eve leading Adam into sin in Genesis 3, a perception that has influenced the church and led towards a patriarchal orientation that excludes women from the leadership roles of the church. The missionaries, coming from a patriarchal background, reinforced the patriarchal approach and this trend accompanied the IRM throughout its development up to the present date.

The next section provides a brief description of the 21st century, which is followed by a discussion regarding the challenges of the IRM in the 21st century.

2.6.6.1 Characterisation of the 21st century

A century, from the Latin *centu*, meaning one hundred, is a period of a 100 years in the Gregorian calendar. In English and many other languages centuries are numbered ordinally. According to the Royal Observatory Greenwich (2017:1-2), the 21st century "began on 1 January 2001, and will end on 31 December 2100; it is the first century of the third millennium; it is distinct from the time span known as 2000s, which began on 1 January 2000 and will end on 31 December 2099".

From its early age, Christianity has gone through significant challenges. In the 1st century AD, Paul had to deal with questions about marriage, resurrection and circumcision. Paul's teachings would come to change the course of history. In reading a letter written by Paul (Rom. 1:17), "it is through faith that a righteous person has life", Martin Luther's life was changed and he had to speak out against the selling of the indulgences. This resulted in the Reformation not only in the church, but in all of Western society.

The first years of the 21st century have been marked by the rise of a global economy and third world consumerism. The 21st century church has to face issues related to nuclear weapons, water crisis, global warming, global poverty, gender inequality, technology and the environment. There are churches that spend money on videos, social media and the Internet, things that were not available in the 1st century AD. According to Sterling (2015:1), Christianity is rapidly changing in a 21st century where commerce, communications and travel have become globally connected in unprecedented ways. The overall number of Christians has been relatively stable, but what has changed is the geographical global distribution of Christianity (Mwaura, 2005:45). The fundamental shifts have been from the northern to the southern hemisphere and from the Western to the Eastern world.

This is to say that the centre of gravity of world Christianity has moved southwards, a phenomenon also described as the "next Christendom". Others prefer terms such as "The Majority World". Consequently, argues Wright (2006:43), it means that much more than half of all Christian missionaries presently serving in the world are no longer white or Western.

Rather, it is the churches of the majority world that are now sending the majority of people into all kinds of cross-cultural mission work. However, it remains true that the United States still sends the highest number of missionaries to other parts of the world, with India as the second country with the highest number of cross-cultural missionaries. In this regard Van Gelder (2014:11) emphasises that every location in the global south is a mission location.

Sterling (2015:1) agrees with Wright (2006:38) in observing that at the beginning of the 20th century (by 1910), the majority of the world's Christians was found in the West or north, i.e. predominantly Europe and North America. At the beginning the 21st century (by 2010), the percentage of Christians in the West or north has fallen dramatically, not only due to the growth of Christianity elsewhere, but mainly to the secularisation of Europe. There, unfortunately, church buildings have been converted into different kinds of establishment at an alarming speed, including businesses like a pub.

The two World Wars and communism are pointed out as two of the reasons behind the decline of Christianity or secularisation of Europe. If the Wars scarred the minds of many Europeans to the extent that people wondered where God was, communism took over the role that used to belong to the church. Instead of the church, communist governments brought meals to the ill or cleaned their houses. Whatever other causes of European secularisation, the reality is undeniable (Sterling, 2015:1).

Coincidentally, the wars and communism mentioned above are also related to the recent reality in which the IRM functioned. For the purpose of the current study it is sufficient to name two consecutive wars: the war against the Portuguese colonial regime, i.e. the liberation struggle that took place from 1964 to 1974; and the 16-year civil war between the Frelimo government and Renamo that occurred from 1976 to 1992 and the subsequent communist orientation of the Frelimo government.

The next section discusses one main challenge of the IRM in the 21st century, namely the secularisation of the country where the church functions. This analysis will raise the argument for IRM to cultivate its own character and identity. Finally, the argument will focus on the need for an inclusive theological education within the IRM (both men and women), since a leadership without women only impoverishes the church.

2.6.6.2 The challenges of the IRM in the 21st century

The establishment, development and consolidation of the IRM were not peaceful, as described earlier. The church could survive and expand by being faithful to the call of God in proclaiming salvation in Christ. The IRM's history of persecution has taught that loyalty to Christ and Scripture

is a prerequisite for the church and for all individual Christians. Having overcome the persecution of the past, the IRM became consolidated by the work of the Holy Spirit. The 21st century into which the IRM has entered means new and more challenges that call for careful adjustment, worked by the Holy Spirit, through faithful leadership of both men and women, since like Christian men, Christian women are kings, prophets and priests in Christ (1 Pet. 2:9).

As an independent nation from 1975, Mozambique faces religion from a neutral perspective. According to number 2 of article 12 of the Constitution (2004), "the neutrality resides in the separation between the State and religion". As explained by Van der Walt (2007a:223), this means the exclusion of God from the daily affairs of Mozambique as a nation or secularism. This fact brings the argument to the main challenge of the IRM in the 21st century.

Secularism and "postmodern time" are similar terms, both describe a specific way and interpretation that includes only the natural or physical order of creation. In other words, both terms exclude the spiritual reality and the existence of God (Van der Walt, 2007a:223).

As Van der Walt (2007a:224) contextualises, like any religion that trusts in something, secularism trusts in man. Like any religion, secularism believes in secular science. Like any religion which has prophets or priests, secularism has secular scientists and lawyers and like any religion, secularism is composed of its own form of evangelism that is embodied in public school and tertiary education. Understood this way, secularism anywhere is a serious challenge to Christianity. It is a serious challenge for the IRM as well in that living under a secular constitution and context, the role of the IRM becomes confused.

This confusion has been real in several secular contexts. When South African became neutral by force of the constitution, from the early 1990s, "the church no longer knows what exactly its role in broader society should be" (Van der Walt, 2007b:106).

This analogy is applicable to Mozambique where the church in general and the IRM in particular run the danger of losing its identity by virtue of a secular environment. The church leadership needs to be greatly focused and totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. It is strongly believed that focus and dependence upon the Holy Spirit are the necessary ingredients for the affirmation of the IRM. This affirmation in turn will result in the cultivation of an own character, through an authentic Christian identity (Massey, 2002:45; Munroe, 2004:58).

In order to stand out from a secular environment, the IRM needs to be a relevant church by means of an own character. This will go hand in hand with a firm identity. In the context where the IRM is a Reformed church, the affirmation of its character and identity must be based on the Word of God as revealed in the Bible.

From one point of view, IRM leaders should note that the fact that the IRM belongs to the Reformed family of churches already contributes positively towards an own character and identity. As observed by Gouws (2005:249), from another perspective being Reformed, as opposed to liberal, means that the IRM has been entirely aligned with conservative values. This has over the years kept the IRM away from new and harmful liberal theological trends, as seen in the conservative values manifested among the church leaders (elders, deacons and pastors).

The conservative mind-set of the IRM leadership may well have been very useful up to the present time, but from now onwards the IRM is under a new dispensation. This means that the leaders of the IRM are now exposed to new and even stronger trends followed in the broader church and even in the Reformed world (Gouws, 2005:249).

Therefore, the IRM leadership needs to evaluate these new ideas and thoughts on the basis of Scripture as well as their own conviction and not merely on the basis of what they have studied. Knowing and acknowledging the authority of the Bible is of paramount importance for the IRM in the new dispensation and in the secular context, an authority of a God who is unalterable, universal and eternal. God is also dynamic, leading the world and the universal history to the second coming of Jesus Christ and the New Jerusalem. According to the New Bible Dictionary (1996:106), the reality of God's authority throughout the Bible can be assumed by the fact that whoever disregards this claim incurs divine judgment. This is to say that God, the royal judge, has (and will always have) the last word and so his authority is (and will always be) vindicated.

At this stage, with regard to the IRM own character, the researcher is of the opinion that the move must be towards an authentic Christian identity and not of secularism. Borrowing the words of Wright (2006:47), the move should be based on the fact that the Bible has much to offer through missional hermeneutics, as the Bible was there long before secularism was even dreamed of. An authentic Christian identity is crucial in the present secular-oriented age and for the IRM, the authentic Christian identity must take into account its transformational role in society.

If the IRM is to partake in transforming society, then it needs to appeal to Kingdom Christians. This is to say that the IRM needs first of all to be transformed inwards. Kingdom Christians within the IRM should be understood in contrast to nominal Christians, usually framed to think and act in a dualistic way. Usually, nominal Christians think and act in terms of what is sacred (the church) and what is secular (the world). Once in the church, secular Christians will think and act according to the standards of the church and outside the church, they will think and act according to mundane standards and reality.

In the opinion of Van der Walt (2007a:267), it is rightly this dualistic way of thinking and action that promotes secularism between public and private spheres of religion. As a result, it is probably

this dualistic way of thinking and acting that brings chaos on the African continent in general and in Mozambique in particular. A dualistic way of thinking and acting is a lack of integrity, of identity and even of accountability. Where there is lack of integrity, identity and accountability, there is chaos in several dimensions: political, social, economic and so on. Chaos is one of the characteristics of the African continent in general and Mozambican society in particular.

The dualistic way of thinking and acting has produced leaders who are negligent; in fact, they become like the irresponsible shepherds of Israel recorded in Ezekiel 34. In Ezekiel 34 God condemns the negligent leaders of Israel for, like many leaders in Africa and Mozambique, taking care of themselves, instead of looking after the people entrusted to their care. Lack of an authentic Christian identity produces Christians and leaders who are only too happy to benefit from the people.

The change must start within the IRM, through Kingdom Christians who are God fearing, accountable and not selfish. Paraphrasing Habtu (2006:973), the IRM must be God's agent in realising that the source of security and all the blessings associated with the covenant relationship is God himself.

Especially, there is a challenging need for the IRM to empower Christians so that they think, speak and act in a way that affects the whole church positively, including the forming of the church's theology. In this specific regard, the church's theology must consider gender equity and equality that women may become equally empowered. Equally equipping both men and women through theological education, proclaiming the Good News of the King and the Kingdom, is the best contribution the IRM could offer: first, to the IRM itself by creating an environment free of gender discrimination; and secondly, to society at large, thus transforming it.

As Oduyoye (2002:97) states, in doing so, the church will be partaking in the *missio Dei* and the church will really become a home for both men and women. In the present world of continuous expectations, the dualistic way of life should be avoided at all cost. Christians must lead the same non-discriminatory lifestyle in the church, at home, at work and elsewhere.

The Western way in which the IRM has been implanted often took the form of patriarchal hierarchy. The material service of women has always been welcomed, but not female leadership and listening to women's voices has also been very difficult. Because of this, together with an authentic Christian identity, profound reforms are needed as a special challenge.

Women's leadership within the IRM should be enabled through theological education. Mozambique in particular and Africa in general cries for inspiring and God-honouring leadership. Many institutions like families, churches, civic organisations and businesses search for people

who have the ability to guide them, the character they can trust and the wealth of ideas they pursue and share with others.

Leadership in the 21st century is often perceived in terms of the position and privileges of one who considers himself a VIP (very important person), even in the church, but only the values of shepherding and servanthood can lead to authenticity that becomes a real source of power for leaders. It was through his shepherding and servanthood that the authority of Jesus was recognised: "They demanded, by what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right to do them? (Matt. 21:23; Mark 11:28)."

The IRM needs leaders (either men or women) who by the consistent example of ethical values and principles that shape their lives, either in public or in private, show genuine care and compassion for their followers. Leaders who constantly point (in word and deed) to the model of Jesus Christ as the vision that consumes them.

2.7   SUMMARY

This chapter has analysed gender equality in church and society in three different stages in Mozambique, namely the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. Throughout this period, the position of women in Mozambique has been influenced by traditional, Christian, colonial and Islamic cultures. In the traditional cultures, it was in the northern matrilineal societies where women enjoyed privileged positions to the extent that some reached royal positions. Resources, like land, were available to women and they were not fully economically dependent on men.

The advent of Islam and Christianity (both with patriarchal orientation) reinforced the inferior position of women, either in church or in society. Women's power and spheres of influence largely disappeared under the impact of colonial and external cultures, which undermined existing economic and social complementarity between the sexes. In this regard, Phiri (1997:23) could be right in observing that the advent of Christianity and colonialism did not create a favourable environment for improvement of the position of women, having pushed women into the spheres of housekeeping and childcare. Colonial labour relations forced men to migrate and worsened the status of women, now forced to take over the tasks left by men.

Even in the post-colonial period women performed all domestic tasks, while at the same time the majority also traded and farmed. Development plans were made and executed without an adequate understanding of women's contributions to the national economy. As a result, they became marginalised in society and primarily dependent on men. This influenced the church in general and within the IRM it manifested by the lack of women in the leadership positions.

Finally, this chapter has also revealed that the establishment and development of the IRM has sidelined the involvement of women in leadership roles. This fact was supported by the theological and cultural justifications inside the IRM (cf. 2.6.4 and 2.6.5). This finding will be taken into consideration in Chapter 5, when proposing a paradigm that guides the IRM to transform the church and society.

CHAPTER 3 WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES ON GENDER INEQUALITY IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The interest in this study arose from a direct observation of the reality behind gender relationships, both in the church as well as in society at large, where women are either discriminated against or sidelined. The immediate assumption was a need to investigate such relationships. The precedent chapters have explored and discussed the situation and position of women in different stages and contexts, through a review of theoretical and historical literature. The broader purpose was to better understand how both women and men can participate in the *missio Dei*, regardless of their gender.

This chapter is divided into nine sections. The first section is an introduction which outlines the different aspects discussed in this chapter. As part of the introduction, two sub-sections deal with the significance of this empirical study as well as the practical challenges faced by women in Mozambique. The second section describes the research design followed in this study, namely: research methodology, limitations of the research and the preliminary work of the research. The third section explains the interview procedures of this empirical work and is composed of three subsections, namely the focus group discussion, face-to-face interviews and the saturation point of the interviews. The next section discusses issues related to the ethical considerations involved in the empirical study: the permission to conduct the research, the informed consent as well as the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the empirical research. The fifth section deals with the researched group, the targeted group and the accessible population. The sixth section highlights the sampling category and the seventh analyses the data. The next section provides the results of this empirical study, in the form of five different aspects, namely the perceptions on the position of women in the family regarding education and marriage; the perceptions on the position of women in the church; the perceptions on the position of women in society; the need for women's empowerment and finally women's future expectations. The last section of this chapter summarises the findings.

3.1.1 The significance of this empirical study

It may be asked why it is necessary in the first place to do an empirical investigation just on gender challenges faced only by women in church and society, since there might be plenty of challenges faced by men as well. This empirical research has given great importance to the challenges faced by women in church and society because generally speaking, the perception is that churches and society are male-orientated, thus the need to bring a dialogue with women from different sectors of life in Mozambique.

Nobody questions men's leadership in church or society or pastors in church in Mozambique, but when it comes to women, such questions are raised. Regarding the leadership of women in the church, the questions are even more frequent and intense. In addition to their status as mothers, care-givers and so called "weaker-sex", women face particular challenges that men may never encounter either in the church or society.

The increased focus on the role of women in church and society as a whole was one of the distinct features of the second half of the 20th century (Phiri, Govinden & Nadar, 2002:84). In this regard, Bernardo (2009:58) has aptly commented that "women issues particularly with regard to women's equality with men, their human dignity and their possible empowerment either in the church or society have become issues of great concern and urgency".

The fact that women´s empowerment has started to involve formerly areas restricted to men, like theological education, constitutes a significant change. The 2013 Global Survey on Theological Education (GSTE) of the World Council of Churches has stated that the number of female candidates enrolled in theological education is increasing rapidly in almost every region of the world and most precisely in Africa. According to Hendriks (2012:26), "28 African theological schools reported that they have had an increase of female enrolment between 11% and 25% in their diploma and bachelor programs; and 17 institutions reported an increase of more than 25%".

From the above description, it is clear that it is a very fluid situation. This is certainly a very positive development and the question now is how women experience gender inequality in church and society. Since a great deal can happen in the near future, it is to capture and listen to women's experiences.

It is within this context that this chapter places itself: to investigate and explore the experiences and challenges that women face in church and society in Mozambique. This includes the question whether they want to change the situation. The aim is to learn from the participants' experiences and to investigate what problems women face and experience regarding gender inequality in their daily contact either in the church or in the society.

Therefore, this empirical study addresses aspects of women's lives. As such, it is concerned with exploring human behaviour. It follows the qualitative method of research, as later explained under the methodology. It also reports on the empirical study that has been done in order to investigate women's experiences and expectations in church and society, either at the present stage or in the future. The exploration will thereby provide indicators as to how to deal with gender inequality in Mozambique so that women reach their God-given potential as servants and leaders in the church and society.

From another dimension, the recent rise in numbers of female students in theological education in Africa, described above, contrasts with the reality in Mozambique. Hendriks (2012:32) lists an average of 23% of female students in the 12 seminaries that were surveyed in Southern Africa of which one school is in Mozambique, namely Hefsiba.

Unfortunately, Mozambican reality as represented by Hefsiba Theological School was placed among the bottom of the list, with only 1 female student enrolled. This figure corresponds to less than 1% and to worsen the picture, the single female student enrolled was not from the IRM. According to the principal of the school, Rev. M. Matiquele (2016), the abovementioned female student was from the Church of Christ, since the school is interdenominational.

Hence, the statement of Phiri (1995:42) from the late 1990s still rings true today: "there is a need, therefore, to reflect on their (women) position and the barriers to their participation in theological education because the number of professional women theologians is really small."

All in all, the discussion of gender at African theological institutions is also rather a recent matter and as such, not a common issue (Amanze, 2009:126). This empirical study is of paramount importance to understand the reality of women's daily life and experiences in the different sectors where they are engaged, either formally or informally. It is expected that the information gathered in this empirical study will be relevant in formulating a paradigm towards gender equality in church and society.

As established by Chapter 2 of this thesis, Mozambican society has changed significantly since the mid-1970s, by virtue of its independence from Portugal. From 1975 to the present date, women still have to confront many obstacles. They are questioned by their church leadership, by their families and by society regarding issues related to leadership, because of their gender.

Before getting further into the research methodology, however, it would be of significant value to comprehend the practical challenges faced by women in Mozambique. In doing so, which will reveal the unprivileged position of women and their marginalised position in society.

3.1.2   Practical challenges of women in Mozambique

According to Newitt (1995:78) and Urdang (1989:152), soon after the independence of the country some changes were introduced in Mozambican law safeguarding the rights of women, such as equal labour rights, paid maternity leave of 60 days, monogamous marriage and the establishment of day-care centres.

However, one cannot take the abovementioned changes for granted in the real and daily life of women in Mozambique. Before embarking on the empirical study, this subsection gives a quick

overview on the challenges that women still face, despite many attempts by the church and society to promote their position.

In Mozambique, farming was and still is the primary way for sustaining the majority of families. Presently, agriculture makes up 81% of the country's production and is mainly done by small-plot farmers in rural and poor areas. Tending the fields in rural areas was and still is widely considered a female role (Francisco & Paulo, 2009:67; Schuetze, 2010:360).

Since Mozambique is a diverse country with many different cultural influences and a great rural/urban divide, it is therefore difficult to describe Mozambican woman. There are different kinds of women, facing different situations.

In the researcher's own experience, the rural traditional culture is still very much intact. Yet in the larger cities (Van de Kamp, 2013:357), i.e. the province and district capitals, urban culture has taken root and this has seriously affected gender positions and the alternatives for women.

And yet, "although it is now more or less accepted that women invest in professional careers, their growing self-awareness and new models of dress, relating and behaviour, are often the subject of heated debate because others consider them inappropriate for an African woman, an African marriage and an African family" (Van de Kamp, 2013:358).

As observed by Schuetze (2010:383), in rural Mozambican environment a woman grows up to become a wife and bear children by necessity and culture.

