

**A Historical And Cultural Analysis of the
Position of Abaluyia Women in
Kenyan Quaker Christianity:
1902-1979.**

Esther Moraa Mombo

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Abstract.

The Society of Friends has always declared the equality of women and men. The way in which it has practised this equality has often been influenced by the attitudes surrounding society and culture. This thesis examines and interprets the status, roles and experiences of Abaluyia women in the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (EAYM). The thesis argues that the Abaluyia culture and philosophy prescribed a largely marginal role for women and in turn was absorbed into and dominated the thinking of EAYM. Second the thesis recaptures the story of the women concerned-making them primary rather than secondary voices in their own history

The thesis begins by analysing how the concept of *engoko* determined the place and role of women in Abaluyia society. It then examines the American cultural, social and religious context out of which the Friends missionaries came and which invariably shaped their ways of understanding reality and organising their work in Kenya. The arrival of the first Friends missionaries in Kenya in 1902 aimed at raising the spiritual and living standards of the Abaluyia people, especially the women. Their experiences of Abaluyia culture and perceptions of the people is assessed, as well as the move to establish EAYM in 1946. A closer look is taken at the complex and interconnected issues of marriage (especially polygyny) and bride wealth. Missionary inability to grasp the issues involved allowed the Quaker elders to make policies which often reflected the patriarchal views of Abaluyia society. The thesis also examines the nature of mission work among Abaluyia women, and argues that much of the mission discussion about women was prescriptive, confining the ideal Abaluyia woman to her function as mother and homemaker. The discussion shows how missionaries assumed an ideal universal understanding of womanhood and how this affected Abaluyia women's roles in the church and in the wider society.

The way in which Abaluyia women experienced and responded to Quaker Christianity is also assessed, especially how they formed separate groups which developed into a Women's Yearly Meeting. From their marginal position women emerged strongly to contribute to the work of a growing church. The thesis then proceeds to discuss the place of women in the organisational structure of EAYM.

Using the cases of Maria Atiamuga and Keran Nyamusi Alfayo, the thesis argues that women have been sidelined from the leadership of EAYM because it reflects a traditional pattern of clan leadership which is exclusively male. Finally the thesis assesses the role of women in pastoral ministry by discussing the nature of training at Friends Bible Institute (FBI) and the type of ministry open to women. Using Rasoah Mutua, the first woman graduate from FBI, the thesis shows that the traditional Friends championing of spiritual equality for men and women in the church has not been realised in EAYM.

The thesis concludes with a reflection on this disparity due to the persistence of *engoko*, and proposes a rediscovery of a Friends teaching in this respect, and the formulation of a new ethos in accordance with it to replace *engoko*.

DECLARATION.

I declare that I alone composed this thesis and that the work contained therein is my own except where explicitly stated in the text.

ESTHER MORAA MOMBO.

List Of Abbreviations.

AFBFM	American Friends Board of Foreign Mission
CMS	Church Missionary Society/Church Mission Society
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
CUP	Cambridge University Press
ESR	Earlham School of Religion
EALB	East Africa Literature Bureau.
EAPH	East Africa Publishing House
EAYM	East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends.
ERSF	Elgon Religious Society of Friends.
FAIM	Friends Africa Industrial Mission
FFMA	Friends Foreign Mission Association.
FUM	Friends United Meeting
FWCC	Friends World Committee of Consultation
FWN	Friends World News.
FYM	Five Years Meeting
GBS	Girls Boarding School
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association.
KNA	Kenya national Archives
NIP	Nilotic Independent Mission
NKCA	North Kavirondo Central Association
NKCA	North Kavirondo Central Association
NKWA	North Kavirondo Welfare Association
NPC	Native Prayer conference
SACIM	South Africa Compound and Interior Mission
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
USFW	United Society of Friends women
USFW	United Society of Friends Women
USFWI	United Society of Friends Women International
WFMS	Woman's Foreign Missionary Society

WFMU	Woman's Foreign Missionary Union
WHMAF	Woman's Home Mission Association
WMU	Woman's Missionary Union
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union.

Quaker Glossary

The RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) is the official name of the Society. 'Quaker' originally a term of derision, is now generally accepted. Thus the term 'a Quaker' and 'a Friend' are interchangeable.

Village Meeting	A weekly Meeting of worship by a group of Quakers in a given village.
Monthly Meeting	A group of villages join together to meet monthly for worship and business.
Quarterly Meeting	A group of Monthly Meetings gather together four times a year for worship and business meeting.
Yearly Meeting	The annual national gathering of Friends lasting several days. In EAYM this was established in 1946 and it meets in August of every Year.
Women's Meeting	Separate Meetings of women for worship and business. Organised from a village level to a Yearly Meeting level.
Discipline	Religious teaching or the regulation of life by religious teaching or a body of such regulations: thus books of discipline.
Presiding clerk.	The word 'clerk' among Friends means one who is elected by Friends to preside over Meetings of business. Meetings at all levels will have a presiding clerk and a recording clerk.

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Dedication

to

Goko Mugesia,

and

Mama Vulimu.