Additionally, there is often little personal choice in the matter and for the most part, women in the rural environment do not feel the need to consider other choices. Marriage and children give them a place in the community, grant them respect and the freedom to have their own household (Oduyoye, 1994:172; Schuetze, 2010:384).

As mothers, women are to be revered and placated by men (Chitlango & Balcomb, 2004:187; Oduyoye, 1995:142). Yet, as daughters and wives, they have to serve the interests of their brothers, fathers and husbands.

Both sexes deem marriage "a duty, an obligation assigned to individuals by corporate society and a rhythm of life in which everybody must take part otherwise he or she becomes a curse, a rebel and a law breaker to the society" (Bernardo, 2009:83).

As such, Chepyator-Thompson (2005:35) observes that in the rural environment marriage is the norm for both men and women. The only difference being that for men, marriage is just one face of the coin and never their sole role in society.

A customary union is often only recognised once the first (male) child is born, which makes childlessness not only an unfavourable incident, but a calamity (Bagchi, 2006:107; Kanyoro, 2001:50).

Above all, children are a status symbol for women in Mozambican society and child rearing is essentially a mother's job (Bernardo, 2009:85).

Anyway, things are continually changing in Mozambique. There no longer exists a large cultural gap between rural society and urban society in Mozambique, due to the globalisation phenomenon. The existing gap, however, is also manifested between generations: Mozambicans under 25 years and those over. Effectively the latter generation is the one born just after the civil war that ended in 1992.

The new generation has received a relatively better education and more exposure to other cultures through television, the Internet and social media. Many of the women interviewed attested to shared child-rearing responsibilities and a husband that is very much involved with the domestic duties as well.

Because children are so important, Mozambican girls mainly in rural environment are given into marriage and have children when still in their teenage years. Despite this having been outlawed by the 2004 Family Code. Only rarely does a girl dissuade her parents from giving her away in an early marriage without her consent (Francisco & Paulo, 2009:69).

The 2009 statistics of the National Health Institute show that 33% of Mozambican girls between the ages of 14 and 16 dropped out of school because they got married to older men (Instituto Nacional de Saúde, 2009:39) and the rate grows to 41% for girls between the ages of 17 and 18. By this age, an estimated 24% of girls already have 2 children and in Mozambique 45% of the population is under the age of 14 years (Osório & Macuácua, 2013:80).

This is very different for boys who tend to be older when they get married. Only 5.8% get married before turning 19 (Instituto Nacional de Saúde, 2009:44).

In rural Mozambique, secondary education remains rare in many places and since families can only afford a certain amount of school fees, if forced to make a choice it is usually the is usually the boys who continue their schooling (Johannes, 2010:62; Schuetze, 2010:365).

According to Osório and Macuácua (2013:76), early marriages and teenage pregnancies are the main factors that cause many girls to drop out of school. Once out, the majority never goes back to finish it.

Mamhute (2011:8) argues that the image of a mother in a rural area is that of a self-sacrificing being. In cases where the girls continue their studies, while pregnant or after delivering, the mother-student is likely to exhaust herself as she attends to both her studies and the parenting role.

As observed by the researcher, the educational challenges of pregnant and particularly nursing mother-students receive the lowest grades and face severe personal challenges during their schooling. Lack of resources and of family support, especially for nursing female-students, constitute the main concerns.

The above opinion is in line with the comments of Van den Berg and Mamhute (2013:307), who argue that nursing and pregnant students reported a lack of support from teaching staff, with unclear guidance as to the pregnancy policy.

In fact, some teachers who notice absent students will make negative comments, such as "is she still breastfeeding the baby?" Comments like this may be either sarcastic or unappreciated and misunderstood (Van den Berg & Mamhute, 2013:308).

Similarly, school administration staff may sometimes scold pregnant or nursing students saying that they should not have come to study if they wanted to have children. Yet, "the support of teaching and administration staff goes a long way to dispel cultural myths that discourage women to actualize their potential in avenues other than motherhood" (Van den Berg & Mamhute, 2013:308).

To worsen the picture, schools in Mozambique do not have a clear policy or support system relating to pregnant women. In many cases, women (girls) under these conditions are sent to night classes. Originally designed for adults, they are now widely attended by the youth (Unicef, 2011a:30).

In other cases, these female students (either pregnant or nursing) simply miss class and eventually drop out or graduate later.

It can be summarised that in Mozambican society at large and in the rural environment in particular women culturally grow up to become wives and mothers. Women in the rural environment do not have other choices, since marriage and children secure them a place in the community (Schuetze, 2010:384).

The abovementioned pattern is changing slowly, the new generation of women under 35 years has received a comparatively better education and is being influenced by television in this globalised world.

As a result, this generation has a degree of choice regarding the status of women. Although they only start to argue against early marriages and being wives or mothers is not their first choice (Francisco & Paulo, 2009:69).

The previous two sections have respectively discussed the significance of the current chapter as well as the practical situation of women in Mozambique. In the latter case, it is a fact that in general the position of young women is tending towards a decline, given the increase of cases of premature marriages that force them to drop school.

The next section provides an explanation of the research design followed in this empirical study. As suggested by Creswell (2009:74), it is important to do so to avoid any unintended confusion.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to collect information, an approach that requires the involvement of the researcher in the environment of the people under research, is of paramount importance. As emphasised by Flick, Von Kardorff and Steinke (2004:10) and Strauss and Corbin (1990:275), such grounded theory is a research form that uses a qualitative methodology.

This study is predominantly a qualitative inquiry with the aim to establish key guidelines towards gender equality that is integrated into the *missio Dei*, in the context of the IRM. It has focused its attention on the current perceptions of women regarding their position in church and society. In doing so, family relationships have also been targeted. Various interviewing tools were employed to ascertain how the feelings of the women have contributed towards the *missio Dei*, expressed through female emancipation.

Authors relate the qualitative research to two fundamental beliefs, namely: (1) preferably, events should be studied in their natural settings and a good and accurate understanding will always require field-based research and (2) that a researcher cannot fully comprehend events without understanding how those events are confronted, perceived and interpreted by all those people who participate in the events (Tuckman & Harper, 2012:388).

In light of the above description, it is important to substantiate such a choice before getting to the procedures of data collection and analysis.

3.2.1   Research methodology

In his book, titled *Introduction to Missiological Research*, Elliston (2011:67) points out that missiological studies can be descriptive, experimental or evaluative. He also observes that while the first and the third are extensively used in missiological research, the second is used less often.

Nevertheless, descriptive research is neither the appendage of the discipline of missiology, as Elliston (2011:67) tends to assert, nor specifically for practical theology (Smith, 2008:225). Being a scientific method that purposes the description of one or more characteristics of a group of people, as Smith (2008:226) recognises it, the descriptive approach can apply to other scientific disciplines as well, because it is about "making reality known".

Authors contend that in some instances, descriptive research requires quantitative data and in other cases it uses qualitative data (Christians, 2000:29; Elliston, 2011:67). In the present research work, the latter has been employed.

In order to make reality known, the researcher gathered data by means of semi-structured interviews (De Vos, 2011:353; Glicken, 2003:25). The interviews were individually held with a group of 35 women, which enabled the respondents to interpret and express their experiences and challenges in a free environment.

In this respect, the investigation sought to build an all-inclusive picture regarding the experiences and expectations of women in church and society (Creswell, 1994:145; Janse Van Rensburg, 2007:20). Hereinafter, respondents will be referred to as participants, by virtue of their participation in the interviews.

As part of informal interviews, male leaders from several churches were approached prior to the meetings with the prospective participants. The main aim of the informal interviews was to obtain authorisation for the meetings and was done as one of the preliminary stages described ahead.

However, this study faced specific limitations, as explained in the next section.

3.2.2   Limitations of the research

The present empirical research has covered female residents in Vila Ulónguè, Angónia District, in the central province of Tete. Notwithstanding, it became obvious that apart from women who are originally from that area (central region), the research also covered participants from the whole of Mozambique, i.e. women from the southern and northern regions. Although targeting the entire country, the research has been limited to the accessible participants found in Vila Ulónguè at the time of the empirical research, as explained ahead in 3.5.2 (Accessible population).

However, this reality was compensated for by the fact that the interviewees were representative of the entire country, because of the following aspects: some of the participants were women spending their holidays and leaves at Vila Ulónguè; other participants were originally from the southern or northern region of the country, but at the time of the research they were residing in Vila Ulónguè by force of their contractual employment, mainly as teachers and nurses; and a few

of the participants were unemployed, but were in Vila Ulónguè at the time when this research was conducted due to marital obligations. The latter refers to women whose husbands were working in Vila Ulónguè in different non-governmental organisations or public and private enterprises.

Apart from these two groups of non-permanent residents described above, there was also a third group constituted of women who moved to Vila Ulónguè with their husbands to seek employment. Considering the provenience of the interviewees as described above, it is satisfactory that the sample covered women from all over Mozambique.

3.2.3   Preliminary work of the research

The main aim of the preliminary work was to identify organisations that would provide prospective participants and to meet with the leaderships of such organisations to explain the aim and objectives of the project, to state the selection criteria for potential participants and to ask permission letters for interviews from the leadership.

As part of the first step of the preliminary work, eight prospective organisations were randomly identified in December 2015. The intention was to find organisations which could congregate large numbers of participants, which would provide a reasonable number of participants within a limited time framework as well as within a limited geographical area.

It must be added that this step was conducted in line with the criterion that these organisations hosted a considerable number of women. In this respect, women's organisations and churches was shown to meet this requirement.

After the identification process, the second step was to book an appointment with the leadership of all the organisations at which the aim and objectives of the ongoing study were explained.

It was also explained that the project would work with adult women, in line with Mozambican legislation that stipulates 18 years as adulthood (Fry & Utui, 1999:18).

Another criterion selection explained to the leadership was the fact that the project was going to work with women who understood the official language of the Republic of Mozambique, namely Portuguese.

It is believed that this criterion has not reduced the sampling group of the interviewees, since use of Portuguese is common in Mozambique as official language of the country and medium of instruction at schools.

The use of this language criterion intended to emphasise two aspects: the first was to lend the project an official environment with the use of the official language of the country. According to

the researcher's own experience, projects conducted in the official language ensure the full cooperation of the people, including the organisations and the government and so the English questionnaires were translated into Portuguese.

The second aspect related to the use of Portuguese was to avoid the need for interpreters in the interview process. Otherwise, several interpreters would have been needed for the several native languages spoken by different participants in the project.

No less important, it is believed that the absence of interpreters in interviews serves to create an intimate environment and also guarantees a free flux of information.

A third party (interpreter) would bring several constraints, like the impression of a lack of confidentiality in the interviews and/or lack of anonymity. The present study went to great pains to observe these two aspects, as explained ahead under ethical considerations.

During the explanatory meeting with the leadership, it was also clarified that the participants in the study would not have financial benefit or any other form of compensation. Furthermore, it was clarified that the participation was voluntary.

At the end of the explanatory meeting with the leadership, written letters drafted by the researcher seeking permission to involve participants from their organisations were submitted. In this specific matter, it was agreed that written answers were expected and would be issued soon after an analysis at each organisation.

The leadership of each organisation was actually supposed to discuss the matter at a specific forum, where the prospective participants from each organisation were to be consulted and carefully informed before any letter of permission was issued.

Two weeks later, i.e. on 28 December 2015, four permission letters were issued by four organisations, as detailed in the next section. Four other organisations cordially declined their involvement on grounds of internal organisational aspects, thus making it impossible for their members to attend the interviews. The members who could not participate in the project due to abovementioned factors, were mostly of the same background and situation and their non-participation could not by any means hamper the results of this research.

3.3   INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

The aim of this topic is to clarify how the interviews were conducted. It demonstrates that prior to the interviews process, fieldwork was conducted, with the following four objectives:

To identify the organisations from where the participants would come

To obtain permission letters from such organisations

To meet potential participants

To clarify the selection criteria, namely age and schooling

As far as the interview process is concerned, according to Holstein and Gubrium (2004:140), it is a means used to acquire specific empirical data about the social world of people by asking them questions concerning their daily lifestyle, experiences and expectations.

An interview constitutes the most common and powerful tool used to gain understanding of human affairs, although the spoken word frequently has the possibility of ambiguity (Fontana & Frey, 2000:645; Miller & Glassner, 2004:45). The member-checking procedure done by the researcher was exactly intended to reduce such ambiguity to the minimum degree or percentage.

Furlong, Lovelace and Lovelace (2000:536) and Mason (2003:225) explain that the style of interviews used in qualitative research is described as conversational, flexible and fluid, rather than purely interrogative.

Since the goal of the interview is to understand the participant, Fontana and Frey (2000:655) note the need to establish rapport with the participant.

Furthermore, Hermanns (2005:5) and Schurink (2001:302) emphasise the importance of the first minutes of the interview, calling upon the interviewer's responsibility to establish a polite and open environment for conversation in order to eliminate the possible participant's fear to lay bare aspects of his or her personal and intimate life.

The interviewer is called to demonstrate sympathy and support, to listen carefully and not to make precipitated or prejudicial conclusions (Gerson & Horowitz, 2003:209).

The interview guidelines must be well and orderly formulated so as to guide the participant in a limited period of time through a maze of life experiences. Richards (2005:38) rightly observes that well-formulated questions will quickly open the possibility to uncover the unexpected as well as to discover the unknown.

The interviewer is reminded to warm up the participant by means of firstly asking short and easily understandable questions. Moreover, the interviewer is reminded not to ask leading questions that will guide the participant's response (Hermanns, 2005:213; Schurink, 2001:310).

An empirical study requires some preparation before it takes off. It is important that preliminary work is conducted by the researcher in order to know the people who will be involved and to inform them of the study process, which is described in the following section.

3.3.1   Focus-group discussion

Creswell (1994:86) indicates that in qualitative research, interviews offer a number of options: face-to face, telephone (researcher interviews by phone) and group discussion (researcher interviews or confronts participants gathered in a group).

This is also recommended by Gerson and Horowitz (2003:204) and Furlong *et al.* (2000:532) who observe that a qualitative research project usually includes a reasonable number of participants, which should be chosen carefully in order to illuminate the different issues to be investigated.

A carefully chosen sample of participants will ensure that larger trends will be reflected in the study (Gerson & Horowitz, 2003:205).

This study collected data through focus groups with prospective participants in the form of conferences conducted by the researcher, through informal interviews (meetings) with church and organisations leaders.

As part of focus-group discussion, a meeting with women interested to debate gender issues was arranged for 15 January 2016, at three o'clock p.m., at Planalto Full Primary School in Vila Ulónguè, Angónia District of the central province of Tete.

Since 78 women gathered at the abovementioned school, it was necessary to hold two different sessions since one classroom could not accommodate more than 50 seated people.

All participants showed great cooperation throughout the entire process. The prospective participants gathered at the abovementioned place at their own free will and came at their own cost.

Previous experience has shown that people (especially women) are willing to cooperate in different projects that take place in their communities. Whenever they are summoned, they attend the meetings and they participate and contribute according to the objectives of each meeting or project.

The main aim of this meeting was to identify potential candidates for the interviews in order to inform them of the objectives of the interviews, to set up the dates and the place of the interviews as well as to discuss the selection criterion.

Therefore, the potential candidates were informed at this meeting that the main objective of the interview was to understand their actual perception regarding gender equality in church and society and their future expectations; that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw at any time in the process in case of any constraint and without any penalty.

As part of the selection criteria, two matters were explained: firstly, that only literate women would be eligible and that "literate" should be understood as those who had completed their primary level of educations, i.e. grade 7. Although holding this lower grade, some women there indicated that they could read and write (i.e. understand) Portuguese.

The age limit criterion of 18 years was also carefully explained. This was laid down in order to comply with Mozambican legislation that defines adulthood as individuals over the age of 18 years. In other words, the age limitation served to comply with basic national and international standards, specifically to avoid working with children.

After the abovementioned explanation, the participants meeting the criteria were listed in alphabetical order.

In the end, 52 out of 78 women were selected as potential candidates for the interviews. This means that 26 women were ruled out by the selection criteria. This fact was kindly explained to them and they were kindly thanked for their availability to take part in the study.

The 52 potential candidates remained on the spot and provided their cell phone contact numbers, in order to facilitate future communication prior to the interviews.

Finally, the 52 potential participants were informed of the following:

The interviews would be held on working days of the month of February up to the month of March 2016, by working days it must be understood from Monday to Friday.

Each day was going to take in 5 interviewees.

Two days prior to the interview, five candidates would be informed of the interviews.

The interview venue was classroom number three of Planalto Full Primary School, Vila Ulónguè, Tete Province, Republic of Mozambique.

The scheduled time for the interviews was three o'clock p.m. This interview time was reached by everyone's consensus, since the morning hours did not suit the participants.

Participation in the interview was voluntary; withdrawal during the process was free and without any penalty.

There was no financial benefit or any other form of compensation by virtue of participation in the interview.

At this stage, it must be clarified that the meeting venue (Planalto Full Primary School) is located at the centre of Vila Ulónguè and easily reachable by all the participants. No transport cost would be incurred to reach the place.

As discussed earlier, although living in Vila Ulónguè, the interviewees came from different regions of Mozambique. The fact that the study was conducted in this central region probably justifies the majority of women coming from this region. There were, however, also interviewees from the two other regions of the country, namely the southern and the northern regions.

After all, at Vila Ulónguè there is not yet a chain of internal public transport (buses) for the residents. Within the municipality, people either walk or use private transport to move from one point to the next. Recently, an interesting internal taxi service has been introduced in town, rather than using touring cars or minibuses. This service makes use of bicycles and motorbikes. All the participants lived at a reasonable distance from the school, no further than 3 km.

3.3.2   Face-to-face interviews

As from the 8th up to the 16th February 2016 (except 13th and 14th February being Saturday and Sunday respectively), five women were interviewed per day at classroom number 3 of Planalto Full Primary School. Each woman was interviewed for 25 to 35 minutes and at this stage, 17 women were left out by virtue of the saturation point.

Before each interview, two documents were handed over to the participants: the consent letter (Annexure B) and the questionnaire in Portuguese (Annexure D). The English version of the questionnaire is attached as Annexure C (this annexure in English was not distributed to the participants, given they do not use this language in Mozambique, and produced for the sake of the readers of the thesis). Each participant was asked to read these two documents carefully and explained that they were free to ask any question for clarification.

At the final stage of each interview, the researcher systematically produced a synopsis of the information revealed by each participant in the questionnaire and interview. The synopses of all the participants served as the basis for the interpretation of the data. A copy of each participant's synopsis was submitted to them so that they may verify that it conformed to what they intended to convey. As described ahead, this is the feedback procedure.

After the verification of the synopsis by each participant, two amendments were made as indicated by each participant to conform to their perception. Conclusions were derived from these

interpretations in order to propose guidelines regarding the call of the IRM towards its missional and transformational calling inside and outside the church.

3.3.3 Saturation stage

It should be explained that initially 78 women were identified as potential participants for the interviews. After the application of age and literacy criteria, as described earlier, 52 women were selected as potential candidates for the interviews.

Over the course of the interview process, however, the saturation point for the empirical project was reached with 35 participants. This means that after 35 women were interviewed, the researcher came to the conclusion that no further and/or relevant information was being added by the interviewees.

On this ground, 17 potential participants were no longer covered by this empirical research. They were kindly summoned for the purpose of explaining to them about the saturation point, they were warmly thanked and sent home.

As a result, this empirical research has gathered information from 35 participants. At the final phase of each interview, a synopsis was produced and a verification procedure was conducted in order to make sure that the conclusion of the researcher was in line with the thoughts conveyed by each participant. For confidentiality sake, the checking procedure was conducted only with individuals.

A total of 35 synopses, representing the 35 participants, are therefore reported in detail in the present chapter.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although this research did not touch on sensitive issues, a set of ethical observations accompanied the entire research process. The phrase "ethical considerations" is related to the ethical rules and principles that direct the interaction and relationship between the researcher and the participants of the research. It has to do with aspects like voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

Moreover, in this research project the participants were informed well in advance regarding the nature, purpose and method of the work, so that they may make an informed decision regarding their involvement in the investigation.

Thus, it was explained that the research would serve academic purposes and participation was voluntary. No incentives or financial payments would be given to the participants. It was clearly

put to the participants that they remained anonymous and were made aware that privacy and confidentiality would be upheld throughout the entire process.

It was also disclosed and explained that the collected data would not be made available to any third parties, either individuals or entities. Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any stage, without an implication or penalty (Furlong *et al.*, 2000:29; Mouton, 2006:244; Silverman, 2001:201).

3.4.1   Permission to conduct the empirical research

This empirical research was conducted in accordance with the relevant rules stipulated by the ethical code of the North-West University.

As far as the abovementioned institution is concerned, written permission was granted by the Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IREC). This permission is included as Annexure A, namely the Ethical Certificate number NWU-00305-16-A6.

Apart from the university's permission, written approval to conduct the present research was also given by the following religious institutions: the Community in the Harvest Church, the Miracle of God Church in Mozambique, the Reformed Church in Mozambique and the fourth organisation granting approval was from the civil society Organisation of the Mozambican Woman.

Finally, written permission was also sought from each woman participating in the study in the form of a signed consent letter confirming her participation in the study. The consent letter of this research constitutes Annexure B.

Strydom (2001:27) observes that informed consent places participants at an advantage in the sense that it guarantees them full knowledge of the process well in advance. From another perspective and at the same time, it constitutes a guarantee of their full and free cooperation. It makes the process free of possible tension, aggression or feelings of insecurity in the participants.

3.4.2   Informed consent

Before the research, the purpose of the current research was clearly explained to the participants. The letter of consent was translated into Portuguese and thoroughly explained to them. This was done prior to the commencement of the interviews. The participants were also informed regarding their confidentiality, protection and safety in terms of their participation in the study.

3.4.3 Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

This research project has strictly respected the privacy of the participants. In fact, personal information related to names and recorded data was kept confidential and anonymous (De Vos *et al.*, 2011:119).

3.5 RESEARCH GROUP

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:41), the research population represents a set of individuals, cases or objects which makes the setting of the research.

A research group generally consists of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. For example, Christian youth make a population. Even within a population, one may find a specific segment of the population that has some different characteristics from the rest of the population. For example, Protestant youth will differ from Catholic youth, yet both are Christian youth.

There are also two kinds of population in a specific research project, concretely the target population (e.g. Christian youth) and the accessible population (e.g. Protestant youth). Because it is impossible to research the whole of the target population, it is recommended that researchers identify and define an accessible population. The next two sections elaborate on the target and accessible groups of the present research work.

3.5.1 Targeted group

The target population is "the population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a given work" (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003:41; Tuckman & Harper, 2012:267).

In the present research, women in church and society (in Mozambique) were the target population. Interestingly, there are more than 12 million women in Mozambique (INE, 2015:14) and it is this group of more than 12 million women that makes up the targeted population.

Due to obvious limitations in terms of finance and time, it has not been the intention of either the researcher or of this work to conduct interviews with all of them. The group of more than 12 million women is not necessarily the accessible population. The results of the research will be applied to the church and the society at large, mostly because all women participating in the study will be coming from either a church or a societal organisation in Mozambique.

Conversely, as earlier described in detail, the women who participated in the study were from all three regions of the country and did not necessarily permanently reside in Vila Ulónguè.

3.5.2 Accessed population

As explained above, the accessible population derives from the target population based on clear definition and criteria. A rationale is needed in defining and identifying the accessible population for a specific research work.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:42), this rationale cannot be only based on some theory, previous studies or professional experience. It must also be founded on the research context and reality as well as the researcher's experience.

Women residing in Vila Ulónguè, Angónia District in the central province of Tete were the accessible population and served as a basis for this research. It must be said that the socio-economic characteristics of Vila Ulónguè resemble the main features of the country. Like the majority of the country, Vila Ulónguè is a quasi-urban area, i.e. in some aspects tending to urban characteristics and in other tending to rural characteristics.

First of all Vila Ulónguè is, as from 1998, one of the 53 municipalities of Mozambique and falls into the same administrative category as all other municipalities including Maputo, Beira and Nampula, the main three cities of the country (Gender Links, 2011:35) as indicated below.

In terms of tertiary education, Vila Ulónguè is presently home to three universities recognized by the government of Mozambique: Hefsiba-Instituto Superior Cristão (as from 2004), Unizambeze (as from 2010) and Universidade Pedagógica (as from 2012). The town is also home to a teacher's training college since 1999 (MINED, 2014:8).

Still in the field of education, special mention goes to Ulónguè Secondary (public school) and Colégio Angónia (private school). Lifidzi Secondary School and Fonte Boa Secondary School are also in the vicinity of Vila Ulónguè and there are 8 primary schools in this municipality.

The urban characteristic of the municipality is also displayed by its different financial institutions, namely BCI (Investments and Commercial Bank), BIM (Mozambique International Bank), Banco Terra, Opportunity Bank and Angónia Micro Finances. Non-governmental organisations like Save the Children, World Vision and Mozambique Leaf Tobacco, just to mention a few, have attracted professionals from across the country. All these characteristics make Vila Ulónguè a growing and a promising town.

During a public rally on Labour Day, annually celebrated nationwide on the 1 May, the Mayor of Ulónguè Municipality, Armando Júlio, recognised the growing urban characteristic of Vila Ulónguè in following terms:

"Because of the recently established public and private enterprise, presently Ulónguè Municipality is hosting professionals not only from the three regions of our country; but even professionals from other neighbouring countries like Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa; they are professionals working different enterprises here in Vila Ulónguè, namely 'Ulónguè Agricultural Research Institute', 'Ulónguè Maize Mill Plant', 'Ulónguè Silos', 'Ulónguè Centre for Technology Transfer' and 'Mozambique Leaf Tobacco Company'; you are all most welcome and feel at home!" (Media Fax, 2017).

Apart from the abovementioned socio-economic infrastructure that attracts labour force from across the country, there are several basic (public and private) institutions that render different services. These include hospitals (public and private), restaurants, hotels, transport, shops and markets.

Ulónguè's rural characteristic cannot be denied either. As in the rest of the country, farming is the primary way of sustenance of families. In fact, agriculture makes up 81% of the country's production and is mainly done by small-plot farmers in rural areas (Francisco & Paulo, 2009:67; Schuetze, 2010:360).

At this stage, the researcher strongly believes that the insights derived from the quasi-urban characteristic of Vila Ulónguè described above, in addition to the reason described in the previous section on the target population, are likely to be representative of the landscape of women's experiences and expectations in church and society at large.

In the actual process of the research work, even the accessible population described in the present section could not be endlessly interviewed. At some stage this accessible population was also limited by the criterion of the saturation point, as elaborated below.

3.6   SAMPLING

The current research work focused on groups of women from three faith groups and one women's organisation, reflected by the following alphabetical order:

 "Igreja da Comunhão na Colheita", in this study translated as "Community in the Harvest Church"

"Igreja Milagre de Deus em Moçambique", in this study translated as "Miracle of God Church in Mozambique"

"Igreja Reformada em Moçambique"; in this study translated as the "Reformed Church in Mozambique"

"Organização da Mulher Moçambicana", in this study translated as "Organization of the Mozambican Woman", abbreviated OMM from its Portuguese name

3.6.1 Sample size

The present investigation has covered a total number of 35 (thirty five) participants. They went through a process of interviews, which terminated upon reaching saturation stage. All the interviews were written up by hand for comparison of relevant aspects of the study.

The age range of the participants was between 20 (twenty) and 65 (sixty five) years. Regarding the marital status of the participants: 25 (twenty five) were married women, including 4 (four) wives of pastors; while 7 (seven) were unmarried, i.e. either single or not yet married; and 3 (three) were divorced.

Finally, this sampling size reflects the employment status of the participants and the study has shown the following variations:

16 (sixteen) were employed women. This includes 7 (seven) primary school teachers, 3 (three) politicians, 3 (three) nurses, 1 (one) policewoman, 1 (one) medical doctor and 1 (one) social worker.

10 (ten) were unemployed women. The study has shown that the main factor of unemployment is early marriage, which resulted in their dropping out of school.

5 (five) were women part of either big or small business, whereby big business is defined as enterprises that involve employment of other people and small business constitutes single vendors.

2 (two) were secondary school students and 2 (two) were university students.

3.7 DATA

The first chapter of this research has briefly sketched out the information concerning the research plan. The aim here serves to go further regarding the data collection.

As mentioned earlier, authors suggest that in a qualitative investigation the researcher spends considerable time in the natural setting gathering information. Data were collected through documentary research, semi-structured questions and some informal interviews and focus-group discussion.

The data-collection approaches of semi-structured questions and interviews, Tuckman and Harper (2012:387) observe, permit the researcher to "measure what someone knows", i.e.

knowledge information; "what someone likes and dislikes", i.e. values and preferences; and "what someone thinks", i.e. attitudes and beliefs.

3.7.1 Collecting of qualitative data

According to Holliday (2002:69), qualitative data is an account regarding of takes place within a particular social setting or among certain people and this may consist of records of observations or interactions which are complex and contextualised.

Frequently, the data is the result of an interview or a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. Some interviews provide more useful information than others. Usually, the meaning of an interview is only fully understood after comparing it with other interviews (Gerson & Horowitz, 2003:211).

As far as an interview recorded on tape, it is the interviewer's decision whether to transcribe it in full or not. At least a partial transcription is recommendable (Furlong *et al.*, 2000:540; Richards, 2005:52).

In the present study, the interviews have not been recorded on tape. Rather, the answers of the interviews have been compiled and written in the form of synopses.

All the answers from the interviews and their respective meaning and interpretation were checked with the interviewees. This was done in order to ensure the most accuracy and transparency of their information as well as to guarantee that the researcher understood and recorded the information passed on by the interviewees correctly.

3.7.2 The writing of qualitative data

Interview, interpretation and presentation of the results are the main three stages of a qualitative research. The results can be presented in various ways, but the narrative alternative of following the chronological sequence is usually the preferred method (Bude, 2005:342).

According to Silverman (2001:233), the report is typified in three sections. The first is the methodology that is usually part of the introduction. This includes the explanation of what the researcher intends to do, how the data will be gathered and how it will be analysed. The second section consists of the contents of the data and the respective interpretation. The last is the conclusion, which summarises what came to the fore during the study. This empirical research has followed this order.

3.7.3   The analysis of data

Richards (2005:163) recommends that after the collection of the data, it is very important to visualise the full picture in order to make sense of the data. The series of individual interviews have to be transformed into logical and coherent conclusions.

Although time consuming, data analysis is a crucial step of the process. The interviewer will have to go through an intensive and repeated reading of the material so as to identify recurrent topics and to note similarities and differences. Therefore, the topics are selected and used to formulate a number of analytical categories (Smith, 2005:254).

As suggested by Gerson and Horowitz (2003:271) and Smith (2005:256), the establishment of the analytical categories from the collected data is followed by applying the analytical categories to the material in order to systemise the data.

The systemising process consists of breaking the data into pieces and rearranging it into the analytical categories so as to facilitate comparison and interpretation. It is of paramount importance to continually keep track of the context of the data, otherwise the researcher will fail to understand the data in full (Maxwell, 1998:89).

3.7.4   The validity and accuracy of data

Validity relates to the credibility and trustworthiness of the instruments, data and findings in a given research. Furthermore, while "validity of data" is applied for quantitative research, "accuracy of findings" is used for qualitative studies (Creswell, 1994:321).

In the current study, authenticity and credibility of data were ensured by semi-structured questions where the participants provided details of their names, age, marital status and profession or occupation. During the gathering of the focus group, the participants were asked to comment on the semi-structured questions. The general impression was that they were clear and understandable.

In addition, as recommended by Kreftine (1999:215), trustworthiness in this work was guaranteed by the following aspects:

The researcher lives in the community where the interviews took place.

The researcher wrote field notes for reflection and was in regular communication with the promoter concerning the findings. The researcher has also used other sources, such as interviews and personal observations.

3.7.5   The possibility of feedback

Taking the interpretation of the researcher back to the participants is an opportunity that this qualitative method of research has provided. This procedure is very useful and can be instrumental in validating the interpretation. It is a process called member checking, often taking place at the end of the process (Hopf, 2004:205; Richards, 2005:21).

So far, this has demonstrated to be an efficient process of ruling out the possibility that the researcher has misinterpreted the meaning of what was said by the participants.

It is also a good opportunity for the participants to review the interpretation and to check whether they agree or not with the researcher's conclusions (Maxwell, 1998:94; Richards, 2005:140).

The present empirical research has followed the above described feedback procedure. As stated in the previous paragraphs, the member checking procedure process has taken place at the end of each interview. Each participant has been confronted with the conclusions of the researcher.

In doing so, the researcher intended to rule out all misinterpretations. In fact, five participants raised the need to rewrite the conclusion, in order to meet what was their real intention or meaning in the interviews. This was actually done and a second final synopsis for each of the abovementioned five participants was produced.

This opportunity showed that feedback procedure is of paramount importance, provided it guarantees that the conclusions attained by the researcher are in line with the ideas and thoughts conveyed by the participants.

3.8   THE RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

As already mentioned, data collection was chiefly done through focus-group discussion, semi-structured questionnaires and interviews that took place at Planalto Full Primary School, at Vila Ulónguè, the headquarters of the District of Angónia, in the central Province of Tete.

The results obtained from this empirical study are explored below. In some instances, verbatim quotes from transcribed interviews with the participants are provided in order to substantiate a given aspect and literature control serves the purpose of validating the findings (Botma *et al.*, 2010:197).

The interviews held with the participants brought the following five topics to the attention of this study:

3.8.1 Topic one: Perceptions on the inferior position of women in the family

It is very interesting to note that in the interviews this topic was not under direct scrutiny as such; but the issue of the position of women in the family relationships always came to the fore and it proved to be of great concern for the participants.

Whenever asked regarding their position either in the church or in society, the participants responded by making some comparisons with the family or when asked at the end of the interview if there was any expected topic not covered, some participants would mention and comment on family relationships. The majority of the participants are of the opinion that at family level, the rights of young women are sometimes neglected. Especially in rural areas, some families force girls into premature marriages.

Due to this reality, the researcher came to the conclusion that the participants regard family relationships as of primary interest, followed by their position in the church and finally in society.

The relevance of the first part of the fifth commandment, "Honour your father and mother…" (Ex. 20:12), resides in the first place in the mutual obligations between parents and children. In second place, but not less relevant, it emphasises the central importance of family in human society. Respecting all men and women as being created in God's image is reflected in the unity of husband and wife and the sacred bond of sex within marriage. This is a moral value on which society should build solid foundations towards gender equality.

A very interesting insight was gained here from this perspective. The feelings and perceptions of the participants in this regard are very in line with the *missio Dei* creational order that reflects how God first created man and woman to live in family relationships, as recorded in Genesis 2:21-24 below:

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man; and Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man; therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

3.8.1.1 Education

It is a general perception that families have a tendency to send boys to school for formal education to the detriment of girls. According to the interviewed, this discrimination starts at an early age when parents approach children at household level and specific tasks are assigned to girls. As a

result, girls are educated and supposed to remain at the house most of the day, if not the whole day and the boys can leave the house at will. The girls perform several tasks such as cleaning the yard, cooking meals and washing the kitchen utensils. In contrast, boys spend their time playing with others in area.

3.8.1.2 Marriage

It has been established that some families tend to sacrifice the education of girls by forcing them into early marriages or even worse, they are forced into polygamous marriages against their will. In fact, it has been pointed out that in most cases early marriages have a female face, involving an older man and a teenager girl, as earlier discussed in Chapter 2 of this research (2.4.2 The position of women in the colonial era. 2.5.2 The position of women in the context of one party state. 2.5.3 The position of women in the context of a democratic system).

Curiously, when early marriages involve both partners, i.e. a boy and a girl, they are promptly discouraged by family members on grounds that they are not mature enough and there are no registered cases of early marriages where the woman is older than the man.

In addition, the interviewed observed that it is within family relationships that polygamous marriages are arranged and accepted. Usually, they are de facto unions, meaning that they are not registered.

From another perspective, either de facto or registered marriages, married women who were interviewed manifested the constant fear of loss of property upon divorce or death of their spouses. This practice is very common, as confirmed by divorced women part of the study.

All interviewed women were unanimous in stating that the absence of adequate sanctions favours an environment of impunity. This fact leads to the prevalence of family relationships and practices that discriminate against women.

In addition, they have observed that the abovementioned aspects contribute towards the phenomenon of feminisation of poverty. The empowerment of women is of paramount importance to overcome this state of affairs, empowerment that should address family relationships, focused on equity and equality of gender.

Family relationships lead to a kind of lack of protection for women. When individuals' need to belong to a particular group goes unfulfilled, they develop a feeling of isolation, alienation and loneliness. In fact, belonging brings more fulfilment or meaningfulness to relationships, thus attenuating the feeling of loneliness (Mellor *et al.*, 2008:213:217).

In some instances, early marriages involving girls may be initiated as a result of lack of both guidance and protection in the family. It can be regarded as lack of guidance if they have not been illuminated enough to the disadvantage of getting married early. It can be regarded as lack of protection if their family did not act against such intentions, either from the man or from the girl. In both cases, however, early marriages do not address the needs of the girls, namely loneliness and a sense of belonging.

Regarding gender relationships in the family, this empirical research revealed that the majority of women showed a total ignorance of the Family Code (2004) approved by Mozambican Parliament as an instrument that protects and promotes women's rights. This was done to overcome frequent violation of women's rights in the past. The family thus needs to be taken into consideration as a valid instrument to empower women for the mid- and immediate short term, as discussed in Chapter 5 ahead (cf. 5.4.1).

Finally, it cannot be denied that some families protect the rights of young girls and prevent premature marriages, sending the girls to school at all costs. These cases are always related to the parents having attained a considerable degree of education and thus the tendency to educate their children as well.

3.8.2   Topic two: Perceptions on the inferior position of women in the church

The study has established the existence of a positive environment in respect to the position of women in the church. The following quote best describes this perception:

"Regarding the position of women in the church, it is positive that openly there is no any discrimination against women; male and female in the church are displayed as equals before the Lord; it is quite different from the family circle, where discrimination is open…"

The participants showed appreciation for the security provided to them by the church in general, whereas the overall teaching of the church regards man and woman equal before God.

In fact the majority of the interviewees have observed that the environment in the church is somewhat better than in the family. It is their perception that the church never openly discriminates against women. The fact that the church is an open place contributes towards this openness and the strict public scrutiny of church relationships plays a significant role as to its openness.

It is more than likely that because of the patriarchal orientation of society, many participants are conformed to the fact that ministry and church leadership are under male control and does not create a negative impression for women.

It is within the church where women feel truly free either spiritually or materially. They regard each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. In church they experience the equity and equality of gender.

In term of the *missio Dei* perspective, it is of paramount importance to acknowledge the teaching of the church in this regard. Genesis 2:21-24, quoted above, already calls towards the oneness of male and female and Galatians 3:28 also emphasises this *missio Dei* commandment in the New Testament:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus".

However, they do feel that the church should do more than it has been doing so far. Objectively, they have pointed out that women are significantly under-represented in decision-making positions of the church.

The main issue raised by the participants is that women in the church have no access to decision-making positions. On the other hand, they recognise an effort by the church not to oppress women. It is, however, women's perception that the church as doing very little regarding leadership of women in the church.

This lack of female representation in leadership positions corresponds by the absence of women in pastoral ministry in the majority of the churches. They would like to experience gender equity and equality in pastoral ministry in future.

3.8.3   Topic three: Perceptions on the inferior position of women in society

"The society protects our rights; the Family Code is one explicit instance of the protection of our rights by the society; the problem however is the lack of punishment of those who trespass the law."

The above quote best explains the perceptions of all the participants regarding their position in society. They have pointed out that the existence and practice of women's rights is relatively more palpable in society rather than in the church, due to specific and real instruments that have been placed there.