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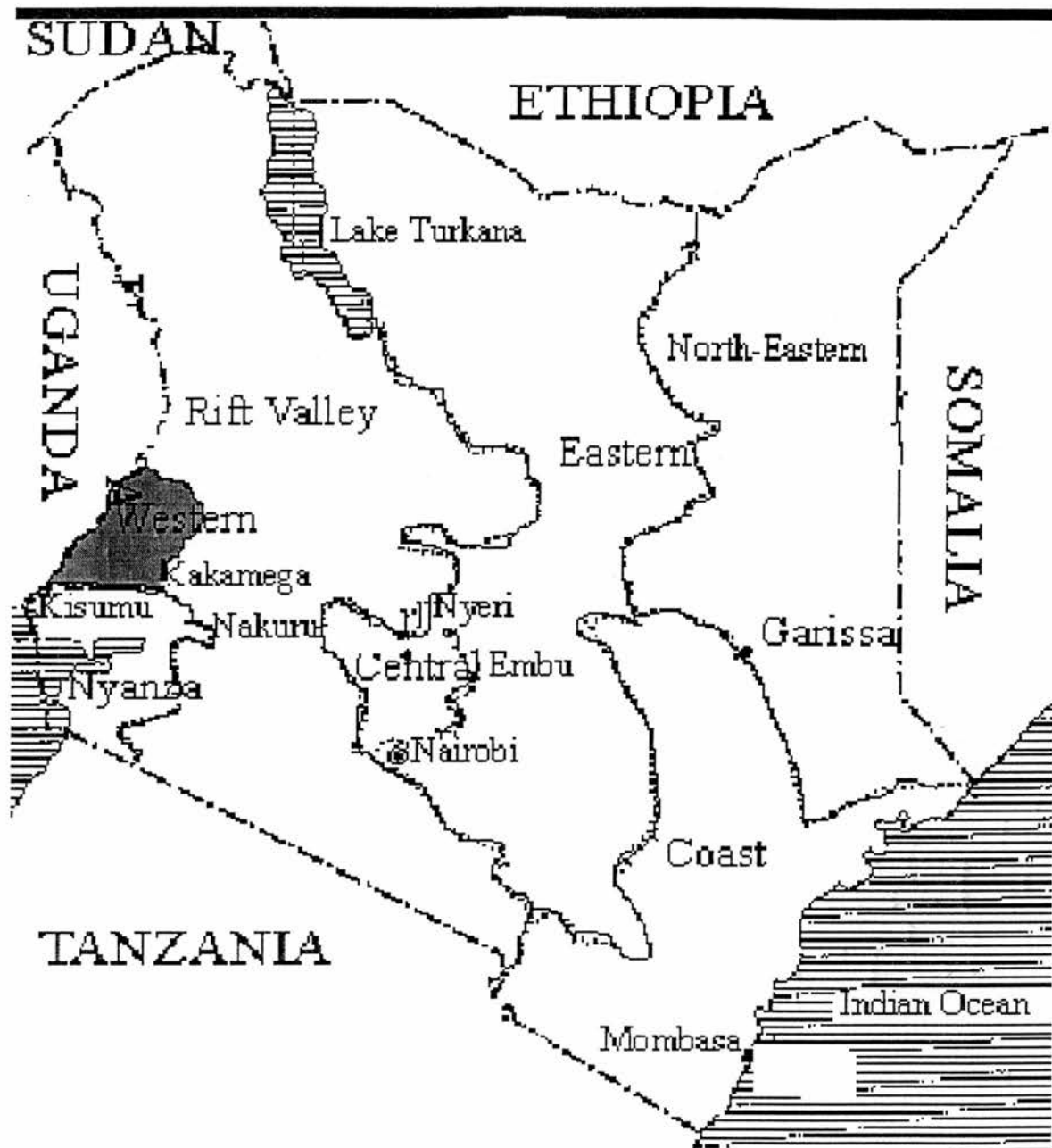
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Map 1: The Provincial divisions in Kenya.

Kenya is located astride the Equator on the East Coast of Africa. It borders Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan in the north, Uganda in the west, Tanzania in the south, and the Indian Ocean in the East. It covers an area of 583,000 sq. km (225,000 sq. miles). The capital city of Kenya is Nairobi. Mombasa the main port is situated on the Indian Ocean and Kisumu another major town is situated on Lake Victoria. Kenya is divided into eight provinces namely: - Central, Coast, Eastern, Nairobi, North East, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western Province. The provinces range in geographical size from the small Nairobi Province to the much larger Eastern and Rift Valley Provinces. The Provinces also range in population from the densely populated Nairobi Province, to the sparsely populated North East.

INTRODUCTION

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has a reputation for being a religious group which lays emphasis on the “priesthood of all believers,” a non- hierarchical approach without ordained ministers leading to equal participation among the adherents. The consequence of this ought to be equality between men and women with ministry open to both. This thesis looks specifically at the Abaluyia people among whom North American Quakers came to work in 1902, and assesses the extent to which these Quaker ideals were realised in practice especially with regard to the position of women. The thesis examines the roles, status and experiences of women in East Africa Yearly meeting of Friends (EAYM) and argues that women in EAYM are to a large extent sidelined and marginalised in the organisational structure and the pastoral ministry.

The thesis is born out of several reasons including the dearth of information about women in EAYM, as well as widespread concerns about sexual discrimination, which has been raised in Friends international gatherings¹. At the Kaimosi 1982 Friends World Consultation Committee (FWCC) gathering over three hundred years after the beginning of Quakerism, Friends were urged to deepen their sensitivity to, and awareness of sexual discrimination.² But at the Birmingham 1997 FWCC Joan Wena of Kenya noted that sexual discrimination was evident in Yearly Meetings where leadership was exclusively male. Citing East Africa Yearly Meeting (EAYM) as an example she observed that since 1946 when this Yearly Meeting was established, women have been sidelined from its leadership.³ In examining and interpreting the roles, status and experiences of women in EAYM, this thesis attempts two tasks: first it brings the story of Abaluyia women to light, and second it critiques the Luyia culture and Quakerism for marginalising women.

¹ FWCC: 15th Triennial in 1982 Kaimosi Kenya; 16th Triennial in 1985 Oaxtepec, Mexico; 17th Triennial in 1988 Tokyo, Japan. 18th Triennial 1994 at Ghost Ranch Abiquiu, New Mexico; 19th Triennial in 1997 at Westhill College, Birmingham.

² FWCC: Triennial Minute 626 1982.

³ Joan Wena, *Answering The Love of God: Living our Testimonies*, FWCC 19th Triennial July 23 to 31, 1997. 11.

In the course of the study the following issues affecting women will be encountered, discussed and analysed: Abaluyia philosophy, culture and customs; the emergence of Quaker teaching and practice; the patriarchal nature of American Quakerism and its Victorian attitudes towards women; missionary assessment of Abaluyia women and Abaluyia assessment of missionaries; the interplay of the two cultures and its consequences for women. Lives, efforts and struggles of individual women are used in the discussions to highlight the perspective of marginalisation.

The study focuses on the Friends in Kenya from 1902, especially on the period between 1946 and 1979 when EAYM covered its greatest extent of territory and was the largest Yearly Meeting outside the United States.⁴ The Abaluyia women who are the subject of this thesis live in three districts of western Province namely Kakamega, Vihiga and Bungoma.⁵ These districts are part of the geographical area, which lies between the southern slopes of Mount Elgon and the eastern part of Lake Victoria.⁶ The Friends were among the first mission groups to set up mission work in this region and their work has received a lot of attention largely from a western missionary perspective; hence the dearth of information about women in the literature.

Levinus Painter in his book *The Hill of Vision* records comprehensively the work of and contributions of missionaries from 1902 to 1963. He deals with the establishment of Friends Africa Industrial Mission (FAIM) and its development into Friends Africa

⁴ David B Barrett, (Ed), *World Christian Encyclopaedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World. AD 1900 – 2000*, Nairobi: OUP, 1982, 436.

⁵ See Map 2, page 3.

⁶ Chapter one of this thesis will give a detailed discussion of this people and especially the place and role of women.



Map 2: The four districts of Western Province of Kenya.

Mission (FAM) and the establishment of EAYM and the integration FAM into EAYM.⁷ As well as Painter's book the memoirs of both male and female missionaries fill out the details of the activities and private lives of Quaker missionaries in Kenya.⁸ In each of these the role of the Abaluyia men is secondary but that of women is absent because they are treated as passive recipients of mission. A number of pamphlets have also been written on Abaluyia men who are regarded as pioneer Quakers but their wives have been given peripheral treatment.⁹

Rasmussen's book *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa* is the latest Quaker publication on Friends in Kenya. Unlike Painter, Rasmussen notes that the ecclesiastical development in the Quaker movement had a negative impact on the role of women. Rasmussen shows clearly that the impact of the 1860 Revival on Quakers was a shift from an egalitarian model of ministry to a clergy-based model of ministry which was dominated by men. As a result the type of Quakerism imported to Kenya was 'hierarchical, clerical, formalistic and Scriptural' [in the negative, legalistic sense].¹⁰ This type of Quakerism downplayed the real core of the Quaker teachings on issues of justice and peace.¹¹ It is concluded in this book that 'while women represent large numbers of loyal members, they are neither visible in church leadership nor part of its aspiring democracy.'¹² And although women have been

⁷ Levinus Painter, *The Hill of Vision: The Story of the Quaker Movement in East Africa, 1902-1966*, Nairobi: East Africa Yearly Meeting, 1966. The name Friends Africa Industrial Mission (FAIM) was used in Kenya until 1911 when Industrial was dropped but the work of industrial department continued. After that the mission was known as Friends Africa Mission (FAM). In 1946 East Africa Yearly Meeting was created as an independent Yearly Meeting but it worked along side a mission board of FAM until 1963 when FAM was dissolved. In this thesis FAIM is used referring to the period between 1901 to 1911.

⁸ Edna H. Chilson, *Ambassador for the King*, Wichita: (KS) 1943; Helen Kersey Ford and Esther Ford Andersen, *The Steps of a Good Man are Ordered by the Lord*, New York: African Inland Mission, 1976. Alta Hoyt, *We Were Pioneers*, Wichita Kansas: Privately Published, 1971; Elizabeth Emerson Emory Rees, *Language Pioneer*, New York: Niagara Frontier, 1958; Dorothy Pitman, *Four Scores and Ten Years, Memoirs of Dorothy Pitman*, Hagerstown Ind: Exponent, 1992.

⁹ Japheth Amugune, *A Christian Pioneer*, Tiriki: EAYM, 1971; Thomas Ganira Lung'aho *Daudi Lung'aho an African Missionary- A Biography*, Tiriki: EAYM 1970. Abraham Wegesa, *A Life of Abraham Sangura*, Ms: EAYM, n.d.; Rose Adede, *Joel Litu, Pioneer African Quaker*, Wallingford PA, Pendle Hill, 1982.

¹⁰ Anne Marie Bak Rasmussen, *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa*, London: British Academic Press, 1995. 18, 158.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 106.

¹² *Ibid*, 162.

significant in the Quaker church as evangelists, educators, preservers of church tradition, and their contribution is accorded public acclaim, serious efforts to incorporate officially such claims in historical data are limited.

The story of Abaluyia women and Quakerism has not been told and their interaction with Quaker mission Christianity has not been a subject of academic study. The oversight is hardly justifiable since, according to the mission reports, by 1915 there were 43 tried and true members of the church and women were among them. By 1922 crowds of men, women and children were thronging into the church and women were visible because of their numbers and the 'gay kerchiefs which they wore on their heads.'¹³ Under-representation of women in the literature of EAYM is not unique to this organisation but it has been observed as a general trend in the literature of other religious groups as well.

Even though women were among the early converts to many missions and they formed an integral part of mission work, they are given little consideration in the literature. This is partly due to the fact that both the 19th century missionary movement and the African culture were patriarchal and they gave women little or no chance in what was regarded as public roles.¹⁴

As well as the patriarchal nature of the missionary movement and the African societies, the dearth of information about women is also due to the fact that they are ignored as sources.

Unless researchers have been interested in a topic that happens to be relevant to the experience of women, they seem to have disregarded them as useful informants, presuming them to be uninterested in and unaware of larger questions relating to political or economic change or structural patterns. In most cases this record of neglect seems to have been unconscious; only that part of society that happened to be male were considered when researchers established the pools of informants.¹⁵

Vansina has expressed similar views when discussing informants in oral tradition. He notes that in some traditions it is believed that 'women cannot know much about tradition because of their sex, which excludes them from taking part in public

¹³ *Religious Life our Mission field*, Richmond Ind: American Friends Board of Missions, 1948. 24.

¹⁴ Adrian Hastings, "Were Women a special case?" in Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood & Shirley Ardener, (Eds). *Women and Missions: Past and Present, Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*. Oxford: Berg, 1993. 110. Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present*, London: SPCK, 1995. 87 & 190.

¹⁵ David Henige, *Oral Historiography*, London: Longman, 1982. 48.

affairs'.¹⁶ In the interaction between Quaker missionaries and the Luyia people, the Luyia women were often assumed to be passive recipients rather than active participants. They were treated as missiological objects rather than subjects and as a result the voices of these women were seldom recorded in the reports and minutes of church gatherings. Their contributions were regarded as insignificant and trivial compared to those of their male counterparts. It is in this connection that Ardener has noted that: 'in being seen as adjuncts to men, rather than as historical protagonists in their own right, women have been systematically written out of historical records and anthropological records'.¹⁷ Lack of documentary evidence is at times 'equated with historical passivity or, even worse with historical insignificance'.¹⁸ This thesis therefore, to use the words of Mercy Amba Oduyoye, is about 'recreating and retrieving women's stories so that they can become an integral part of the story of the church and of Africa as a whole.'¹⁹

When one decides to research the lives of Abaluyia Quaker women, the difficulties of locating sources and developing a workable methodology are formidable. If history is a reconstruction of the past it is therefore clear that silence and omissions have been part of the historical work related to women in EAYM. This thesis reconstructs women's story and their roles and experiences in EAYM by using oral interviews, participation- observation and the silence of omission as sources. The decision to do this was arrived at when I realised that there was a dearth of information about women both in the literature of EAYM as noted above and, in the various archives that house the Quaker mission work among Abaluyia. Various libraries in Britain and Kenya were consulted and a full list of the sources appears at the end of the thesis in an appendix.

In Britain I consulted the Friends House Library in London and Woodbrooke College Library in Birmingham and SOAS in London. Even though these libraries house

¹⁶ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Method*, London: Routledge & Kegan, 1965. 195.