The participants have indicated that although a recent approach, the position of women in society is also manifested by some public policies that encourage the female gender towards emancipation, like the efforts to promote gender equality through several workshops sponsored by different stakeholders in the process.

Females representatives in decision-making positions is another visible fact pointed out by the participants. There are women at the different levels of decision-making, namely municipality seats, provincial and national parliaments.

According to the participants, it is the business sector that at present still remains closed to the participation of women. This is contrary to the fact that 80% of Mozambican economy is informal and women are the major labour force in the economy of Mozambique (David, 2017:11).

In general, women regard the topic on the position of women in society as more liberal and open than both in the family and in the church. Women perceive society as more tolerant and conscious of their rights.

3.8.4   Topic four: The need for women's empowerment

It is interesting to note that in this study many participants have heard of "women's empowerment" as a theoretical concept, but in practice they do not feel any real meaning or impact in their lives and reflected by the following quote:

"It is common to hear the phrase women empowerment in the media; it is a new concept; they should explain more about it and what is the real meaning; at this stage this looks like a theoretic concept and not a practical concept; maybe it is an academic phrase and the majority of us do not understand its real meaning."

It was also very interesting to note that some participants do not even understand why and how women should be empowered.

The few (approximately 10%) who understand "women empowerment" define it as a tool of equipping women towards their full participation in human relationships. They are of the opinion that women empowerment should be promoted by the women's organisations. Very few pointed out that this task should be conducted by society and not one indicated that women themselves should initiate their empowerment movement.

The interviewed pointed out that there is a gap between the intention and the practice. The majority doesn't feel the real implication of female empowerment in their daily lives. The majority deem women's empowerment as relatively theoretical concept, which needs to be translated into practice. For instance, they are of the opinion that the workshops on women financial empowerment should match with practical supply of funds so that they may implement what they learn at the workshops.

It would seem that female empowerment by the church could be really influential and productive, if taken into account that the number of women who attend church far exceeds that of men. Again, it is a golden opportunity for the IRM to play a fundamental role in this regard.

3.8.5   Topic five: Women's future expectations – anxiety

All the interviewees highlighted the need to change their present status in the family, church and society circles towards a better environment and where gender equality is based on merit.

In addition, the participants commented on the fact that in future they would like to experience a church and society free of discrimination against women. In this regard, they have clearly indicated that any change should start at family level.

"A future free of discrimination is the ideal either in church or society; everyone must do his/her part so that future generations live better lives than present generations in terms of gender equality; it is a challenge that must start from the family level and manifests in the church; and the churches must live what they preach; in doing so, they will easily influence the society; because society is made up of people from different churches."

Once again, this places the IRM in a privileged position in terms of performing its calling towards gender equality in church and society, where the issue of women's empowerment will form the basis for future hope, for a better society without discrimination and for a society where gender equality is a reality.

So far, the IRM has focused on the soteriological aspects of the gospel, i.e. regarding people's salvation from sin (now) and in heaven (after death). There is a challenge to focus on the present in terms of people's equality as well. As rightly asserted by Bosch (1991:510), the *missio Dei* (mission of God) should look at all social aspects through the missionary involvement of the church in addressing injustices and inequalities. Bosch (1991:10) considers *missio Dei* as "God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate".

3.9   SUMMARY

The current chapter has set out the empirical investigation of female participants, with the purpose of exploring their current experiences and expectations in church and society. The 35 participants that took part in the study represented a saturation point in which the researcher was confident that the findings already obtained were representative of the experiences and expectations of the majority of women in the society.

The experiences of the interviewed women correspond with the outcome of the literature review. Generally speaking, women still face social disadvantages like premature marriages that are often permitted in family relationships. As a result, they are forced to drop out of school at an early age. In this particular regard, when consulted by the researcher, many women showed total ignorance of the Family Code approved by the Mozambican parliament in 2004.

Women are still confronted with the reality in church that the office of pastor remains the male's dominion. The empirical study showed that women in Mozambique clearly find themselves working and living among men who are discriminating, critical and even oppressive towards them. This makes the *missio Dei* lens of practical relevance in order to empower women so that they may exercise their rights to the full, in accordance with the missiological plan of God.

The findings made the following aspects quite clear:

•   In family circles, many women are still discriminated and oppressed by their female counterparts.

•   In the church, women have conformed to the existing male dominance in the leadership role. It is, however, the place where they feel more protected. They also feel more welcomed by the church in general and by women's associations in particular.

•   In society, women feel that the protection of their rights is still at a theoretical level and that much still needs to be done in practice.

•   In general, women are very concerned over their future. They all hope for a better future with equal opportunities, especially in church and society, regardless of gender.

CHAPTER 4 THE GUIDANCE OF THE *MISSIO DEI* TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has established women's experiences on gender inequality in church and society, by means of the empirical research. The aim of the current chapter is to research the guidance of the *missio Dei* towards gender equality in church and society.

This chapter is laid out in the following sequence: The first section is an introduction that sums up the previous chapter and gives a general overview of the themes discussed herein. The second section explores the *missio Dei* concept and the third analyses the implications brought by the "fall" on gender equality. Section four deals with the *imago Dei* concept and reflects the intrinsic dignity of women (and men) from the beginning of their existence. The fifth section explores the absence of women in the early Jewish priesthood. The sixth and the seventh sections highlight the Scriptural guidance for gender equality in society as well as the Scriptural guidance for gender equality in the family and church respectively. The final section summarises the findings of the chapter.

4.2 THE *MISSIO DEI* CONCEPT

The term *missio Dei* is a phrase that comes from the Latin language, which can be literally translated as "the mission of God" or also the "sending of God". In the words of Wright (2006:63), the term means "the Father's sending of the Son and their sending of the Holy Spirit; from this perspective, all human mission was understood as a participation in and extension of that divine sending".

Within a missiological context, the term is traced back to the Trinitarian theology of Saint Augustine. He described God's work as restoring the fallen world with the full participation of His church. Progressively, the German missiologist Karl Hartenstein incorporated it into his synthesis of Karl Barth's lecture on the doctrine of the Trinity, with regard to mission, presented in 1928 (Coleson & Schwanz, 2011:56; Wright, 2006:62-63). Both Barth and Hartenstein were trying to clarify that mission is a movement that initiated within the Trinitarian aspect of God over history, to which the only human alternate response was obedience to Him.

Kemper (2014:4-5) agrees with Wright (2006:63) in observing that in ecumenical circles the term *missio Dei* became common after the International Missionary Council held in Willingen, Germany in 1952. There *missio Dei* definitely came to be understood as the work of the triune God. Mission was now viewed in terms of Barth's missiological theology of God at work and the church in a

participatory role. In light of the above it could easily come to the conclusion that it was in the 20th century that the phrase *missio Dei* gained greater relevance. It became established as the foundation of God's missionary programme on earth.

Conversely, it could be further clarified that mission belongs to God and the church is given the privilege to join in the process of recreation. This is to say that the God of creation in Genesis remains involved in his on-going acts of re-creating, through the active participation of the church. This is in sharp contrast to deism that denies God's continuous interaction with the affairs of his creation (Dulles, 2005:28; Wainwright, 1991:124-125).

Theron (2015:65) observes that the involvement of woman in the *missio Dei* manifested itself soon after God created humanity. In Genesis 2 God is mandating both woman and man to rule over creation (Gen. 2:28) and by implication, the concept of *missio Dei* means that both genders have the right to exercise the mission given by God, to rule over God's creation. In Genesis 2 the woman is the helper (ezer), a word that is applied to God 16 out of the 21 times it appears in the Old Testament. It, therefore, does not suggest a weak or inferior person and often symbolises a military ally (1 Sam. 7:12). Israel needed God, their strongest ally. Likewise, in order to obey God's command to fill the earth and reign over creation, man needed and needs woman (Gen. 1:28).

Therefore, if the dignity of women and men comes from God, it is by implication not alienable. In other words, the dignity of women and men is not the result of human desire, but rather the will of God, the Creator.

As rightly argued by Koopman (2015:20) "non-alienability of the dignity of women and men means that its recognition does not depend upon the recognition of dignity by the frail and unreliable hearts, minds and actions of humans". It is dependent upon the living God.

As a result, humans calling towards acknowledging and affirming, actualizing and fulfilling dignity must be a testimony not only in word but also in deed of the dignifying decisions and actions of the *missio Dei* (Koopman, 2015:21).

In light of the above, Koopman (2015:21) agrees with Webster (2007:24) by indicating that human dignity derives from the *missio Dei*, given that human beings were created in the image of God.

As such, Webster (2007:24) asserts that as God's image women and men "share in God's freedom, authority, creativity, rationality, responsibility as well as in God's desire and capability towards living life in communion".

The investigation into the biblical foundation for equality between women and men should bear in mind that where the dignity, freedom and justice of women are betrayed, there the dignity, freedom and justice of all have been betrayed (Koopman, 2015:30).

From a biblical perspective and according to Wright (2006:44), all true justice, liberation and human dignity flow from God revealed as YHWH in the Old Testament and incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth in the New Testament.

However, according to Wright (2006:65), the *missio Dei* concept cannot be closed without touching other dimensions of mission revealed in the Bible. These other dimensions of mission, an extension of the *missio Dei*, do not exclude women. The first dimension is found in the introductory chapters, where the Bible depicts humanity with a mission on the earth that was purposefully prepared for them. Their mission was to fill the planet, subdue it and to rule over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:28).

This authority that humanity received from God was moderated by other mandates as recorded in Gen. 2:15, "to work…and take care of" the Garden. The human mission was therefore to care and keep creation. The purpose of human existence on earth is directly related to the creative objective of God himself. This theological understanding gives rise to human ecological responsibility, economic activity that involves work, productivity, exchange and trade and the entire cultural mandate.

It is interesting to note that from this perspective, participation of women in the *missio Dei* is inclusive and not exclusive of women, as patriarchal culture alleges that men alone take part in the *missio Dei*. As part of their mission work, men and women were given equal responsibility to manage all of God's creation. Their chief service was to glorify God. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve lived in close relationship between themselves and with God. The fall into sin, as described in Genesis 3-11, has given rise to the tendency of labelling Eve in derogatory terms and to make her the sole culprit to blame for the first sin. In addition, it is erroneously thought that only Eve lost the image of God and gender equality. This is the reason West (2005:52) is of the opinion that scholars should not select Bible texts that marginalise women, like Genesis 3:2-6. As the head of the family, Adam was expected to take responsibility of his household when his spouse invited him to eat the fruit. Furthermore, God gave Adam knowledge of all the trees in the garden and thus Romans 5:17 portrays sin has having entered the world through Adam.

Progressively, after human the sin and rebellion recorded in Genesis 3-11, the Bible depicts Israel with a mission. The call of Abraham in Genesis 12 is the starting point of this mission. In God's wider purpose, the election of Israel was not the rejection of other nations. As recorded in Genesis 12:3b, it was the instrument to embrace and bless the rest of the nations (Wright, 2006:65). The

mission of Israel was to bear witness to the identity of the true and living God, YHWH, towards the nations and their gods.

Regarding gender roles in Israel, Biblical narratives reflect how women were marginalised in the patriarchal community and yet God provided laws that protected women. For instance in Exodus 22:16-17, whoever committed rape against women had to suffer the consequences of their actions. As a demonstration of God's love and his inclusive nature, women served as prophetesses and judges. The examples of Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21), Deborah (Judg. 4:4-9) and Huldah (2 Kgs. 22:15-18) are but three instances where women participated in the *missio Dei* even in the patriarchal context of Israel.

Then, into the midst of Israel came Jesus with a mission. The involvement of women in this dimension of mission was crucial. Pennington (1998:54) aptly observes that it was through a woman (Mary) that God became man. She was visited by the angel Gabriel, who told her the good news of the Immaculate Conception (Luke 1:28) and in accepting God's mission by conceiving the Divine Son through the Holy Spirit, she contributed in God's plan of salvation. Wright (2006:65) observes that Jesus did not just arrive into the midst of Israel, Jesus himself had a clear conviction that He had been sent by the Father. The voice of his Father at his baptism matched with the identity of the Servant Figure in Isaiah (42:1) and that of the Davidic messianic king in Psalms (2:7).

Intense scholarly debate has occurred regarding Jesus' sense of mission, i.e. the aims, motivation and self-understanding behind his recorded words and actions. It is, however clear that Jesus put into action an agenda based on the will of his Father. In his obedience to the Father, even to death, the mission of God knew its climax (Wright, 2006:66). In fact, Jesus Christ states that as the Father is still at work, so is He (John 5:17). Wolters (2001:13) maintains that God continuously sustains all He has created by preserving, directing and ruling his world.

Jesus' mission was inclusive. Christ liberated women in order to participate in the *missio Dei*, such as the Samaritan woman who proclaimed the Messiah to others after an encounter with the Lord (John 4:20-30). Jesus empowered a woman who had anointed his feet with oil (Luke 7:36-50). Women witnessed when Jesus was resurrected from the dead (John 20:14-18). Jesus allowed sinful women to come to him, to repent and to receive a new life, never discriminating against them. In doing so, Christ changed the culture and discriminatory customs set against women and the status of women improved (Moore, 1993:210; Osiek & Pouya, 2009:104).

Finally, regarding mission in its broader sense, Wright (2006:66) introduces the concept of church with a mission and according to Luke 24:45-47, this mission is entrusted to the church by Jesus.

The disciples, having lived with Jesus, knew his true identity, as a crucified and risen Messiah. Their mission was to bear witness of that fact to the ends of the earth.

The mission of the church flows from the identity of God and Christ and in biblical terms, mission is the committed participation of God's people (men and women) in the purposes of God towards the redemption of the whole creation. Likewise, in this last dimension of mission, some women stood out. Before the institutionalisation of the church, Paul mentions several women who had participated in the *missio Dei* as his fellow workers: Tryphena and Tryphosa (Rom. 16:6, 12), Euodia and Syntyche (Phil. 4:2-3).

However, it cannot be denied that in the Old Testament the priesthood was entirely comprised of men (Clark, 1983:40). The next section endeavours to understand the influence of the predominantly patriarchal culture of the Bible on the exclusion of women in leadership positions.

4.3 THE FALL AND ITS IMPLICATION ON GENDER EQUALITY

The findings of the previous chapter are clear in the sense that patriarchy and other forms of marginalisation of women are but some effects of the fall. In this work the term fall serves to express the rebellion against God by the first humans (Adam and Eve) and the painful consequences that followed, as described in Genesis 3:1-24 (Du Plessis, 1960:23).

Genesis 3:1-7 says

"The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God had said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die

And the serpent said unto the woman, surely you shall not die; for God knows that win the day you shall eat of the fruit, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil

And when the woman saw that the fruit was good, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit and ate; and also gave her husband and also ate

And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked."

This record describes how mankind's first parents (Adam and Eve), when tempted by the serpent, disobeyed God's express command by eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The essence of all sin is displayed in this first sin, man's rebellion against the authority of God as well as man's pride in his self-adequacy (Gen. 3:4: "…you will be like God…"). Soon after the disobedience, one finds two immediate consequences of sin.

The first is mankind's awareness of guilt and separation from God (Gen. 4:8: "…they hid themselves from God…"). The second was the statement as a result of sin, decreed by God, involving the whole of the created order of which man is the crown. This is essential so as to understand that God never cursed women to be inferior to men and the whole created order, including the ground, was cursed because of man's disobedience.

In revolting against the purpose of his being, which was to live and act entirely to the glory of his sovereign and beneficent Creator and to fulfil his will, mankind became a perverted creature, (Manoel, 2012:45).

In other words, mankind ceased to be truly mankind in that his true humanity consists in conformity to the image of God in which he was created.

Williams, Machen and Murray (1996:365) observe:

"The image of God is manifested in man's original capacity for communion with his Creator: in his enjoyment of exclusively of what is good; in his rationality which makes it possible for him alone of all creatures to hear and respond to the Word of God; in his knowledge of the truth and in the freedom which that knowledge ensures; and in government, as the head of God's creation, in obedience to the mandate to have dominion over every living thing and to subdue the earth."

Kasali (2006:1354) agrees with Williams *et al.* (1996:365) and advances that the psychological and ethical effects of the fall are graphically described by Paul in Romans 1:18-23, namely godlessness and wickedness.

Therefore, Paul argues that godlessness is vertical and is manifested by a lack of reverence for God and rebellion against God, while wickedness is horizontal and is manifested by injustice towards others. When one abandons God, one's relationships with other people are also broken.

Thus in Romans 8:18 Paul explains that the truth is that God exists and he requires people to worship and obey him, but wickedness leads people to suppress the truth whenever it reveals their sinfulness.

In addition, Paul asserts that creation is powerful evidence of the existence of God. While natural revelation does not provide the same depth of knowledge of God that special revelation provides through the Scriptures, it still demonstrates God's eternal power and divine nature (Rom. 1:19-20).

Such evidence has been available to be seen and understood by all since the creation of the world. Those who choose to ignore this evidence have no excuse and it's not the result of ignorance, but of a deliberate attempt to dishonour God.

Furthermore, Romans 8:22 postulates that since the fall account in Genesis 3 until today, the whole of "creation has been groaning as in the pain of childbirth".

In their survey of the dignity of women and men, Gillham and Matsveru (2015:39) identify three areas where sin has distorted the image of God in humanity: the distortion of humanity's rule, the distortion of harmonious relationships and the distortion of the expression of God's character.

Regarding the rule of humanity, it is well observed that integral to the fall it is the serpent that takes the lead when it deceives the woman who in turn leads the man into sin.

As a consequence of the fall humanity's rule over creation was distorted and frustrated by an introduced enmity between the serpent's and woman's descendants (Gen. 3:15) and the resistance of the earth to produce crops for food (Gen. 3:17-19), the latter a very sad reality in sub-Saharan Africa.

In the second area, it is observed that at the fall the harmony of relationships is also distorted, given that the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation is subjected to the frustrations. Man and woman are not spared and their competing desires for selfish rule (Gen. 3:16).

As suggested by Foh (1975:379), the statement in Genesis 3:16 "Your desire will be your husband and he will rule over you" is the beginning of the battle of the sexes.

Still in the province of relationships, the covering with fig leaves and hiding in the garden (Gen. 3:7-10) are evidence that shame, guilt and fear are introduced into the relationship between humanity and God as well as between man and woman.

Finally, the expression of God's character is distorted. The doctrine of total depravity means that every area of life has been affected by sin. Although the image of God is distorted in mankind, it was not totally wiped out and for this reason Gillham and Matsveru (2015:40) aptly observe that because of being made in the image of God, even the most depraved person on earth still reflects God's image to some extent.

Since the fall, and as a result of it, the world has been witnessing a display of good and evil, either in conformity of God's character or in the distortion of that character.

Gillham and Matsveru (2015:40) take the instance of the relationship between Hannah and Elkanah (1 Sam. 1:8, 23) to illustrate the conformity of God's character.

Elkanah loved and respected his wife despite of her inability to have children: "Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?" This was not according to the culture of their time, given that men usually expected their wives to bear children for them.

On the other hand, Genesis 19:30-38 illustrates the distortion of God's character when the daughters of Lot sexually abused their father, taking turns in raping him.

Brown (2000:126) understands the book of Judges to be a summary the moral decadence of people as a result of the fall. Even in Israel, the nation of God, sin had risen to unprecedented levels.

Gender-based violence became the order of the day at that time. The Levite's concubine was raped, murdered and chopped into pieces (Judg. 20:5-6) and the Israelites forcefully handed over young women to the Benjamites: "Then the men of Benjamin returned to their homes, and the 400 women of Jabesh-gilead who had been spared were given them as wives...In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed to be right in their own eyes" (Judg. 21:14, 25).

These sad biblical narratives of the Old Testament clearly show that the fall had left women and men in such depraved condition that they desperately needed salvation.

As rightly pointed out by Yen (2003:3), each person either male or female, has at the same time both an infinite equality of worth before God and one another as well as a total equality of need for Jesus as a Saviour.