¹⁷ Bowie, Kirkwood, Ardener, (Eds), *Women and Missions*, 1.

¹⁸ Cheryl Walker, (Ed), *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, London: James Currey, 1990. 3.

¹⁹ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 'The Search for a two winged theology: women's participation in the development of Theology in Africa.' in Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro, (Eds), *Talitha Qumi!* Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1990, 22.

information on British Quakers, the Friends House in particular had mission records of the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions (AFBFM), which became Friends United Meeting (FUM). It also had major journals such as the *American Friend*, *African Record*, *Missionary Advocate*, and *Quaker Life* which were avenues of communication for the Quaker missionaries. The *African Record* especially was a valuable source for early missionary views and work among women. Special articles by women missionaries about women's work provided me with substantial information on the attitudes which formed the notion of mission work among women. The *Missionary Advocate* was particularly important because it was specifically for mission work and it was written by and for women. This gave me useful information about the ways in which mission work among women was supported. In the SOAS Library I looked into the Archives of the International Missionary Council on East Africa and in particular the work of American Friends in Kenya.

The second archival source I consulted was the Kaimosi Office which is the headquarters of EAYM and some records of FAM and EAYM are stored there. These records are not catalogued but simply placed in heaps of boxes on top of each other. Despite the poor state of these records I spent time sifting through this heap of papers and found notes about Maria Maraga, the first Luyia woman to become a Quaker.²⁰ Many of the later records especially after 1970 are in files but the files are not organised in any order and they are scattered in the rooms of the building. One file marked 'Women' contained a few reports and letters and information about a few annual conferences of the Women's Yearly Meeting. This file also gave me a lead to information which I had to find out more about. As well as the Kaimosi Office I used the Friends Bible Institute Library which contained some information about the institute.

The third archival source I consulted was the government records at the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi. The National Archives contain a wide range of documents, among which the following were explored: District files for North Nyanza and Elgon Nyanza, Kakamega and Bungoma districts. Provincial files for

²⁰ Information about Maraga is used in chapters three and six of this thesis.

Nyanza province, Western province. The records of the Friends Africa Mission (FAM) in microfilm, the files of Maendeleo ya Wanawake. (Women's Development). As well as being properly catalogued, the information at the archives was better preserved and it provided me with some basic and background information

The KNA information was important because it shed light on the social, economic and political situation within which the Quaker missionaries worked. As regards women's work both the government of the time and the missions shared the same philosophy, that women were to be prepared for good motherhood. Outside the KNA, I also consulted the St. Paul's theological archives in Limuru. These archives contained interview transcripts, especially on the churches in western Kenya. These oral interviews included those of Rasoah Mutua, the first Quaker woman to train as a pastor whose information is used extensively in chapter eight of this thesis. Although I met and interviewed her, she was old and frail. The St. Paul's' interview was done in the mid-sixties, when she was more alert. The St. Paul's oral interviews helped to clarify the information that she gave me. St. Paul's also had research papers on some aspects of the Quaker church in Western Kenya even though there was nothing specific on women.

As well as visiting these archives to look for data, some data was sent to me from other archives such as the Earlham School of Religion which houses records for FAIM and FAM. These were in the form of copies of letters which I could not find in other archives or on microfiche.

After the archival research I embarked on oral and observation participation research which I conducted between December 1995 and June 1996. Over fifty interviews were carried out, with women outnumbering men. A full list of the informants is appended to this thesis.²¹ The informants included professional people such as teachers, pastors, elders, and missionaries, former and present leaders of EAYM and a mixture of rural and urban Quakers. Since three quarters of the members of EAYM are in rural areas, the majority of the interviewees were from the rural areas. The age range for both sexes was from twenty five to one hundred years old. The educational level of the interviewees ranged from university graduates to those with no formal

education at all. Most women professionals interviewed were either teachers or nurses.

The interviews were conducted in three Districts of Western province- Vihiga, Kakamega, and Bungoma.²² These districts were specially chosen because they covered the areas where Kaimosi, Vihiga, Liranda Malava and Lugulu, the first FAM missions, were situated.²³ Kaimosi was specially chosen as a base because of being the first mission station and the headquarters of EAYM from 1902 to 1979, and because it is the host of several educational institutions which were started by FAM.²⁴

I conducted all the interviews with individuals as well as groups and attended church services and special services like funerals to observe how they were being conducted and who did what.²⁵ At the beginning of the research I was fortunate to attend two annual Conferences of the Women's Yearly Meeting. One was for the Women in

²¹ Pages 320-324.

²² See Map 2 of the districts in Western Kenya, page 3

²³ See map 3 of the early mission stations , page 10

²⁴ These institutions are Friends Hospital, Friends College of commerce and Technology, Kaimosi Teacher's college Kaimosi Girls High School. Kaimosi Junior Primary school, Kaimosi Village Polytechnic, Kaimosi mixed Secondary School, Friends Bible Institute. Apart from Kaimosi Village polytechnic and Friends Bible Institute, the other institutions are managed by the government of Kenya.

²⁵ During the whole period of research I attended five funerals in two of which, I had interviewed the deceased. One meeting of General Superintendents, three Women's Conferences, two Yearly Meeting conferences and One triennial conference and several Sunday services.



Map 3: First Quaker Mission stations: Kaimosi 1902, Vihiga 1906, Liranda 1906, Lugulu 1913, Malava 1919.

EAYM and the other was for the women of EAYM South. In both conferences I was introduced and welcomed and I used the opportunity to make contacts with the women I was later to interview. The conferences were an opportunity to see how women use their space in EAYM. For the interviews I chose to use informal in-depth interviews rather than structured questionnaires following Oakley's views on interviewing women. This method gave me the opportunity to get to know my interviewees and to be able to share on an equal level rather than 'objectify them'.²⁶ Interviews varied in length, with an average interview lasting three to four hours. The interview included several things including basic biographical detail for those who were willing to share it. The line of questioning often pursued particular events or situations about which the individual was knowledgeable. Most interviews were recorded but permission was asked before the interview. If an interviewee objected to the use of the tape, notes were taken during the interview. Some interviewees would want the tape to be switched off on some issue that they were talking about, especially if the opinion which they held was contrary to what the church held. Individual interviews were successful especially with women when they were carried out in their homes and this gave them a feeling of self-confidence as they were in control. The kind of hospitality that was offered to me was an indication of 'being welcomed as a guest, not merely tolerated as an inquisitor.'²⁷ Most women interviewees were keen to talk about themselves and their experiences of the church because it is something they had never been asked before. At last there was someone who was interested in their status, roles and experiences.