The implications of the fall described in Genesis 3 are presently portrayed as a global problem. While there are local and social factors at work, this is an evil which crosses all cultural, ethnic and socio-economic boundaries (Gillham, 2012:93).

In many parts of the world, including Mozambique, the problem of discrimination, subjugation and oppression of women and other gender injustices are but one expression of the fall of humanity described above.

It is interesting to note that after the fall, according to Genesis 3:16, one of the consequences of the sin would be Adam ruling over Eve:

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shall bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

One of the implications of sin can be clearly depicted from Genesis 3:16, manifested by Adam (man) ruling over Eve (woman). This is only disclosed at this stage as a direct consequence of sin. Previously, God had graciously placed her in a beautiful Garden and given her a husband.

The depravity of human kind, as the consequence of sin, has developed into some patriarchal systems where of course women are oppressed. In extreme instances, such patriarchal systems take advantage of this isolated passage (verse 17 "he shall rule over thee") to perpetuate and justify their actions.

The fall and the outright rejection of God's commands have resulted in broken relationships between God and people, between people and one another and between people and the environment. Wars and interethnic clashes and natural disasters are all the result of the three-way broken relationships between God, people and the environment. Humankind went from responsible dominion as God's stewards over creation (Gen. 1:25-31) to irresponsible domination and abuse of God's world. All of God's beautiful creation has been broken and damaged.

4.4 THE *IMAGO DEI* AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In discussing the biblical dignity of women and men, Genesis 1 discloses the important truth that they were created to be like God (*imago Dei*). "Then God said, let us make human beings in our image, to be like us" (Gen 1:26a). The concept of *imago Dei* means that like God men and women were to reflect the Creator in several abilities: to think, to create, to love, to rule over creation and to live holy lives (Gen. 1:26-28), giving them value and dignity (Moritz, 2013:441). Genesis 1 makes no distinction and both received the command to tend God's creation. They were created as a unit and equal.

Kostenberger (2004:76) observes the fact according to which the likeness (*imago Dei*) of humanity with their Creator invests women and men with inestimable worth, significance and dignity. Therefore, dignity of women and men, and by implication their equality towards church and society, is rooted in creation. This is to say that both women and men are intrinsically worthy of deep respect.

This understanding is also suggested by Bosman (2010:565) who states that the *imago Dei* "establishes a niche for humankind in creation that impacts on how humans understand themselves and interact with one another, as well as with the rest of creation".

Consequently, the concept *imago Dei* in humanity points out that women and men have a God-ordained dignity, they are worthy of respect by themselves as well as by others. Because men and women are in the image of God, respect is therefore not only for God's creatures, but for the Creator as well.

It must also be noted that human dignity resides in the loving act of God who has summoned women and men into being. In this sense Koopman (2015:20) argues that the dignity, worth, honour and glory of humanity also rest in their calling to live in fellowship and communion with God.

Consequently, Christians in particular should understand that the dignity of women and men is transcendental to any human policies, charters or conventions and does not fall under human convention. On the contrary, it is God's sovereign design (Gillham & Matsveru, 2015:35).

At this stage, as rightly observed by the British Barth scholar and Methodist theologian Webster (2007:22), it can be said that the equality of women and men in dignity are based in the Trinitarian rationale for dignity that matches an illuminating way.

In addition to what has been said regarding the *imago Dei*, it is also interesting to note that after the creation God assigned both of them with a task in order to participate in the mission of God (*missio Dei*), as discussed below.

4.5   WOMEN'S ABSENCE IN THE EARLY PRIESTHOOD

The first priest recorded in the Bible is Melchizedek, prior to the Israelites, the king of Salem (Gen. 14:18-20). Like Jesus, Melchizedek was not born into the priesthood, but was appointed by God to be high priest and king: "Jesus became a priest, not by meeting the physical requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed...you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:16-17).

According to Exodus 28:1-3, Aaron and his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar became the first priests after the return of the Israelites from exile in Egypt. They were spiritual leaders appointed by God to serve in the tabernacle and temple. According to Schrieber (1988:215), from then onwards male dominance in the priesthood succession persisted in the church.

The absence of women in the priesthood, however, did not prevent women in participating in the *missio Dei*. Aaron may have been male, but in Exodus 19:6 surely God intended all people to be priests: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." This passage (Ex. 19:6) did not discriminate against any gender. Likewise, the church of Christ did not exclude women from priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9 calls all people who believe in Christ, regardless of their gender, "a royal

priesthood, a holy nation God's possession". This sentiment is also supported by Revelation 1:5-6: "He who loves us...has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father – to him be glory and power forever and ever!"

Finally, however, the fact that Jesus (the High Priest) was born male also created engendered language. Jesus' gender caused and still may cause a great deal of confusion towards patriarchy and yet as the High Priest, Jesus came to offer himself as a sacrifice for all and forever through an oath: "this new system was established with a solemn oath. Aaron's descendants became priests without such an oath, but there was an oath regarding Jesus. For God said to him The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: you are a priest forever" (Heb. 7:20-21).

It seems that marginalisation of women restarted the moment the church turned into an institution, contrary to the fact that they had participated in the *missio Dei* during New Testament times (Makgaka, 2017:38). George (2011:7-14) agrees with this sentiment and has identified the following councils during the 4th and 5th centuries that prohibited women from occupying leadership positions in the church:

4.5.1   The Council of Laodicea (352 AD)

This meeting was limited to 60 rulings that prohibited certain foods during the Lent, condemned astrology, recommended the correct Sabbath Day and prohibited women from presiding over the ecclesia. From then onwards, it became illegal for women to be in the priesthood (Teixeira, 2015:56).

4.5.2   Fourth Synod of Carthage (398 AD)

The early church gathered in homes owned by women. The growth of the church however attracted male intellectuals who, using the Greco Roman culture and influence, limited women in several duties such as "woman may not teach men in an assembly...women may not baptize" (Teixeira, 2015:59).

4.5.3   Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Canon 15 of the Council stated that women aged less than 40 years were no longer allowed to be ordained as a deaconess, before the council could examine them. The Council restricted the ordination of deaconesses, while between 325 and 450 AD women were ordained as bishops and priests in Asia Minor (Teixeira, 2015:65).

All in all, every believer is a child of God and Jesus freed women from oppression and slavery. "There is no longer Jew or Greek, nor slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for you

are all one in Christ" (Gal. 3:27-28). Though God selected male apostles to serve him, women also serve(d) Him and proclaim(ed) His message.

The next section seeks to bring forth Scriptural guidance for gender equality in society by discussing the status of noble women who honoured their families and their society (Prov. 31:10-31): Ruth and Abigail.

4.6   SCRIPTURAL GUIDANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY

Scripture reflects God's hand in women's participation in church and society. He seeks to restore them and at times steer the course of events in their lives to fulfil his purpose. The next section seeks to ascertain if God has a vision for women to be honoured in society.

The stories of women are oftentimes described in larger pictures, without a detailed portrait of them. For instance, all that is known of the wife of Lot is in Genesis 19:26: "But Lot's wife looked back as she was following behind him, and she turned into a pillar of salt." Yet, many women stand out in the Bible. It tells of women who had a powerful influence on their children, their husbands and their nations. Many women have participated in the *missio Dei* through their strength, courage, leadership and vision (Goheen, 2005:230).

Like in today's society, the influence of women in the Bible can be positive, like Esther or Mary, or destructive, like Jezebel. The next section explores the *missio Dei* provision for the honour and the dignity of women in society.

4.6.1   Proverbs 31:10-31

This passage describes a noble woman who had moved beyond her expected influence, in the sense that a wife's typical responsibilities would be the household. Yet, in this passage, the woman purchased land and planted vineyards (Prov. 31:16). She wove clothing for selling in the marketplace (Prov. 31:24). Even though she performed activities that might be associated with men, she was not condemned. Rather, she brought her husband honour in society (Prov. 31:23) and the wealth she generated brought her husband respect and influence.

Here is a good example of a woman who did not misuse her power or position, but looked after the poor and the needy around her (Prov. 31:20). With her character, she truly personified the "fear of Lord" and the wisdom of the book of Proverbs.

Since in the ancient world women were typically seen as having limited capabilities, this passage expresses a different message. This beautiful poem reminds Israel that God's vision was for women to have great honour and dignity and more precious than rubies and any other treasure (Prov. 31:10).

From this perspective, the paradigm seeks to encourage women to maximise their gifts and talents in the service of the family, the church, the community and society. If related to Genesis 1 and 2, it is possible as long as men participate towards empowerment of women: in the family, in the church, in society.

The contribution of the following section is purely to exalt women who under the weight of sin and or of patriarchal systems have been able to influence a household, a community and universal history.

4.6.2   Ruth

During the time when the judges ruled in Israel, Elimelech, a man from Bethlehem in Judah, left his homeland and went to live in the country of Moab. There was a severe famine and so he took his wife, Naomi, and his two sons, Mahlon and Kilion. Sometime after settling in Moab, Elimelech died. Mahlon and Kilion had married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah respectively. In the course of time, Mahlon and Kilion also died (Ruth 1:1-5; 4:10).

As a widow, Naomi went back home after learning that the Lord had blessed Bethlehem with abundant crops. Ruth, strongly influenced by Naomi, followed her mother-in-law to Bethlehem. The latter was a patriarchy dominated society, i.e. a society not friendly to women, as observed by Phiri (2006:319). Ruth would probably have faced several constraints during that time: as a Moabite woman, she was a foreigner in the land (Bethlehem) and in the second place, she was a widow; and finally, she was childless.

According to Phiri (2006:320), biblical scholars advance two reasons why the story of Ruth was recorded in the Bible. It is interesting to note that both reasons have to do with the dignity of women: The first argues that the story of Ruth was written in order to raise the image and dignity of women in a patriarchal society. The second argues that the story was written to show the kindness of God towards any person who trusts in God, regardless of gender, race or religious background.

Ruth and Naomi suddenly found themselves alone, helpless and with no way to change their circumstances. In that culture, without husband, they had almost no options. Ruth did not, however, surrender to despair and hopelessness.

Instead, upon her arrival in Bethlehem, Ruth immediately went to work looking for ways to provide for her and her mother-in-law Naomi. The solution Ruth found involved hard manual labour. She worked all day, picking up the scraps left over after the harvesters had done their work (Ruth 1:7).

Ruth chose to do something even when she did not see where God was leading. The golden lesson that Ruth teaches is that no one (either man or woman) was to regard himself or herself as a victim of circumstances.

Especially in the present age, where women have many more options than Ruth did, every woman should be challenged to have hope and look a way to overcome the discrimination and obstacles laid down by the patriarchal system. The narrative about Ruth shows that participation in the *missio Dei* is by obeying the Word of God and not necessarily by physical birth. Adoption into God's family or people comes through faith and shows itself by love of others. Ruth was a foreigner who became part of an Israelite family through her marriage. As a result of her loyalty and dedication to this family, she became the great grandmother of King David and through him, part of the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5).

Every woman is encouraged to follow God's lead and reject being defined by patriarchal circumstances. By following God's lead and by taking action, Ruth opened the way and changed the circumstances. She found fulfilment and joy according to God's plan.

When Ruth decided to follow Naomi and her God, it showed her integrity and impressed the people of an entire town. The elders even blessed her, declaring as recorded in Ruth 4:11-12:

"May God make this woman who is coming into your household like Rachel and Leah, the two women who built the family of Israel; may God make you a pillar in Ephrata and famous in Bethlehem! With children God gives you from this young woman, may your family rival the family of Perez, the son Tamar born to Judah."

It is also worth noting that in God's eyes there are no outsiders or foreigners. God accepts as part of his family anyone who trusts in him. Ruth was at the bottom of the social scale of the people of Israel when she arrived in Bethlehem, because she was a foreigner, a woman and a widow (Phiri, 2006:324).

However, by the grace of God, Ruth moved up the social ladder to the point that she came to be associated with King David. She was the mother of Obed, father of Jesse, father of David. The gospel of Matthew (1:5-6) confirms her as an ancestor of Christ, the Saviour and as such, Ruth became part of the history of Israel. This participation of Ruth in the *missio Dei* is an indication that God calls people to his mission, regardless of their gender or social status. Ruth's narrative is evidence of God's sovereignty and ability to call people, irrespective of their gender into his mission.

4.6.3 Abigail

The following woman to be discussed is Abigail, the wife of Nabal (1 Sam. 25). The wisdom of this woman in an extremely difficult situation prevented an impending disaster over the entire household of rich Nabal, who lived in Maon.

Nabal had been asked by David to provide food for David's men during the sheep-shearing celebration (1 Sam. 25:4-8), since David's men had protected Nabal's shepherds. Nabal, however, insulted David by responding,

"Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? The country is full of runaway servants these days. Do you think I am going to take my bread and wine and meat freshly butchered for my shepherd shearers and give it to men I have never laid eyes on? Who knows where they have come from?" (1 Sam. 25:10-11)

The insults of Nabal infuriated David who commanded 400 of his fighting men to Maon, where Nabal lived. Abigail's wisdom in the face of danger was exceptional.

The account of what happened between Nabal and David came to Abigail through a young shepherd who had benefited from the protection of David. Having learnt how powerful David and his men were, he warned Abigail of the expected disaster.

She assessed the situation the entire household was facing. When confronted with danger, many people (men and women) are paralysed by fear or indecision, but regarding Abigail Scripture says,

"Abigail took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep ready and five measures of parched corn, a hundred raisin cakes, and two hundred fig cakes, and laid them on asses; then she said to her servant 'go on before me. I come after you'. But she said nothing to her husband Nabal" (1 Sam. 25:18-19)

Abigail knew that David needed food and supplies and that is why he had sent his men. She quickly selected provisions and sent them ahead, in a way that reminds of how Jacob sent gifts to his brother Esau before crossing the Jordan River (Gen. 32:13-21).

Habtu (2006:786) observes that Abigail resembles the wise woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31. Though married to a fool, she did not lose her personal character to the point that she remained always approachable by her servants. Despite her wealth, she was a humble woman that listened to her servants (1 Sam. 25:14).

Despite being a beautiful woman, she was not too proud to kneel down and plead with David and demonstrated generosity in proving a large quantity of food to David and his men.

Having recognised the bad consequences of her husband's attitude, Abigail acted wisely to prevent the danger that was threatening her entire household. Apart from being a competent and honoured woman, she knew how to submit. In both cases (Ruth and Abigail), even under patriarchal system, these women used their wisdom to overcome such a system, a wisdom primarily derived from God, since they have been created in the imago Dei (Phiri, 2006:324).

The humility and submission of Abigail were the instruments that gave her victory in this complicated situation, the same as in the case of David's victory over Saul (1 Sam. 24:8). Her plea for David to overlook her husband's behaviour points to the Lord's Prayer on the cross (Luke 23:34).

4.7 SCRIPTURAL GUIDANCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FAMILY AND CHURCH

In the New Testament narrative the lives of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, and Mary Magdalene show that not only men but also women are equally important in the church. The following section scrutinises the positive participation of these two women in the *missio Dei*. Mary's acceptance of the divine conception of the Saviour marks a unique participation with regard to the beginning of the church with the birth of Jesus Christ. During the ministry of Jesus and close to his resurrection, Mary Magdalene's story confirms that women's participation in the church is part of the *missio Dei*.

4.7.1 Mary (mother of Jesus)

This was an ordinary person leading a normal woman's life in Nazareth. It would be logical to assume that in the course of time she entered her engagement period with Joseph the carpenter (Luke 1:26). As a normal woman, she might have been very excited to be married soon.

Mary is one of the great women who participated in the *missio Dei*. Having faced a unique opportunity, she showed obedience together with her husband. What made Mary great was her participation in the *missio Dei* through faith and obedience. As recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:30-31), Mary believed everything the angel Gabriel told her about the good news of the Immaculate Conception (Awad, 2011:260; Isaak, 2006:1204).

The angel's announcement in Luke 1:30-31 that Mary (a virgin) was going to conceive and was going to give birth had several implications for Mary's life, implications that would need deep wisdom to be overcome.

Firstly, Mary had not sacrificed her virginity yet. Once pregnant, society would assume that she and Joseph had slept together before being married.

Not having slept with Mary, Joseph would believe that she was unfaithful and slept with another man and would eventually reject her. She lived in a culture where women had no voice and a case of adultery was a crime punishable by death by stoning.

Yet, in the face of the aforementioned implications, Mary decided wisely. Amid confusion, doubts, questions and fears, she discerned the voice of God and said yes. Against all logical and human understanding and against all the odds, Mary trusted in God and said yes.

She accepted God's redemptive plan by conceiving the Divine Son, through the Holy Spirit. Having adopted Jesus as his own son, Joseph cared for him and Mary endured with her son unto the cross.

Mary's life teaches that the *imago Dei* that resides in women and men makes them God's instruments to achieve the impossible. Made in the image of God, in other words, men and women were created to be vessels of the impossible.

What is impossible for women and men to accomplish, with God becomes an opportunity and a possibility. With God, it is possible to change the patriarchal system that advances inequality between women and men, back to the system where women and men are equal in value and dignity according to the *missio Dei*'s design.

This brings the issue to another perspective, namely faith. Women and men of the present age need a transforming faith in their daily lives so that they may hear the voice of God. Women and men also need to believe in the promises of God, the initiator of all true acts of justice, passion and liberation (Wright, 2006:530).

For "all mission or missions which the church initiate, or into which the church places her vocation, gifts and energies, flow from the prior and larger reality of the mission of God. God is on mission", and the church (women and men), is kindly invited to join in this wonderful work of God (Wright, 2006: 532).

4.7.2   Mary Magdalene

Jesus Christ liberated women and they actively participated in the *missio Dei* in different ways, like spreading the good news. In doing so, the rigid culture and customs set against women were directly challenged and the status of women improved comparatively (Moore, 1993:210).

Although it was against the custom, women were now allowed to be associated with rabbis. Jesus allowed women to come to him, to repent and receive a new life. He never discriminated against women who were condemned by society for their sinful behaviour or life. Jesus equipped his people (men and women) to serve him, so that "the body of Christ may be built" (Eph. 4:11).

One of the followers of Jesus was Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast out seven demons (Luke 8:2). She then travelled with Jesus during his ministry and served Jesus in practical ways. Thimmes (1998:198) observes that with other wealthy women (Joanna and Susanna), Mary Magdalene contributed from her own resources to support Jesus' ministry and the disciples (Luke 8:2-3). She was one of the first people to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection (Hendriksen, 1992:78).

Mary Magdalene was the first to preach the gospel of the good news that Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:18). As the first witness of the risen Jesus, she became by implication the first apostle of the gospel of the resurrection (Ewell, 2012:386).

De Boer (1997:89) agrees with Thompson (1995:119) in assuming that Mary Magdalene, as an eye and ear witness of the resurrection of Jesus, was a disciple and qualified as an apostle. In this regard, gnostic literature points out that Jesus Christ had male and female disciples and apostles (De Boer, 1997:89; Thimmes, 1998:215).

Although there is no evidence of the selection of Mary Magdalene as an apostle, the Gospel of Luke (24:5-10) proves that she was the first to spread the good news concerning the resurrection of Christ. As an eye and ear witness, she fits the selection criteria for apostleship. According to Jansen (2001:62), Mary Magdalene received the title of "apostolorum apostola" in about the 12th century by Hugh Cluny (1024-1109), Peter Abelard (1079-1142) and Bernard Clairvaux (1090-1153). During Jesus' ministry, second only to Mary mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene is the most recorded name in the New Testament.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter has explored the guidance the *missio Dei* offers toward gender equality in church and society. It has been established that men and women were created equally and as bearers of God's image (*imago Dei*), they share equal dignity and responsibility. Men and women actively participated in the missio Dei.

In the Old Testament, as recorded by Exodus (38:8), women were devoted to their service and freewill offerings to God and the tabernacle. In a very specific way, they were able to consecrate themselves before God through the vow of a Nazirite and thereby dedicating themselves to the

Lord (Num. 6:2). The examples of Ruth and Abigail substantiate that women were never excluded from the *missio Dei*.