As well as individual interviews I carried out some group interviews, but the Chango group was the most successful. The other groups were less successful because it was a busy time of the year and it was not easy to assemble together in one place. Through this group I had the opportunity to interview a mixed group and experience the dynamics of discussions between men and women. On issues that affected women, the male elders blamed women for their lot, arguing that they were not in

²⁶ Ann Oakley, 'Interviewing Women' in H. Roberts (Ed), *Doing Feminist Research*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988, 41.

²⁷ J. Finch, 'Its Great to Have Someone to Talk to': The Ethics and the Politics of Interviewing Women' in C. Bell, and H. Roberts, (Eds), *Social Researching Politics, Problems, Practice*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, 73.

leadership because they were not ready to take on the challenges of leadership. Although the elders blamed the women for their lot, they were not ready to give women the opportunity to express themselves. But women in the Chango group were able to show how the elders were a hindrance to their participation in leadership roles.²⁸

Because of the prevailing circumstances some key leaders were afraid of being exposed and were suspicious of my motives. This made it difficult for me to find out from them where I might locate the whereabouts of some interviewees. But the nature of my research did not pose any threats and I had the great advantage of being a grandchild of one of the pioneer Quaker women and I spoke the language. On one occasion my interviewee turned me down because she had been warned to beware of researchers like me. I had to go through another elder to dispel her fears and after the first interview she said the elder who had warned her was misinformed.

Sources and methods of research especially on the interaction between western missionaries and Africans vary and have disadvantages whether they are written or informal in-depth interviews. In written sources there are instances, for example, where missionaries, despite their intentions misunderstood what was going on. While they got the dates right because they wrote soon after the event, the information should be treated with caution. Oral information and participation observation allows one to see and interpret events from the interviewees' perspective. However the dates may not be accurate, memories fail as the interviewees get older, or an informant may tell different stories to different groups. In this thesis I have tried to weigh both oral and written sources against each other. In cases where I had to rely on oral evidence, especially on issues that were not corroborated by any textual evidence, I had to test the information with more than one informant; if this was not possible I had to rely on the integrity of the informants and the consistency of the evidence. It is within this context that this thesis examines and interprets the status, roles and experiences of Abaluyia women in the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends.

²⁸ Chango group, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

CHAPTER ONE

1 WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL ABALUYIA²⁹ SOCIETY

1.1 INTRODUCTION.

Much has been written about the place and role of women in traditional African societies.³⁰ A similar undertaking with regard to the Abaluyia society will be an addition to such writings. Even though this chapter on women in Abaluyia society will reflect some of the concerns raised and conclusions drawn by the existing literature, its examination of the place and role of women reflects a different interest and concern. Its main concern is with the nature of the encounter between Abaluyia and the Quaker missionary views and attitudes towards women and womanhood and the result that emerged from the interaction between the two groups.

It is important, first of all to reconstruct and highlight the position and roles of women from the mid-nineteenth century until 1902 when the Friends Africa Industrial Mission (FAIM) commenced work among the Abaluyia people. Even though many of the practices which are described in this chapter no longer take place in their original form, the forms in which they appear indicate how the traditional ideology is reflected in modern Abaluyia society. It is therefore important to reconstruct the past in order to understand the present.

This chapter demonstrates how the place and roles of women among Abaluyia was determined by a comprehensive ideology, which for lack of appropriate terminology this thesis has called 'engoko (chicken) Ideology'. This ideology permeated the Abaluyia society and even with the contradictions it carried, was the guiding principle governing all relationships between men and women. Before analysing

²⁹ Abaluyia (Pl)—people Omuluyia /Muluyia (sing). Luluyia is the language and Buluyia is the country. Different spelling for the words exist (Abaluhya, Luhyia, Luya Luyia). The spellings used in this thesis are those that have become commonly accepted in recent years

³⁰ For example Denise Paulme & H.M. Wright, *Women in Tropical Africa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963; Nancy J Hafkin, & Edna G. Bay, (Eds), *Women in Africa. Studies in Social and Economic Change*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976; Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist & Lamphere, Louise, (Eds), *Women Culture and Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974; Etienne Mona & Eleanor Leacock (Eds), *Women and Colonisation: Anthropological Perspectives*, New York: Praeger, 1980; Harold K. Schneider, *Livestock and Equality in East Africa: the Economic Basis for Social Structure*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979; Eleanor Leacock, Leela Dube; & Shirley Ardener, (Eds), *Myths of Male Dominance, Essays on Women in Society and Development*, Oxford: OUP, 1986.

engoko and how it permeated the Abaluyia society, the chapter will briefly discuss the setting of the Abaluyia people.

1.2 THE ABALUYIA PEOPLE

Abaluyia constitute the largest group of the Bantu-speaking people in the western province of Kenya.³¹ At the turn of the century they numbered about a million people; but according to the census of 1989, they numbered about 4 million.³² Abaluyia are divided into eighteen autonomous sub-groups, each containing a loose connection of patrilineal clans which descended from a common ancestor.³³

Abaluyia share a common language, Luluyia, with some variations in dialect especially between Llogooli spoken by Abalogoli and Lubukusu spoken by Ababukusu. These are the two major groups among whom the Quaker missions worked, but there was also work amongst Abakabarasi, Abatachoni Abatirichi Abaidakho, and Abaisukha. As well as the language, these groups share similar customs especially those that deal with women.

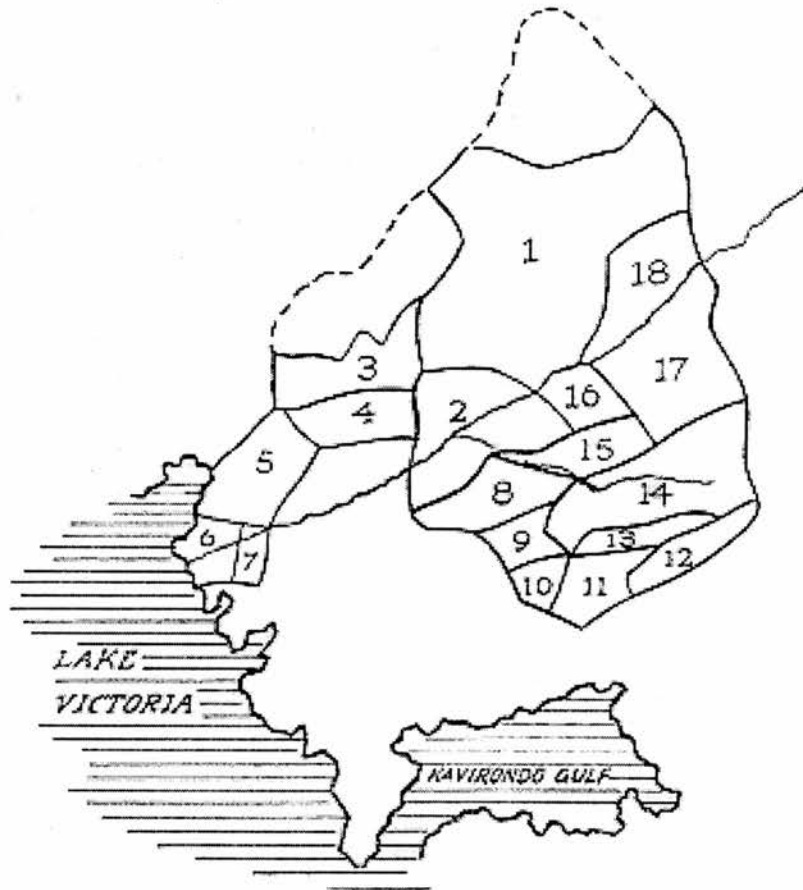
Prior to the British rule and Quaker mission work, Abaluyia were grouped in patriarchal clans which held corporate ownership of land governed by a clan elder known as *Omwami*, *Omukasa*, *Wengoma*, with the assistance of a council (*Eshiina*) of the leading lineage elders.³⁴ It is in this corporate unit that the 'spirit of togetherness' was cultivated both for the well-being of the individual and that of the community. The clan not only had a corporate identity but also stressed the importance of mutual aid and collective efforts. This meant that anyone who had surplus time, talent or material contributed to the well-being of the group as a whole.

³¹ Detailed information on the history and anthropology of Abaluyia is contained in these books and articles. Gunter Wagner, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, Vol. 1. London: OUP, 1949; Vol. II. 1956; "The Abaluyia of Kavirondo (Kenya)", In Darryl Forde, (Ed), *African Worlds*, London: OUP, 1954; "The Political Organisation of the Bantu of Kavirondo" in E. E Evans Pritchard, (Ed), *African Political Systems*, London: Routledge & Paul Kegan, 1987; N. Stam "Bantu Kavirondo of Mumias District" *Anthropos* Vol. IV – XV, 1919 – 1920. 986- 980; Walter Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki Kenya*, London: OUP. 1960; Gideon S. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya*, Nairobi: EAPH 1967; J. Osogo, *Life in Kenya in the Olden Days: The Baluyia* Nairobi: OUP, 1965; *A History of the Baluyia*, Nairobi: OUP, 1966.

³² Republic of Kenya: *Population Census, 1989*, Vol. 1. Nairobi: Government Printers, 1994. 221.

³³ See map 4, page 15.

³⁴ Were, *A History*, 99.



Map 4: The Abaluyia Groups

KEY:

- | | | |
|-----------------|----|--------------|
| 1. Bukusu. | 10 | Bunyore |
| 2. Wanga | 11 | Maragoli |
| 3. Bukhayo | 12 | Tiriki |
| 4. Marach | 13 | Idakho |
| 5. Samia | 14 | Isukha |
| 6. Bunyala (CN) | 15 | Butsotso |
| 7. Busonga | 16 | Bunyala (NN) |
| 8. Marama | 17 | Kabras |
| 9. Kisa. | 18 | Tachoni. |

This map is adapted from Osogo, *Life in Kenya in the Olden days: The Baluyia*. Page v.

Such a system ensured that no member starved or fell below a certain standard. The clan was responsible for settling common grievances when they occurred. The representative male elders of the clans concerned settled inter-clan disputes. Once an agreement was reached it was binding on all the members. All this emphasised the degree of authority which the clan elders exercised over domestic and foreign affairs. The authority for leadership was derived from age and maturity, reputation as a warrior and the possession of wealth, since influence depended partly on the ability to offer hospitality and thus make the homestead a centre of local social life. As well as these, qualities of gentleness, wisdom and freedom from greed and jealousy were considered essential in managing community affairs and preserving unity during disputes. The power to rule was invested on the clan elders because Luyia society was structured on the basis of age and sex.

The rules of seniority were stressed during the socialisation of the children and young people. Respect for elders was the ideal behaviour of every young person. It was the driving force and guiding principle in economic, political and social aspects of the society. Economically the Luyia depended on agriculture, growing sorghum, finger-millet, beans, sweet potatoes and bananas. Even though white maize is a staple crop today it was introduced only in 1920.³⁵ Local maize was known as *Amaduma ge kebendi* (coloured maize). Apart from being agriculturists, Abaluyia also kept livestock and fowls, including goats, sheep, cows, and chickens. Livestock had sacrificial significance and goats, sheep and cows in particular provided skins for clothing and were used as bridewealth. The possession of livestock was also an indication of a man's wealth.

As well as being significant in the social and political organisation of the clan, Luyia elders were important because of their position in the religious and ritual observances, especially in the rites of passage: birth, initiation (circumcision) marriage and death ceremonies.³⁶ Most Luyia groups practised male circumcision,

³⁵ Marvin P. Miracle, 'The Introduction and Spread of Maize.' *The Journal of African History* 6 (1,2 & 3) 1965. 39 – 55; *Maize in Tropical Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966. 97.

³⁶ The rites of passage are dealt with later in the chapter in relation to the position of women in the rituals.

but Abatachoni practised both male and female circumcision.³⁷ The actual practice of male circumcision varied from one community to another although the philosophy behind it was the same. Traditionally the average age for circumcision was eighteen to twenty years; that is when a boy had reached full physical and mental maturity. The stages of the rite of circumcision included the preparation, the actual physical operation, the period of seclusion and the feast of rejoining the community. Circumcision ceremonies used to take place every three to four years on average, at a time set by the elders of all the clans belonging to the same group. It was usually after the main harvest in August so that there was plenty of food to feed the initiates while they were in seclusion. Circumcision was about the education of the initiate into understanding the roles and values of society and their roles, responsibilities and privileges in the clan.