In the New Testament, the cooperation of Mary in the divine conception of Jesus and the contribution of Mary Magdalene in spreading the good news of the resurrection of the Messiah is solid evidence that women's participation in the *missio Dei* is part of God's provision for his people. Furthermore, during his entire ministry, Jesus respected and uplifted women to a place of honour, value and dignity. In fact, the dignity of women began at creation, when both genders were created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). Progressively, women's dignity became manifested throughout God's redemptive plan.

The fact that Mary Magdalene and other women preached the gospel is an important finding in this chapter, which will be taken into consideration when proposing a paradigm that guides the IRM to transform the church and society in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 PROPOSING A PARADIGM EMBEDDED IN THE *MISSIO DEI* TO GUIDE THE IRM TO TRANSFORM THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have explored gender relations in Mozambique (church and society). The study has established throughout the previous chapters the inferior status of women, as a result of oppression, discrimination and marginalisation brought about by patriarchal culture, either in church or in society. This reality has created the need to formulate a transforming approach, from the perspective of the *missio Dei*, towards gender equality in church and society.

Based on the literature study (Chapter 2), the empirical study (Chapter 3) and Scriptural perspectives on gender (Chapter 4), the current chapter seeks to formulate a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* to guide the IRM to transform the church and society towards gender equality.

The first section of the chapter is an introduction that provides a general overview of the chapter, followed by the definition of the concept "paradigm". The third section explores the possibility of a paradigm shift in the IRM, after which four principles are laid down for formulating a paradigm in the IRM. The fifth section proposes the theoretical principles of a paradigm in the IRM. The sixth section displays the paradigm that portrays the IRM as an eschatological community, followed by a summary of the findings of this chapter.

5.2 DEFINING A PARADIGM

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016) indicates that "paradigm" is a word of Greek origin meaning a way of beliefs, attitudes and culture in a specific period of time.

According to Kuhn (1962:28), a paradigm is characterized by a set of theories and ideas that define what is possible and rational to do, giving scientists a clear set of tools to approach certain problems; insofar as paradigms are useful, they expand both the scope and the tools with which scientists do research.

Taking into account this description, a change or shift in paradigm can be explained as the way of changing beliefs, attitudes or changing a way of doing things. It does not mean that the old paradigm disappears completely. A shift sees some aspects of the old paradigm being replaced by those of the new one.

For instance, the shift from the Old to the New Testament did not occur all at once. Jesus Christ repeatedly referred to the Scriptures of the Old Testament and so the New Testament paradigm

inherited the language, belief, liturgy and Scriptures of the Old Testament (Ericson, 1987:338). Certain patriarchal cultures also strongly influenced the New Testament. For example, in some traditional churches only men could represent the apostles and/or Jesus in being ordained as priests.

Bosch (1991:363) relates, in his *Transforming Mission*, paradigm shift to the *missio Dei*, whereby the new paradigm is directly related to the change in theological thinking. In this aspect, the history of religion moved from a modern missionary perspective to the establishment of the Christian church. The movement does not depend solely on its canons of rationality, but is rather identified as the reign of God.

Interestingly, Bosch (1991:186) notes that the movement from primitive Christianity to the Christianity of the 21st century would not present the same, in the sense that Christian theologies are affected by several factors like the personal background, social and cultural contexts and more importantly, several Christian traditions or denominations different from the context of primitive Christianity. The next section elaborates on a slow pace, but a definite paradigm shift in the context of the IRM.

5.3   POSSIBLE PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE IRM

According to Kuhn (1962:54), a paradigm shift consists of fundamental change in the basic concepts and experimental practices of a specific discipline. He contrasts paradigm shifts, which characterize a scientific revolution, to the activity of normal science, which he describes as scientific work done within a prevailing framework; paradigm shifts arise when the dominant paradigm is rendered incompatible with new phenomena, facilitating the adoption of a new theory or paradigm.

According to Kuhn (1962:199), a common misinterpretation of paradigms is a belief that the discovery of paradigm shifts and dynamic nature of science are a case for relativism; the view that all kinds of belief systems are equal; he denies this interpretation and states that when a scientific revolution is replaced by a new one, albeit through a complex social process, the new one is always better, not just different.

Within the church in general and the IRM in particular, a setup of belief or paradigm has been developed: the use of the Bible to endorse the exclusion of women that was created by patriarchal culture as well as hermeneutical misinterpretations of Scripture. Chapter 2 of this work has indicated the environment in which the IRM was established (cf. 2.6.1) and developed (cf. 2.6.2), marked by a patriarchal context that partly excluded the female gender to participate in the *missio*

Dei. This was supported by theological and cultural justifications that excluded women to the leadership of the IRM (cf. 2.6.4 and 2.6.5).

Current theological-missionary thinking, according to Bosch (1991:381), maintains that since God is a missionary, "God's people are a missionary people". Consequently, missionary people comprehend both men and women, as explained by 1 Peter 2:9. God did not assign his mission to his people on the basis of gender.

The paradigm regarding women's participation in the *missio Dei* has slowly been shifting within the IRM, in the sense that presently the church is more open than before. Unlike at the time of its establishment and development, now there are women in the diaconate office in the IRM. On the congregational level, the existence of a strong women's association that is involved in serving the community in several ways, is a signal of the openness of the church in this regard. Unlike before, there are presently concerted efforts to involve both men and women in practical workshops related to different themes, like gender equality and participation of women in the church leadership. In the past such workshops were solely attended by men.

The Mphatso Synod of the IRM organised a workshop on Leadership and Marriage in 2017, which was attended by all the pastors of the synod. The fact that all the wives of the pastors were equally called into the workshop points towards the synod's consciousness of the need of female participation in the *missio Dei.* This way the synod testifies in deed that women are equally called to the *missio Dei*.

Because of the quality of the participation in 2017 workshop and because of the practical impact of the workshop in the congregations, the synod has decided to organise such inclusive workshops regularly and as a result, a similar workshop took place in 2018. The testimonies of both genders (pastors and their wives) after the 2018 workshop pointed to the need to run similar workshops at the congregation level as well. In the opinion of some wives of the pastors there is, despite a range of challenges, a definite shift of pace in the concept of women leadership in the church as well as women's participation in the *missio Dei*.

It is also the opinion of both pastors and their wives that for the benefit of society, at the congregational level, the church should take the lead in replicating similar workshops at community level. The acknowledged leadership qualities of women, such as mobilisation, could be very useful in bringing together the entire community for similar workshops, regardless of religious denomination. Through these workshops the shift initiated within the church would be replicated in society at large. The church would be teaching, testifying and making God known as the One who calls people to participate in his mission and to transform society, irrespective of gender.

On the other hand, the development of a paradigm shift in this work must surely be comprehended from the progressive change in gender relations and position of women in Mozambican society over the course of time. In this regard, it is of great help to recall two specific moments in Mozambican society when the emancipatory movement of women uplifted their status: the first moment was the direct participation of women in the armed struggle against the Portuguese army, as discussed in 2.4.3. This moment brought a new perspective on women's contribution in society. The second moment took place when the patriarchal family ceased to be the main family structure, because the civil war had undermined its economic basis, as discussed in 2.5.3.1. This moment meant new forms of family cohabitation, with female-headed households and new forms of mutual associations leading women to economic independence from men.

Then, as explained in the empirical research in 2.8, the efforts of the government of Mozambique to uplift the position of women in society through the Family Code cannot be ignored. The Code, approved by the Mozambican Parliament in 2004, although ignored by some of the women who participated in the empirical research, promotes gender equality in society.

Having explained the development of a paradigm shift in the IRM, the next section explores the eschatological community as how the church would look like to carry out its transformational calling in society, by setting out four principles that guide the IRM in transforming the church and society for women's participation in the *missio Dei*.

7.1 PRINCIPLES FOR FORMULATING A PARADIGM TO GUIDE THE IRM TO TRANSFORM THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE *MISSIO DEI*

The current section intends to be a basis for justifying that participation in the *missio Dei* is for both genders. The principles discussed below are therefore inclusive of both genders. It is clear from both the Old Testament and New Testament that the mission of God embraces men and women, which is totally contrary to patriarchy dominance.

The examples of Abigail, Ruth, Mary the mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene are among the women of the Bible who participated in the *missio Dei*. This evidences God's will for women's participation in his work. Although discriminated against and marginalised, God seeks to restore women and at times, steer the course of events in their lives to fulfil his purpose. For instance, God's purpose of the incarnation of His son Jesus Christ as the Living Word was fulfilled through a woman.

The Holy Spirit's role in the *missio Dei* has in mind the plight of the marginalised, such as women. He thus empowers Jesus Christ and engages in the *missio Dei* to the disadvantaged and dispossessed women of society, as described in John 4:1-30; 8:1-11.

Apart from what has been said up to this point, this study has identified four principles drawn from Scripture as the basis on which to formulate a preliminary paradigm to guide the IRM towards gender equality: the "pre-fall" stage (Gen. 1 and 2), the dignity of women and men in God's redemptive plan, the restoration of women dignity by Jesus and the dignity of women and men in the new creation. In other words, these principles urge the IRM to participate in the restoration of women by virtue of their participation in the *missio Dei* as per the will of God.

7.1.1   The "pre-fall" stage (Gen. 1 and 2) and the dignity of women

This section discusses the principle according to which both genders are in an equal position at the "pre-fall" stage. Herein the term "pre-fall" is closely related to the introductory chapters (1 and 2) of the book of Genesis. It ranges from the time when God created the universe, including humankind (Hamilton, 1990:50).

It is very important to realise here that the whole created order was in accordance with the Creator's will and God himself approved his work, deemed excellent, as recorded in Genesis 1:31a: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

Above all, the narrative of the creation of the world recorded by the book of Genesis reveals a methodical God, according to Assohoto and Ngewa (2006:11), who created different things one after another with the precise purpose of accommodating the human family and "one by one, the Lord puts in place all the elements necessary to sustain the human beings for whom he is creating this world".

The privileged position of human beings (men and women) is manifested by virtue of having required special attention and decision for their creation. The plural in Genesis 1:26, "let us make", shows the solemnity of the occasion and decision in making them. It signals that something very important was going to happen. The plural also suggests the community of the Godhead, which involves three persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006:11).

Regarding gender relations, however, it is important to note that God's purpose was not supremacy of one over the other. Men and women were permitted to rule over other living creatures and not over one another. Men were not given authority to dominate or oppress women or vice versa. Women and men were but to rule over creation and to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:26c, 28b).

The Garden of Eden demonstrates God as the Lord of beauty and order, of peace and perfection. It shows that these are the ideal conditions for men and women. At the same time, the story raises men and women to a status above all other created works (Gen. 1:26-27). Humans are given authority and responsibility for one another. The "pre-fall" narrative of creation in the first few chapters of Genesis is one basis for formulating a paradigm to guide the IRM towards gender equality.

At the "pre-fall" stage, the whole creation was in order. Each element was created at the appropriate time and each element occupied a specific place, allowing for the harmony of the whole. The whole creation was full of meaning, since it served the purpose of bringing pleasure to God (Assohoto & Ngewa, 2006:13). The story hints at the relationship within the Trinity. It introduces the relationship between God and humans as one in which God loves both men and women, pursues men and women and dies for men and women. They were created male and female to live in harmonious families.

The foundational basis of Genesis 1 for formulating a paradigm is characterised by holy relationships between God and people, between the man and the woman and between those two people (man and woman) and the environment. Such relationships were maintained by a simple rule of order and obedience to God.

7.1.2   God's redemptive plan and the dignity of women

This section discusses the principle of dignity of both genders even after the original sin of Eve and Adam. After the original harmonious relationship between God and humans broke, all creation felt the effects. A broken creation was now in need of a Saviour to redeem it and to restore justice and order. Throughout the grand narrative of the Bible, there is a testimony of God calling women and men from different walks of life to effect salvation of God's people. The list of people called by God becomes more inclusive and wider in the New Testament, ranging from slaves like Onesimus (Philem. 1:10-16) to wealthy people of high standing like Erastus (Acts 19:22; Rom. 16:23) and Lydia (Acts 16:14, 40).

Andria (2006:1512) rightly observes that one of the remarkable characteristics of the new covenant communities is that they should be comprised of people from all genders. It is in this inclusive line that the author warns his readers in James 2:1-13 that if they are guilty of discrimination, they are disobeying the word. This very warning is manifest in Galatians 3:28 and Colossians 3:11.

This is to say that in the redemptive plan of God it is not simply that women and men from all spheres of life are eligible to be saved and to join the new covenant community, but that all who are saved are called and expected to be part of God's continuous work of salvation worldwide.

It is not by chance that when the Lord Jesus declares, in the Sermon on the Mount, to those who follow him that they are "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

According to Gillham and Matsveru (2015:43), this description picks up on the expectations that were to be fulfilled in the context of the Servant of the Lord referred to by Isaiah (Is. 42:6; 49:6). Such role for believers is confirmed by the New Testament epistles regarding the ongoing salvific work of God in different ways.

It is also in the same context that the apostle Paul describes those who share ministry with him as "fellow workers of God", since "now is the day for salvation" (2 Cor. 6:1-2). Scripture emphasises in Genesis 3:15 (the one who would crush the serpent's head) a singular hope in Jesus Christ, the descendant of Eve.

The name Eve in Genesis 3:20 (meaning "living") given by Adam to the woman served a twofold anticipation: the first regards her role as mother of humankind; the second, connected to Gen 3:15, regards her role as the mother of the Saviour of the human race (Gillham & Matsveru, 2015:44).

As Hebrews 2:14-15 and Romans 16:20 confirm, it was Eve's greatest son who finally conquered the power of evil within Creation and by doing so, reversed the effects of sin. The first woman created plays a unique role in the history of salvation, as Mary, the mother of Jesus, played later. By virtue of their roles, Eve and Mary point us to their child (Gillham & Matsveru, 2015:44).

Anticipation concerning the descendant of Eve is emphasised gradually and sharply in the course of time, as progressively God reveals his redemptive plan for the human race.

Progressively, Genesis 12:3 decreed that the whole world would be blessed through a descendant of Abraham, a son of David would rule forever with peace and justice (2 Sam. 7:16). All the promises of God are manifested in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:20), in whom human redemption is fulfilled.

As explained in Galatians 3:26-28, everyone (women and men) who believes in Jesus finds the locus of their identity in him. It is in this context that all believers are united in their own redemption as well as in their calling to participate in the redemptive ministry.

The fallen dignity of women and men in Genesis 3 finds a new identity in Jesus, the Saviour. The fallen identity becomes a redeemed human identity centred in Christ.

7.1.3   Jesus and the restoration of the dignity of women

Another principle against a patriarchal orientation in the church and society is the dignity given to women by the Messiah. In fact, the curse of the fall also came with the first promise of God's Messiah. "And I will cause hostility between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

Jesus came to destroy the work of the serpent and to reverse the curse. Graciously, God responded to the fall by moving all history towards the world's redemption (Adams, 2013:128). The gift of the Saviour-Redeemer, Jesus Christ, restored the communion and fellowship between humankind and God. Humans are made righteous and sinless in Christ, just as Adam and Eve had been before the fall (2 Cor. 5:21).

Gillham and Matsveru (2015:44) are of the view that Jesus was born in a remarkably patriarchal cultural environment, but Jesus Christ brought and sealed a new covenant between God and humanity. Christ came to reverse all the effects of the fall on the dignity of women (and men). He also came to restore the image of God in humans.

Women were treated with dignity and deep respect by Jesus, throughout his earthly ministry. As God, he chose to come to this world by means of a woman (Mary). He showed concern for a Samaritan woman (John 4:7-29). He defended a sinful woman against a respectable Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). He appeared to women first upon his resurrection, which made them the first to announce the good news of his resurrection, i.e. the first disciples (Matt. 28:8-10; John 20:10-18).

Curiously, as Jesus restored the dignity of women he never intended to sideline the dignity of men. Rather, he recognised both women and men as equally significant and worthy of dignity and respect. He came to this world in the form of a man and chose 12 men as his inner circle of disciples.

Gillham and Matsveru (2015:45) identify three areas where human dignity is upheld under the new covenant: marriage, family and church. Upon Jesus' arrival, as recorded in John 1:29, John the Baptist said: "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Jesus ushered in a new covenant between God and humanity (Luke 22:30; Heb. 9:15).

7.1.4   The new creation and the dignity of women

In the present work "new creation" is the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ, when He will remake the world and creation will be restored. God's people will enjoy perfect fellowship with him, with one another and with creation, as God planned from Genesis 1:1. Believers, God's city (the New Jerusalem) and the earth will be saved and remade. The new creation is the eternal and

glorious home of the believers, where the "glory of God will illuminate the city and the Lamb will be the light" (Rev. 21:23).

The previous descriptions of the new creation presuppose equality in dignity of both genders before God the Creator. The fact that in the new creation both genders have equal dignity helps in guiding the IRM towards a participatory paradigm of women in the *missio Dei*. In discussing the dignity of women and men in the new creation, Gillham and Matsveru (2015:47) point out that in the biblical presentation of the new heavens and the new earth God is the centre and the focus of all things (Rev. 1:8; 4:11; 19:6; 21-22).

Therefore John, the writer of the book of Revelation, makes use of apocalyptic symbolism in conveying the eschatological reality of the majestic rule of God. In his vision, as to confirm the dignity of women and men, John describes an uncountable number of people from every nation, tribe, language and tongue who are gathered around the royal throne of God.

Gillham and Matsveru (2015:47), in their further discussion of the new creation, indicate three facts that occur, regardless of gender: the reverse of all the effects of the fall; the elevation of women and men in Christ and the familiar categories of distinction that are superseded. Regarding the familiar categories of distinction that are superseded, Gillham and Matsveru (2015:47) are of the opinion that the innumerable gatherings of people signal the final destination of those who are in Christ.

Gillham and Matsveru (2015:47) agree with Ngundu (2006:1556) in observing that the new hymn sung by the elders in Revelation 5:9 introduces the new era of the kingdom of God by Jesus through his death on the cross and his resurrection.

In actual fact, the image described by John in Revelation 5:9 is that of freeing slaves, similar to the liberation of Israel from Egypt. It also indicates the greater emancipation towards eternal life in the kingdom of God.

An eternal life that has been accomplished for all women and men, at the cost of the Lamb's blood, where the redeemed have become a kingdom and priests in the service of the eternal God (Rev. 5:10).

The final destination has nothing to do with Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female (Gal. 3:28). They are not the ultimate categories that will define humanity in eternity, although they are part and parcel of the present reality.

While becoming a Christian does not change one's race, gender or social statues, in the new creation the central identity which characterizes human identity is their inclusion in Christ. In this world, the real measurement of Christians should be primarily defined by their identity in Christ.

In second place, Gillham and Matsveru (2015:48) suggest that humanity is elevated in Christ to a position of prominence. In the new creation women and men that live in the heavenly city are envisioned as the Bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7; 21:2), while the main celebrations are described as their wedding banquet (Rev. 19:9). Referring to the observation of Bosch (1991:165), the principle here is to urge the IRM to be an eschatological community that should seek to live according to God's purpose in eternity. This topic is elaborated in detail ahead in section 5.6, where this work has depicts the paradigm of the IRM as an eschatological community.

It is important to note that the whole creation is still taken care of in the final destination. Yet the elevated description and characteristic of women and men makes clear that humanity is distinct from the rest. As the initial design of God in making humanity in the *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:27), in the final destination humanity is again the crown of the new creation.

Thirdly and finally, the effects of the fall are reversed. Again, women and men are restored to the relationship with God. Since the effects of sin have been reversed, God again dwells directly with women and men in communion and fellowship (Rev. 22:2-3) like before the fall. As in the Garden of Eden, again women and men have access to the tree of life. The pain and frustration once brought by sin are removed forever (Rev. 22:1-2).