The rite of circumcision gave the men from each clan a sense of belonging in regard to the history of the clan. Men who were circumcised on the same occasion belonged to the same age-set (known as *elikula* among Abalogooli and *lubaga* among Ababukusu). Each age set was given an identity, such as a name after a major natural disaster, war, or a meteorological event. The age-set system was a way through which the history of the clan was reckoned. Among the Tiriki, for example, names of age-sets formed a cycle of twelve periods which repeated itself indefinitely.³⁸ The Bukusu on the other hand would group six age-sets into generations. Since the age-set system was a form of recording community history, men developed a better sense of identity and belonging than women who did not go through such a rite. Men were not observers of history but initiators, shapers and participants. This involvement in the making of history created for them a bond with each other. Among the Tiriki, for instance, Sangree notes that:

...The initiation rites, apparently with marked effectiveness, do give the initiate a sense of belonging to a special tribal brotherhood, and do much to teach him what kinds of social attitudes are appropriate for and expected of members of that brotherhood.³⁹

³⁷ Female circumcision (clitoridectomy) is discussed on the section of rites of passage and women later in the chapter.

³⁸ Sangree, *Age Prayer and Politics*, 68.

³⁹ Walter Sangree, 'The Bantu Tiriki of Western Kenya', in James L. Gibbs (Ed), *Peoples of Africa*, London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc, 1994. 67.

While men had an identity and a sense of historical belonging to the clan, the women remained at the periphery of the clan even among Abatachoni who practised clitoridectomy, because clitoridectomy was not regarded with the importance as regards the position of women in the clan equal to male circumcision (as this chapter will show). They lacked both the historical footage and the ritual significance which circumcision gave to the men. Women therefore were excluded as 'un-initiated and uncircumcised from the formal religious life of the tribe.'⁴⁰ The rite of circumcision prepared the men for their roles in society as leaders and it also initiated them as ritual beings so that they could participate fully in the social and religious affairs of the community.

As initiated men, the male elders were responsible for the family or clan's religious rites, especially sacrifice. The aim of the sacrifice was threefold: to sustain, renew and restore a social order. Luyia people believed that physical health, material well-being and success was the normal state of affairs, even if this was not always the case. When these were threatened, the social order had been tampered with, and in order for it to be restored, sacrifice had to be made. The people who performed the ritual sacrifice were the elders because they had passed through all the initiation ceremonies and had been initiated into a higher social and religious status.

Mbiti has called such people 'specialists', in virtue of their specialised office, knowledge and skill in religious matters.⁴¹ These people are chiefs, priests, medicine men and women, diviners and rainmakers. Among Abaluyia the religious specialists functioned in three categories, even though some elders combined various roles. The first category, was composed of those who sustained the social order, the second category were those who restored the social order and the third category were those who upset the social order. The elders who sustained and perpetuated a social order were known as *omukevi* (circumciser) *omukumu* (diviners) and *omung'oli* (prophets). Each of these elders had a part to play in the life of individuals as well as the community.

As well as diviners and prophets there was another set of people, *avahi* (herbalists), who dealt with ailments. The art of providing medicine for all sorts of ailments was

⁴⁰ Sangree: *Age Prayer and Politics*, 59.

⁴¹ J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969. 166.

common and both men and women practised it. The work of *avahi* was supplemented by *avaliuli* who unearthed and exposed magical objects. It was linked up with a belief that there were some people in the society who disturbed the social harmony. These people *avalogi* (witches), who employed magical powers to effect malicious intent to harm a victim. It was the work of *avaliuli* to detect, unearth and expose the evil magical objects used by the witches. The role of *avaliuli* was exclusively male, the women on the other hand dealt with the magic of the evil eye which was believed to be performed by women.

Even though some of the offices mentioned in the above paragraphs were shared between men and women, the role of *avasalisi* (ritual elder/priest) was a male role. *Avasalisi* worked in sustaining the social order, to restore it and to renew it. One of the areas that was significant for the ritual elders was the sacrifices during the funeral ceremonies. The beliefs about the ancestors necessitated the ritual sacrifices on their behalf. The ancestors were believed to be dependent upon the living for their peace in the world of the spirits. It was necessary for those who were therefore alive in society to offer sacrifices to help the departed settle into the life of the spirit world. If this was not done, then the ancestors would not settle but return to the living causing tension or conflict.

The ritual sacrifice at a funeral was significant because it was the means through which the spirit of the dead person was laid to rest. The world of the spirit was gendered, so that male spirits and female spirits were treated with corresponding sacrifices. If a spirit of an ancestor appeared to the living at odd times, then appropriate steps were taken to lay it to rest. But if a spirit of an ancestor appeared during an occasion such as the birth of a child it meant that this ancestor was asking the child to be named after him or her and if this was done, then the spirit would not re-appear. As well as sacrifices being made on their behalf, ancestors were remembered through the wealth of wisdom handed over by tradition from one generation to another. This tradition was evoked in ethical matters by the phrase *avaguga vavola* (our forefathers said). The term *avaguga* (forefather) was not inclusive of female ancestors thus showing that either the ancestral world was gendered or that wisdom was.

Apart from ritual sacrifice for the ancestral spirits, sacrifice was the most solemn form of worship. The chief concern of sacrifice was to maintain a peaceful relationship between the living and the supernatural world. If such a relationship was not maintained it was believed that people experienced misfortune and suffering. A sacrifice in this case was important to ward off evil. In a community sacrifice young girls could collect firewood for lighting the sacrificial fire, otherwise women were prohibited from leading in any ritual sacrifice. In sacrifices to both the ancestral and supernatural spirits, women were excluded because of the interpretation of authority. Women lacked this authority because they were not initiated into the clans in which they were born or married. They lacked a sense of belonging and the authority that went with it.

It is this lack of authority and sense of belonging with regard to Luyia women and Luyia philosophical reasoning which ensured the preservation of the status quo that is being described as *engoko* ideology

1.3 **ENGOKO IDEOLOGY.**

Engoko, (chicken) was a very important bird among Abaluyia because it was used as part of the diet, it served as an honourable 'gift item' to guests, and was frequently used as an object for ritual sacrifice in some 'rites of passage.'⁴² In this single creature lay the means to feed, to communicate feelings of honour towards respected guests and to reach out to the spiritual world. As such, *engoko* had material, social and religious significance in Abaluyia homes. Lack of it in any home meant a lot more than the lack of a physical reality called *engoko*. Such a lack would be symbolic of the inability of the members of that home to respond adequately to the physical, social and spiritual realities of normal existence in Abaluyia society.

It is not surprising therefore, that the acquisition and multiplication of *zingoko* (chickens) was an important primary concern in every home. Abaluyia believed that in order for a home to be economically stable, it had to start from the possession of *engoko*, then proceed to other animals such as goats, sheep and cattle. It thus provided the economic base from which homes went on to acquire more wealth in

⁴² Joseph .O. Otiende, *Habari Za Waluyia*, Nairobi: EALB, 1948, 28; Daniel, M. Wako, *The Western Abaluyia and their Proverbs*, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau. 1954. 15-16.

cattle and human beings. Thus *engoko*, in addition to being of material and spiritual importance, also had economic significance in Abaluyia society.