Having discussed the principles of equal dignity between men and women, the next section proposes a paradigm embedded in the *missio Dei* to guide the IRM to play its transformational role in church and society towards gender equality, according to the guidelines provided below.

7.2   PROPOSING THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE IRM

The preceding sections have laid the foundations for formulating a paradigm to guide the IRM towards gender equality. This section concentrates on providing theoretical insights and analysis on guiding the IRM to a fruitful role in transforming the church and society towards gender equality, based on the summary of the topics that arose from the study.

The summary of the topics that arose from Chapters 2, 3 and 4 indicate an imbalance in the relationship between genders in the family, church and society. Chapter 2 has revealed that women had been in an inferior position (cf. 2.3.2; 2.4.2 and 2.5.2) as well as the absence of women in the leadership roles of the IRM from its establishment to the present date (cf. 2.6.1; 2.6.2; 2.6.3; 2.6.4 and 2.6.5). Likewise, the empirical study in Chapter 3 has once again established such an inferior status, matched with a lack of women's empowerment (cf. 3.7.1;

3.7.2; 3.7.3; 3.7.4 and 3.7.5). The paradigm also takes into account the findings of Chapter 4, given that irrespective of cultural or patriarchal influence women have actively participated in the *missio Dei* and have preached the gospel (cf. 4.6.1; 4.6.2; 4.6.3; 4.7.1 and 4.7.2).

The paradigm seeks to give an answer to the persisting erroneous hermeneutical interpretation that results in the inferior position of women in the family, church and society; their lack of empowerment; and in the case of the IRM, even their exclusion in pastoral ministry and leadership. In this regard, the paradigmatic calling of the IRM resides in uplifting women's status by investing in their informal and formal education and empowerment.

The paradigm also seeks to change the way men understand the position of women in the church and society. In doing so, men would acknowledge women as their partners be it in the family, in the church or in society. The paradigm shift includes therefore a positive change in men's attitudes towards women.

As for women's education, it is essential to ensure an environment of gender equality in the family, church and society. Feeling inferior in these communities plays a detrimental and disgusting effect on women. As noted from the empirical study, it was clear from interviews the researcher made that the majority remains suspicious when discussing their position in the abovementioned communities.

Asking them questions immediately placed many of them on the defensive, which hampered communication. Most of the women would prefer to abstain from an appointment, made to enquire about life in the family, church and society, apparently due to their inferior position.

The researcher explained to the participants the protection provided by the Family Code (2004), which clearly states equality of genders in the domain of family, church and society. Their perceptions made clear the need for an extensive and intensive (informal) education, based on a combination of the Word of God regarding the dignity of women and the Family Code regarding the equality of genders in society. The outcome would be the emancipation of women in pursuing their rights.

7.2.1   IRM's calling to transform the church and society through a combination of the Word of God and the Family Code – a short term goal

It is very important to observe at this point that the Family Code that promotes women's rights by emphasising gender equality is not something strange nor new to the Word of God. As thoroughly discussed earlier in Chapter 4, the *missio Dei* has included women from the beginning of the creation of humankind. When patriarchal culture oppressed women, in the course of time, Jesus restored their dignity. The combination here serves the purpose of giving light to the fact that God

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was the first who created both genders for equal dignity and shared responsibility, starting from the family, passing through the church and terminating in the society.

On the other hand, as reported in the empirical research, many women do not know the Family Code that protects and promotes their rights. The first step towards a shift in the existing imbalanced gender relationships would be to mobilise women in order to be well acquainted with the Family Code. It is widely recognised that this legal document not only protects the rights of women, specifically in the family and society, but also promotes their status. The existing good collaboration between the Government of Mozambique and the churches in general, gained by virtue of their participation in the pacification of the country (cf. 2.5.2.1), is an added advantage.

The fact that the women's association in the IRM meets regularly with the women's associations of other denominations, through the "Fraternal Meeting of Churches – Women's Wing", is another opportunity that would be used to emancipate women. A well-advertised campaign in this regard should aim at reaching all women in a specific community, regardless of their religious affiliation or background.

Furthermore, this approach would be in line with the vision of the United Nations with regard to the empowerment of women. On the occasion of the celebration of the "International Day of the Girl and the extraordinary power of girls in the world", on 11 October 2017, the United Nations Foundation highlighted five reasons as the basis for empowering girls (Lee, 2017). The same reasons presented for the empowerment of girls can be validated and applied for women's empowerment by the IRM, through the Family Code, as underlined below.

a) Women's empowerment is their right: Basically, to empower women is to promote one important aspect of human rights. In the 21st century, there should be no place for any discrimination based on gender. Together with boys, every girl or woman has the right to attend school. In parallel to their right to go to school they are entitled to an environment free from all kind of violence. At the very least all girls have the right to benefit from health services and to fully participate in the development of their communities. Equal opportunity for schooling, access to health services and an environment free of violence are but three ways to empower the girl.

b) Empowering women means healthier families: It is worth remembering at this stage that "family" is an institution constituted by God and it is the nucleus of society. Once women are empowered and educated, the church and society will greatly benefit from having healthier families. When women are educated, healthy, and empowered, families are healthier. According to UNICEF (2011b), "2.1 million children under age 5 were saved between 1990 and 2009 because of improvements in girls' education. And closing the gap in the unmet need for family planning for the 225 million girls and women who want to delay or avoid pregnancy but aren't

using modern contraception would reduce maternal deaths by 67% and new-born deaths by 77%".

c) Empowering women is a key to breaking the cycle of poverty for families around the world: The report from UNICEF (2011b) has indicated that the probability of a girl increasing her wages is directly related to each additional year of her schooling. Once empowered, a girl will be the source of income that will be invested back in the family as a mother and her children will be cared for better.

d) Empowering women strengthens economies: According to a UNICEF (2011b) report, "Increasing the number of female gender completing secondary education by just 1 percent could increase a country's economic growth by 0.3 percent." Additionally, it found that "if women's level of participation in the labour market was the same as men's it would add up to $28 trillion to annual global GDP in 2025".

e) Empowering women is the right thing to do: Investing in women is one of the smartest ways to promote a healthier, more prosperous world. This is so because an empowered girl will be in charge of her future and her fate. As soon as men and women realise this reality, there would be both an obligation and also a collective will to protect the rights of the girl and to promote her wellbeing.

This section has discussed a short-term goal to guide the IRM to transform the church and society towards gender equality, through the emancipation of girls and women. Once men realise the need for the emancipation of girls and women, for common benefit, there is a strong possibility that they would change their behaviour and attitude towards the female gender. Personal experience has shown that after an IRM workshop men's view, understanding and attitude towards women changed positively. The next step of the paradigmatic calling of the IRM to transform the church and society is aimed at a mid- and long-term goal. The next is different from the precedent in terms of age groups, as explained below.

The former step is aimed at reaching all adult women affiliated to different women's associations. The next is aimed at reaching a younger group, composed of both males and females, as a strategy that intends to empower both genders that are tomorrow's Christians and citizens (be it in the family, be it in the church or be it in society at large), but with emphasis on women. Since this is a theological-missiological study, for terminological convenience, the expression "youth empowerment" is replaced by "youth ministry".

Before going further into the next section, it is of paramount importance to clarify that youth ministry should embrace both genders, because gender equality needs to appeal to males as well

as females for the sake of a long-term or future sustainability. As Matsveru (2012:134) rightly argues, endeavours or studies that are only oriented toward one sex are likely to fail for its disregard of the other very important half or part of the population. This is to say that the efforts to uplift women, therefore, should not amount to an endeavour to reduce men. The efforts on gender equality need to become less of a battle and more of a ministry.

In fact the term "gender" should be understood in its most neutral form and not necessarily tied to the female or to the male. When the term gender is addressed neutrally, there is a strong possibility that it will be taken more inclusively and more seriously by both men and women. Long-lasting results can then be expected. Because of this approach, both sexes need to be engaged with it.

7.2.2 IRM's calling to transform the church and society through youth ministry – a mid- and long-term goal

It cannot be denied that the health of societies depend on the health of their youth. Youth is an important building block of any society (Mazula, 2018:29). In conceiving and establishing youth ministry, the IRM will not circumscribe its activities only in its congregations. Although IRM based, the youth ministry will be society focused and will seek to identify teenagers in different residential areas, as a reaching-out ministry.

Youth ministry in the IRM would be a paradigm shift if taken into consideration that up to the present stage, this church has operated within its traditional frameworks. In other words, the IRM has ministered the Word of God through established sermons on Sundays to its several congregations. This established paradigm will remain in place. The nuance would be to conceive and build another stage of ministry directed at the youth, where there are reached out to girls and boys without discrimination.

7.2.2.1 Youth ministry – a shared vision for the IRM

According to Hybels (2012:75), a vision is "a picture of the future that produces passion. A vision is more than just a good idea with the potential to captivate the attention of a congregation in a way that stirs people to action". Bringing this explanation into the context of the IRM, a vision for youth ministry would not be just expecting more and more youths in the church. Although it is true that the youth is needed in every church as the future of the church, but more compelling still youth ministry in the IRM should entail the idea and the will to reach a significant generation of young people for Christ. It is this kind of a visionary task that needs to be understood by the IRM as being relevant, vital and very urgent. In order for the entire church to become excited and

involved in the passion, the members should see the need, the potential and the relevance of the vision.

Sometimes these challenges are either neglected or not fully understood by both the congregation and the church leadership. Wright (2016:1) aptly observes that "youth ministry can be an uphill battle. The congregation and church leadership often don't fully understand the challenges that a youth ministry and their leaders face and don't know how to support them. Yet many churches and leaders are still looking to start or develop a youth ministry".

In Matthew 13:1-23 (the parable of the sower and soil), Jesus compares the seeds that fell on good soil to the seeds that fell on rocky or shallow soil. Taking into consideration this teaching, the IRM needs to faithfully prepare the soil for its youth ministry in order to reap a good harvest. In African contexts, average congregations do not think about the youth. Because there are so many young people in their midst, they take it for granted that the youth will always be in their midst.

Jesus' parable in Matthew 13:1-23 urges the IRM to draw attention to teens not only in the IRM congregations, but also in the surrounding community. Then the IRM needs to raise the issue of youth ministry in the congregations so that in the course of time it will be in the hearts of most of the members. For instance, it is important to mention teenagers and students in prayers during services and ask the congregations to be praying for youth. The IRM may use newsletters and bulletins to highlight youth-related issues and news.

7.2.2.2 The calling of the IRM towards a strategic leadership

Wright (2016:2) observes that "setting up the church for success in youth ministry is a learning experience. The uniqueness of each congregation, shaped by location and population, suggests that one size does not fit all. The process must be bathed in prayer and shaped by Scripture. This is God's work and not human program, scheme, or cultural trend".

The paradigmatic calling of the IRM to transform the church and society through the establishment of a youth ministry would have several aspects in common with the calling of Nehemiah to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah's calling started when he heard of the need to rebuild Jerusalem, as reported by his brother Hanani and some other men who had just arrived from Judah: "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire" (Neh. 1:3). Consequently, Nehemiah accepted the challenge to rebuild Jerusalem and he got down to the task.

Throughout the previous chapters, the outcome of this work has indicated an imbalance in the relationship between genders. The real and immediate need for the IRM is the urgent task to empower women in the church and society. The lack of women's empowerment in church and society at present creates an imbalance reflected by women's anxiety regarding their expectations in future. The calling of the IRM resides in investing and directing its efforts in a ministry focused on the youth, since they are the citizens of tomorrow. This ministry is not merely church focused, but rather it intends to be society focused. Although being a church ministry, in other words, it aims at reaching out the entire community and society (Bruce, 2008:42).

The fact is that the IRM cannot change overnight the existing imbalanced relationship between genders in church and society, but rather it needs to be very persistent in its efforts. Yet its calling to effectively minister to the youth could definitely pave the way towards gender equality for mid- and long-term purposes. Nehemiah accepted the challenge to rebuild the walls. The challenge for the IRM is to empower the youth through the divine Word of God towards gender equality, for "all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives…it corrects us when we are wrong" (2 Tim. 3:16).

A careful look at the strategy used by Nehemiah would provide solid guidelines for the IRM's youth ministry paradigm by planning ahead. It still rings true that in the present age planning ahead ensures that all those involved in the vision are aware of the aim being pursued. It is still true that non-profit organisations, businesses and churches alike all need be involved in planning ahead to ensure that all involved are aware of where the organisation is heading. This will enable them to evaluate their progress at any stage and if necessary, make the requisite corrections and feedback along the way (Ferdinando, 2008:50).

Along the way, Nehemiah overcame several obstacles, either physical or human. Nehemiah was intimidated and threatened by Sanballat: "Sanballat was very angry when he learned that we were rebuilding the wall; he flew into a rage and mocked the Jews" (Neh. 4:1). In the midst of the obstacles, Nehemiah prayed: "Hear us, our God, for we are being mocked" (Neh. 4:4). Several opponents tried to distract Nehemiah from his main task, but his response to them was: "I am doing a great work, I cannot come down!" (Neh. 6:3)

The IRM will have to be firm in embracing her calling. As long as the IRM stands firm in the Word of God, the Lord will also fight for it, as He fought for Nehemiah. Like Nehemiah, the IRM needs to be strategic in pursuing its calling to transform the church within and without through youth ministry. The following five steps of Chalke (1992:85) regarding strategic implementation would be of great help in order to bring focus to the implementation of youth ministry by the IRM.

Step One: *"*Where are we?*"* This is a diagnostic examination of where the IRM and society stand now with regard to gender equality. The strengths, weaknesses and needs of the church and society are considered. In the case of Nehemiah, the diagnostic examination brought forward was Jerusalem's desolation. In the case of the IRM, the diagnostic examination brought forward is related to the inferior position of women in the family, in the church and in society as well as women's lack of empowerment. The inferior position of women in the family is matched with men's negative attitude towards women, regarding women as mere instruments of leisure and/or of labour. This negative attitude in the family is many times replicated in the church and society and is often the reason women are denied the opportunity to take leadership positions.

Step Two: "Where do we want to go?" This is the phase to determine the priorities and consequently set mid- and long-term goals according to the priorities for putting into place an action plan.

Nehemiah's priority was to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Before putting his plan into action, Nehemiah worked out what he wanted to accomplish. With his clear vision, he knew precisely what his task was. This enabled him to share the vision with all the people around him and because of his clearness, many people were willing to help with the project. IRM's priority is to empower the youth. The paradigmatic vision of the IRM is twofold: to empower the present generation of youth that they may become mature and responsible Christians and citizens in future, either in the church or in society.

The paradigmatic calling of the IRM will seek to empower young people to know that they belong to the kingdom of God. This means that the youth will be transformed towards Jesus Christ identity. The youth will serve in the church and in the community, with the identity of Christ, based on the visions and values of the reign of God. The work with the youth will seek to recognize the relevance of several faith entities like the family, the congregation, the school and different youth-serving organisations. This is fundamental because it will help the adolescents grow in faith as they experience life in community and will be actively involved in the *missio Dei*. The IRM youth ministry will also foster the development of Reformed identity and growth. The ultimate purpose of promoting the growth of young and older adolescents will be to address the developmental, social and religious needs of the youth and nurturing the qualities and assets necessary for their positive transformation (Steyne, 1999:63).

Step Three: *"*How are we going to get there?*"* How is the IRM going to accomplish its vision? The paradigmatic calling of the IRM to transform the church within and without can best be achieved through the integration of all youth into the broader life of the church by providing opportunities for their total participation in worship; youth ministry programmes and events; service opportunities and trips; development of community initiatives; Christian education offerings;

church-wide stewardship efforts and the church's institutional structure, such as ministry teams, committees and board of deacons just to mention a few.

Simply put, step three should be one of the steps of the strategy of the IRM youth ministry that needs prayer and time. Successful youth ministry does not appear overnight. The strategy should be driven by a deep understanding of the will of God and Scripture, before considering the cultural context. Like in Paul ministry's strategy in 1 Thessalonians, IRM's youth ministry needs to consider the following three approaches.

a) To build and strengthen fraternal relationships: "We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. We know dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be His own people" (1 Thess. 1:3-4).

b) To proclaim the gospel: "For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that we said was true…So you received the message with joy from the Holy Spirit in spite of the severe suffering it brought you" (1 Thess. 1:5-6).

c) To teach the Scripture: "And then, dear brothers and sisters, you suffered persecution from your own countrymen. In this way, you imitated believers in God's churches in Judea who, because of their belief in Jesus Christ, suffered from their own people, the Jews. For some of the Jews killed the prophets and some even killed the Lord Jesus. Now they have persecuted us, too. They fail to please God and work against all humanity" (1 Thess. 1:14-15).

Rather than creating programmes, the IRM needs to build its strategy in the context of relationships through proclaiming of the Word of God and discipleship. As emphasised earlier, the strategy needs to be clearly communicated to the entire congregation. This is crucial, because Christians in the congregation will respond to opportunities to get involved when they appropriate the vision, once they know about what is going on and become excited.

Step Four: "What are we going to do and when are we going to do?" This is the phase when short-term objectives are attached to a specific timeframe and undertaken.

In the case of Nehemiah, this meant to enlist specific workers for specific tasks. It was never the intention of Nehemiah to do the work alone. He knew the work was too huge for him to tackle alone. Nehemiah could not build any walls or undertake a ministry without the participation of others. Jesus' ministry was not completely done by him alone; he called several disciples. The IRM cannot build a ministry without a team either.

In this regard, the IRM could build a team for youth ministry by approaching young people and asking them to serve. This method should take into consideration that each member has given his or her life to Christ and has a personal relationship with Christ. Each one shows consistency in spiritual life and is prepared to take responsibility. Finally, each member is prepared to be a servant, is teachable and attends church services and team meetings regularly. The responsibilities of the members of the team should include planning and prayer. Each member should be exemplary and fulfil his or her function on the team.

In addition, the paradigmatic calling of the IRM to transform the church and society towards gender equality needs to be implemented through a unique ministry. Nehemiah was persistent and above all, he was so careful that his opponents failed to distract him from his main agenda. Likewise, the IRM should be very careful not to adopt someone else's youth ministry that seems to have worked for a specific church. The IRM needs to develop a ministry based on the needs and concerns that arose from the empirical study, namely: perceptions of inferiority of women in the family, church and society and the need for their empowerment. Undertaken in this way, the IRM paradigmatic youth ministry will be different and cannot be copied from elsewhere.

*Step Five***:** "How are we doing?" The IRM will have to evaluate its progress continually. It is the monitoring of the effectiveness of the methods that are being used and the assessment of the goals that were set.

Being the last step, this phase should lead back into stage one for feedback and then the process resumes. Sometime the work of Nehemiah was slow, but he was quick to find out what was in fact needed to be done. From such assessment, Nehemiah made the necessary arrangements to ensure that the building process was successful. Likewise, continual evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the IRM youth ministry will be of great importance if success is to be achieved. Throughout the step one to five, the IRM should keep in mind that youth ministry is for the glory of God that women may participate in the *missio Dei* according to the will of God (Walvoord & Zuck, 1983:37).

7.2.3   Women inclusion in theological education in the IRM

Nelson Mandela (s.a.) rightly mentioned that "education is the most powerful weapon to change the world...the great engine of personal development". No one can achieve sustainable gender equality without education (including theological education), since it has the power to equip individuals with necessary skills in order to face life and its different and several challenges. Educated people confidently make informed decisions, become critical and creative thinkers. Therefore, it should be accessible to all. In the opinion of Maluwa-Banda (2003:4), it is also

connected to power and it empowers people's participation in making any decision as well as in the transforming their lives and societies.

According to UNESCO's interpretation, gender equality in education is related to the notion of both genders (boys vs. girls and men vs. women) "experiencing the same advantage or disadvantages in attending school, receiving teaching methods, curricula and academic orientation, as well as producing equal learning achievements and subsequent life opportunities" (UNICEF, 2011a).

It needs to be mentioned at this point that it is not the intention of this section to promote ordination of women as such. It may be related, but is definitely a different issue. Rather, this section seeks to challenge the leaderships of both the IRM and Hefsiba theological seminary to ensure that there is equal access for men and women who seek to pursue theological studies. As observed by Madimbo (2015:229), this approach is very important given theological education plays a vital role in the development and growth of the church and it may also serve society as a whole.

The following personal female account of Madimbo (2015:228) may serve to clarify why equal access to theological education is important as a way to bring a paradigm shift in gender equality in church and society:

"To my mind, theological education plays a crucial role in societal life in general and the church in particular, as it leads to the general development of individuals and society; I think of the benefits of theological education in my own life; being a woman who earned a first degree at a Bible college, I know first-hand the importance of theological education to women leaders in the community; when I enrolled at a Bible college, the idea of a woman attending such an institution was quite foreign; people could not understand why a woman could attend a theological institution, yet she could not be ordained in the future; two decades later, people know the importance of theological education to both ordained ministers and lay people; hence, they are not asking the same question, but they are rather wondering why there is still gender inequality in the church; as I look back, I am grateful to God that there was an institution that was willing to accept me even though I am a woman; the fact that I was able to get my first degree from a theological institution laid the foundation for the rest of my career and it has also given me the confidence that I need to serve God wherever God leads me."

Equal access to theological education should be a case of gender justice in education. The Bible is the standard for Christians and justice is one of the most basic notions for Christians, since the God of the Bible is a God of justice. For instance, in the account of Exodus 2-5 the justice of God is seen when He stood for the liberation of Israel from oppression, a leading biblical motif of liberation theologians (Schussler, 1999:45).

Equal access to theological education through Hefsiba theological seminary would after all bring the church to the forefront of ensuring that there is gender equality in its educational (theological) system. Moreover, both the church in general and the IRM in particular confess their belief in gender justice and gender equality. They confess that men and women, boys and girls are equal in dignity before God. Yet the practice in secular institutions is not much different from the practice in ecclesiastical institutions. Putting in place and then implementing non-gender discriminatory policies would require both IRM and Hefsiba theological seminary leaderships to have the vision, capacity and policy support to create much more accessible and quality theological education.

Otherwise, as rightly argued by Lumby and Coleman (2007:55), even good policies can be used to mask or promote the denial of continuing inequalities, with the possibility of being used to defend and underpin the status quo by drawing attention away from inequalities. might this be what is happening in IRM when women access to theological education is neglected.

The current section has proposed three pillars as a way of promoting a paradigm shift that the IRM may transform the church both inside and outside, namely (1) the combination of the Word of God and the Family Code; (2) reaching out to the youth in the community, i.e. inside and outside the church; and (3) the inclusion of women in theological education. In the opinion of the researcher, these prerequisites should be place the IRM as an alternative entity to serve the entire community, as discussed in the next section.

7.3   THE PARADIGM – IRM AS AN ESCHATOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

Bosch (1982:8-9) has related eschatology to an alternative community when he explained the creative tension between the "already" and the "not yet", an unbearable tension that the church needs to address proactively.

When Jesus came to earth, He revealed his Father to the world and also came to be the final sacrifice for sin. He also came to make one family of all those He has saved into new people (2 Cor. 5:17). Jesus brought together Christians into one body called the church, from the Greek word *ekklésia*, meaning a Christian community. This new community welcomes all who have become Christian by their faith in Jesus Christ and it does make no distinction regarding colour, culture or gender (John 17:11; 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:17).

The Christian community does not seek to dominate others, but rather to serve others with a spirit of love, justice, truth, holiness, humility, mercy and joy in sharing. As an eschatological community, the members put into practice these principles of the Kingdom of God through the power of the Holy Spirit and everyone experiences what heaven will be like: a kingdom of priests

called to ultimately reign with God (Rev. 5:10). This is the "not yet" reality of the creative tension (Chester, 2011:43).

The Christian community is also living in a real world of an ongoing creative tension or the "already" reality (Bosch, 1982:8-9). The "already" reality was also well explained by Micah Declaration on Integral Mission in the following terms: "If we ignore the world, we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the word; if we ignore the word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world" (Challenge, 2017:118).

In the case of the IRM, the paradigm consists of being an alternative community through integral mission that in the opinion of Challenge (2017:24), takes place when the church speaks of Jesus Christ and lives out the faith in Jesus Christ in all aspects of life. The church then positively contributes to the physical, spiritual, economic and social transformation of people in the surrounding community.

The concept of an eschatological community here is closely linked to an alternative community for the IRM, an approach found in the life of Jesus. In this regard, Bosch (1975:4-7) portrays Jesus against the backdrop of four Jewish groups: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Zealots and the Essenes. Using this background as an analogy for possible choice, the church can be confronted on how to be an alternative community today.

The IRM, as an alternative community, should not exist for the sake of the church and rather for the sake of the world. Livingston (1990:5) agrees with Bosch (1982:8-9) in suggesting that this can be achieved as long as the church seeks to be uniquely separate, through a continuous effort of renewing of the church. In doing so, the society also becomes renewed.

In line with the thinking of Bosch (1991:387-388) regarding the role of the church in the world, this work agrees that IRM as an alternative community should be viewed as an anticipatory community, bringing forth the reign of God by anticipating the "not yet" and setting up signs towards the "not yet".

One cannot review the argument on the church as an eschatological community without observing that currently the thinking of Bosch is being related to the concept of "public theology". Storrar (2011:24-25) calls Bosch's paradigm of mission as a public paradigm of mission. Regarded as participation in the public sphere, public theology would require resolving the existing tension between church and world, always understood in the work of Bosch. According to Storrar (2011:24-25), the thirteen paradigms of mission presented by Bosch have shifted from a series of creative tensions into a style of Christian engagement in society.

Van Wyngaard (2011:161) supports the previous perspective in the following terms: "the issue is not to talk about God in a culture that has become irreligious, but how to express, ethically, the coming of God's reign, how to help people respond to real questions of their context and how to break with the paradigm according to which religion has to do only with the private sphere." In Bosch's ecclesiology "to express ethically the coming of God's reign" recalls the task of the church in anticipating the signs of the kingdom.

Van Wyngaard (2011:161) makes a valid point and so it is suggested here that the IRM needs to be, on the one hand, a distinct community from the world to be of service to it and yet, on the other hand, the context of the society needs to be taken into consideration.

In terms of women's participation in the *missio Dei*, the IRM must be a distinct community that signals the possibility and practice of gender equality in church and society. This becomes a very specific vision of what the reign of God would look like: absence of discrimination, oppression and marginalisation of women.

7.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has addressed the erroneous interpretation and practice of patriarchy dominance in the church and society, which deny women the opportunity to participate in the *missio Dei*. This was done by proposing a paradigmatic calling of the IRM that aids in transforming the church and society towards gender equality. The chapter has defined the term "paradigm" as a way of changing belief, attitude or changing the way of doing things (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2016), then scrutinised and analysed four foundational principles showing that God accepts women as participants in the *missio Dei*.

The abovementioned principles intended to lead the thesis into the need for formulating a paradigm that does not exclude women from the *missio Dei*, through the participation of the IRM. The first principle discussed was the "pre-fall" stage, as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2, with both genders participating freely in the mission of God. The second principle was the dignity of both genders in the redemptive plan of God, after the fall and the third principle was the restoration of the dignity of women by Jesus, the Redeemer. The final principle was the dignity of women and men in the new creation of God.

After the discussion of the abovementioned principles, a paradigm based on the topics that arose from the empirical study was proposed, guided by three main pillars:

(1) Women's education by means of the Family Code (cf. 5.4.1): With the purpose of addressing the imbalance in gender relationships in church and society as an immediate goal, the IRM is to respond to its calling by means of the Word of God as well as the Family Code

(2004) of Mozambique. The empirical research revealed that many disregard this legal instrument that protects and promotes their status in the family and society. The study of the Family Code, however, will be a context in which the Word of God will always be taught and most importantly the Word of God will be very relevant in illuminating the following:

a) The Word of God has always promoted gender equality.

b) The Word of God proceeds to the Family Code of 2004.

c) The Family Code agrees with the will of God as revealed in his Word.

(2) Women's empowerment by means of youth ministry (cf. 5.4.2; 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.2.2): As a mid- and long-term goal, the IRM is called to transform the church and society through the empowerment of the youth as a way to engage the entire generation with a vision that emphasises the participation of both genders in the *missio Dei*. The steps of Nehemiah in his calling to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem provide an acceptable model in sharing and accomplishing a vision or a calling (Zulu, 2015:81).

(3) Women inclusion in theological education as a way of preparing their participation in the church and society (5.4.3). Women education in theological studies will equip them to participate in the *missio Dei* confidently, including taking up leadership roles either in the church or in society.

The exploration of these three pillars set the paradigm into place. Placing the IRM as an eschatological community that is required to be distinct from the world, but which signals the next and final coming of the reign of God, where participation in the *missio Dei* is regardless of gender.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The present research project has emerged from an observation that in Mozambique, either in the church or in society at large, women tend to be marginalised. From this reality it was assumed that a revisit of the will of God regarding women participation in his creation was of great relevance. The purpose of the work was then to better understand how the IRM could transform the church inside and out towards gender equality. This chapter is composed of three sections, namely: summary, conclusion and recommendations. The last section has been divided into immediate recommendations, as the result of the findings of the entire work, as well as recommendations for future research.

8.2 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 has discussed the research problem and provided a methodology for the research. Chapter 2 has reported the results of the literature study, having allowed the researcher to understand the development of the position of women in Mozambique (church and society) in three distinct stages: the pre-colonial era, the colonial era and the post-colonial era. Chapter 3 has presented, interpreted and analysed the findings of the empirical investigation. Chapter 4 has explored the guidance of the *missio Dei* towards gender equality, whereas Chapter 5 has discussed the paradigm on the calling of the IRM to transform the church and society towards gender equality. Chapter 6 is composed of a summary, a conclusion and recommendations for future study.

8.3 CONCLUSION

In the beginning of this work it was established that in pre-colonial Mozambique women enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy and independence. The advent of religions highly influenced by patriarchy like Islam and Christianity, marred with capitalist labour relations, of the colonial stage reversed the position of women to the extent that they became oppressed and marginalised, pushed into a position of inferiority as mere instruments of labour. This fact stirred women's consciousness and influenced their emancipation in the struggle against the colonial regime in Mozambique. During the civil war in Mozambique, women gained some economic independence because the patriarchal family ceased to exist as the only family unit, given that its basis had been undermined along the way. Although some progress has been made regarding the position of women in church and society, this research has revealed that women are still neglected, marginalised and oppressed.

Regardless of the patriarchal influence, there is more than strong evidence that women have always participated in the *missio Dei*. This research has also established that although excluded or neglected in the church and society, God has always included women in his mission. In the 21st century the paradigm is shifting, permitting women to assume leadership positions in the church and society and yet there are still several changes that need to be addressed. This reality urges the IRM to play its role in transforming the church and society towards gender equality. In order to address the catalyst for the current project research as well as to correct some of the dysfunctions, a transforming paradigm has been identified and substantiated to permit the participation of women in the *missio Dei* in a context free of discrimination and where the leadership positions are shared by both genders, specifically in the IRM.

At this stage, it is assumed that if the suggestions brought forward in the proposed paradigm are implemented, the IRM in particular and society in general would be positively transformed towards women's participation in the *missio Dei*, without discrimination. As a result, the following outcomes should be expected:

• The IRM should stay relevant through youth ministry, thereby resisting the status quo where patriarchal influence does not determine the suitable gender for God's mission.

• The IRM should facilitate integration of women into the larger and intergenerational community of society.

• Through youth ministry, the IRM would focus on inviting women and men from the larger society into the deeper narrative of the *missio Dei*.

• The calling of the IRM to empower women would remind the church inside and the society outside that women are not marginalised members of creation, but co-partners and collaborators in the divine work of the church.

• The calling of the IRM through youth ministry would help the church focus on the way of Jesus, which goes beyond tradition, dogma and work.

• Last but not least, due to the whole current setup of inequality, ordination of women in the IRM is not an immediate issue; but hopefully, it will happen once the current inequality has been addressed.

8.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Before introducing immediate recommendations and recommendations for future research, it would be prudent to emphasize at this stage that "gender equality should not be perceived as sameness between man and woman; such an understanding should be nonsensical, since it is

obvious to all that men and women are not the same; however, it is possible for each one to do their part, working together in unity to fulfil that for which God has called humanity into existence" (Matsveru, 2012:134).

8.4.1   Current recommendations

- Participation in the *missio Dei* should not be determined by gender.

- Christian calling should transform the church within, so that it influences society outside.

- God calls all people to participate in his mission, regardless of gender, either from the church or from society.

- The leadership of the IRM is called to avoid discrimination of women.

- Participation in the *missio Dei* is not a matter of blood or physical birth; anyone can be called through his or her faith in Jesus.

- God cares for the marginalised of society and in his sovereignty uses strangers, aliens, widows and orphans to achieve his purpose in the world, either in the church or society.

- God does not exclude people from participating in his mission, He expects his children to respond to his call (Deut. 10:18-19; Jer. 22:16; James 1:27).

- Christians (men and women) must keep trusting God, no matter how difficult or confusing life's situation may be. God causes everything to work together for the good of those who fear Him (Rom. 8:28).

8.4.2   Recommendations for future research

The main expectation of the empirical investigation, which was conducted in this project, based on the literature explored in the preceding chapters, was to lay the groundwork for the current situation in the understanding of gender equality in the church and society. The empirical survey did not by any means intend to be an experimental survey either to agree or disagree with a given hypothesis. Assuming that this study was mostly theory-based, it can therefore be tested in future studies so as to determine to what extent the calling of the IRM (or any other denomination) can contribute towards gender equality inside the church or outside in society. In addition, this thesis presents the following questions for further research:

- How can the church promote gender-related justice in theological seminaries?

- How can a congregation be aided to change its mind-set on issues of gender injustice through education and empowerment?

- How can men's attitudes towards women's leadership positions in church and society be addressed?

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ANNEXURE A ETHICAL CERTIFICATE FROM NWU

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
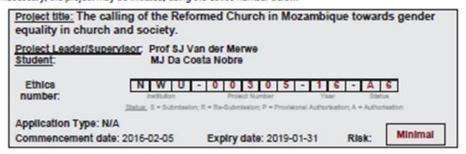Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee
Tel: +27 18 299 4849
Email : Ethics@nwu.ac.za

2016-07-12

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by Research Ethics Committee of Theology (TREC) at the meeting held on 27/06/2016, the North-West University Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-IRERC) hereby approves your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-IRERC grants its permission that provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: The calling of the Reformed Church in Mozambique towards gender equality in church and society.

Project Leader/Supervisor: Prof SJ Van der Merwe
Student: MJ Da Costa Nobre

Ethics number: N W U - 0 0 3 0 5 - 1 6 - A 6

Institution   Project Number   Year   Status

Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation

Application Type: N/A
Commencement date: 2016-02-05   **Expiry date:** 2019-01-31   **Risk:** Minimal

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Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the TREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the TREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-IRERC via TREC:
  - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
  - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
  - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the TREC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-IRERC via TREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-IRERC and TREC retains the right to:
  - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
  - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
  - withdraw or postpone approval if:
    - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
    - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the TREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
    - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
    - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- TREC can be contacted for further assistance via Nadine.Havenga@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1600.

The IRERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRERC or TREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof LA Du Plessis
Digitally signed by Prof LA Du Plessis
Date: 2016.07.18 08:27:58 +02'00'

Prof Linda du Plessis
Chair NWU Institutional Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (IRERC)

ANNEXURE B CONSENT LETTER

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
POTCHEFSTROOMKAMPUS ®

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear participant

You are kindly invited to take part in a research project (doctoral thesis), entitled "**The calling of the Reformed Church in Mozambique to participate in the missio Dei towards gender equality in society**".

Researcher

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Purpose

The aim of the project is to establish the calling of the Reformed Church in Mozambique to participate in the *missio Dei* towards gender equality in society. It seeks to assess how the contribution of women from various organizations/churches can be intergraded towards gender equality in society.

Participation in this study will involve

Scheduled interviews with women from various organizations/churches based in Vila Ulónguè, will be held.

Risks and Discomforts

No risks or discomforts are associated with this project.

Confidentiality

Participants will have a choice of remaining anonymous, in which case the study will just refer to "respondents". Information obtained via the research will be used for research purposes only. The research results will be presented in the format of a thesis that will be submitted to the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, for examination and most probably will some of the findings be published in an accredited academic journal.

Withdrawal without Prejudice
Participation is voluntary and refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty. Each participant is free to withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any given moment in time.

Costs or Payments
There will be no costs involved for taking part in this research study. No participant will receive any payment to participate in this research project.

Questions
Participants may contact Prof. S.J. van der Merwe (sjvdm@xsinet.ac.za cell +27 833 100372) with questions concerning this research study. Prof. S.J. vd Merwe acts as the supervisor for this research project.

Agreement
This agreement states that you have read and received a copy of this informed consent. Your signature below indicates that you understand the parameters of your participation and agree to take part in this research study.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____

Participant's Name _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

ANNEXURE C EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FORM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN REGARDING THEIR PRESENT STATUS IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY AND THEIR FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

(N.B. If you need more space to answer any question, feel free to use the opposite side of the paper)

1. Name (Optional): _____
a) Position or office in church or society: _____
b) Age (Optional): _____
2. Are you a member of any organization in church or society? _____
a) If YES, what is the name of the organization and for how long?
   _____

3. Do you think that women have any rights in church or society? _____
a) Discuss your answer:
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. If you have ever heard of "women empowerment", what is it about?
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. Why should women be empowered?
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. In your opinion, who should empower the women?
   _____
   _____
   _____

7. What are the characteristics of an empowered woman?
   _____
   _____
   _____

8. Describe the main challenges or discrimination (if any) that you face in your <u>family, church or society</u> by virtue of being a

   woman_____

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. What do you know about gender equality?

   _____

   _____

   _____

10. Is there gender equality in the society? _____

a) Discuss your previous answer:

   _____

   _____

   _____

11. What changes in the <u>church and society</u> regarding the status of women would you like to see or experience in future?

   _____

   _____

   _____

12. Regarding women (or gender equality), describe anything else or remarks not covered by the present questionnaire

   _____

   _____

   _____

ANNEXURE D   EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FORM IN PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE

QUESTIONÁRIO SOBRE IGUALDADE DO GÉNERO NA IGREJA E NA SOCIEDADE E EXPECTATIVAS

(N.B. Se precisar de mais espaço para resposta, utilize o verso da folha para esse efeito).

1. Nome (Opcional): _____

a) Posição ou cargo na igreja ou na sociedade: _____

b) Idade (Opcional): _____

2. Você é membro de uma organização na igreja ou sociedade? _____

a) Se SIM, qual é o nome da organização e por quanto tempo?

_____

3. Será que as mulheres têm alguns direitos na igreja ou na sociedade? _____

a) Explique a resposta anterior:

_____

_____

_____

4. Se você já ouviu sobre "empoderamento da mulher", descreva o seu significado em poucas palavras:

_____

_____

_____

5. Porquê a mulher deve ser empoderada?

_____

_____

_____

6. Em sua opinião, quem deve empoderar a mulher?

_____

_____

_____

7. Quais são as características de uma mulher empoderada?

_____

_____

_____

8. Descreva os principais desafios ou discriminação que você enfrenta na sua família ou igreja, ou na sociedade, pelo facto de você ser mulher

_____

_____

_____

9. Diga o que você sabe sobre a igualdade do género

_____

_____

_____

10. Será que na sociedade existe igualdade do género? _____

a) Explique a sua resposta anterior:

_____

_____

_____

11. Quais são as mudanças que você gostaria de ver no futuro, na igreja ou na sociedade, em relação ao estatuto da mulher?

_____

_____

_____

12. Se tiver outro comentário ou opinião sobre a mulher ou igualdade do género, descreva:

_____

_____

_____