Even though women played a central role in the rearing of this all-important fowl in their homes, it was *omugiro* (taboo) for them to eat it on the pretext that if they did they would be under a curse leading them not to be married. If they were married it would result in having deformed or no children.⁴³ These consequences in turn may lose them the chance of becoming mothers, something which accorded them status and value in the society. As a result of this prohibition, men were effectively able to deny women the choice to enjoy the products of their labour. No such restrictions were applied to men.

The prohibition implied a defect in women which men did not suffer from, and so were able to do what women could not do, without suffering the consequences. By the nature of this prohibition, men ensured that women saw marriage and childbearing as the only means by which society could accord them a status of respect and value. And since men were the ones who initiated marriage contracts with women, it is easy to see how the prohibition myth guaranteed men of Abaluyia society power to determine and control the forces and means of production.

The way in which Abaluyia women were made producers of material, economic, social and religious resources but denied access to the control and decision making about their use through a prohibition myth designed by men, is what is being referred to here as *engoko* ideology. The myth was the bedrock on which the philosophy and defence of sexual inequality between men and women in all aspects of Abaluyia society examined below was based and rationalised. In other words sexual asymmetry in all aspects of Abaluyia society had its basis and reasoning in this prohibition of women from eating the chickens that they reared.

⁴³ Bridget O'Laughlin, 'Mediation of Contradiction: Why Mbum Women Do Not Eat Chicken' in Rosaldo and Lamphere, *Women Culture & Society*, 299. Among the Mbum Kpau, women neither eat chicken nor goat for fear of pain and death in childbirth, the bearing of abnormal or unhealthy children even sterility'; John Robson, (Ed), *Food Ecology and Culture: Readings in the Anthropology of Dietary Practices*, London: Gordon and Breach, 1980. 97-117. Olivia Nasaka 'Women and Taboo' in Musimbi, A. Kanyoro. & Nyambura, Njoroge, *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*, Nairobi: Acton, 1996. 164. Among the Baganda, Nasaka notes that 'a woman who was still of child bearing age should not eat eggs and chicken. If a woman broke this taboo she would be regarded as a thief and an indecent woman'.

In actual fact, a woman in Abaluyia society effectively played a similar role to that of *engoko* in the following ways. First, in addition to being the food that satisfied her menfolks' carnal appetite, her presence in a home personified the availability of food for her family, guests and the community at large. This is because she was centrally involved in the production of food. Second, like *engoko*, her importance lay not in what she was as a person but what she produced for her owner, the man who married her. Her value was measured by her success in producing wealth for her owner. Third, as *engoko* had no control over the wealth it brought its owner, an Abaluyia woman also had no control over the wealth she created in her home, and what she enjoyed from it was very little. Fourth, like *engoko*, which was part of the property of the home but was not really part of the human family of that home, so was an Abaluyia woman. She was a property of her home, but she did not really belong to that home. An Abaluyia woman was like *engoko*, which belonged to another family of living creatures. She was a stranger (both in and outside her clan) – a passing stranger upon whom the continuity of the human family, in terms of male offsprings depended. Fifth, like the first *engoko* in an Abaluyia home she was depended upon to be the means through which additional birds, animals, and people were brought into that home, and so an Abaluyia woman's created wealth became the means by which her husband acquired more women and thus more wealth.

The taboo of *engoko* informed the relationships between men and women, young and old, children and parents. It also served as a pecking order in matters ranging from those who were served first at meal times to who had the last say in any decision regarding the home and society. It also defined the division of labour between men and women. The *engoko* emphasised the cultural, social, and economic differences between the sexes in Abaluyia society and it discriminated between the role and place of women and that of men. The rest of this chapter will seek to highlight how *engoko* as expounded above, permeated and expressed itself in the various aspects of the Abaluyia society and ensured harmony in that society.

1.3.1 FOOD CONSUMPTION.

Regulations about food consumption among Abaluyia were based on the type of food and the people who ate it. Although the basic food was the same for everybody, certain foods were preserved for certain people either for health reasons or the

position they held in society. For women, regulations on food consumption were based on both the health and their role in society. Although women were allowed to eat fewer quantities of certain parts of goat, sheep and cow meat, we have seen the taboo against them eating *engoko*. The other taboos on food were for unmarried girls or brides and young women not to consume milk.⁴⁴ Although it is argued that some of these taboos on food were used for health reasons, the taboos largely indicate the eating habits of the Abaluyia and the inequalities that they represented. Men and women ate separately, and 'good wives' were expected to serve the best food to their husbands.

The prohibition of chicken to women was not important in everyday life, because chickens were killed and consumed only on special occasions. Yet in such culturally special contexts, the prohibition served to distinguish sexual differences and sexual ranking. When a male visitor came the man killed a chicken and cooked it in a special pot called *eyambeba*.⁴⁵ The fact that the chicken was cooked in a pot which was used to cook rats which were a delicacy for men, enforced the chicken taboo.

The *engoko* taboo was extended to the way certain foods were distributed, for example meat. It was the privilege of the father to distribute the meat in the family between his wife and children but starting with himself because it was his 'undisputed privilege' to retain the best and largest piece for himself. Similarly when beer was served within the village or at a work party, the first and largest amounts were always 'offered to the senior men present'.⁴⁶ As these examples illustrate masculine privilege in food consumption was expressed within the class of 'best food'. To understand why chicken should be distinguished as a special class with its own prohibition, it is important to understand the economic importance of the chicken.

⁴⁴ Nathan Luvai, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

⁴⁵ The root word for *eyambeba* is *embeba* (rat). So *eyambeba* is a pot which was used to cook rats. The men used to hunt and lay traps for animals and rats were among the things they caught and cooked to eat. *Eyambeba* was used to deny women from eating *engoko* because it had been used to cook rats which women did not eat.

⁴⁶ Jotham Mbohia, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

1.3.2 ECONOMIC POWER.

The saying *Omukali naria engoko arahobara omugudze sigotuga mba* (If a woman is allowed to eat chicken, the home will be reduced to poverty) is an indication of the economic significance of *engoko*.⁴⁷ Since the economic strength of the family depended on the women's hard labour, *engoko* was used to restrain them from consuming what they produced and this diminished their economic power and fulfilment.

Secondly being an agricultural people, the dominant paradigm of Abaluyia traditional society was the cycle of days and seasons, rituals and ceremonies. The goal of all these were to harmonise people's needs with the natural forces around them. The sun and seasons of the year reckoned time. The farming year was the calendar and people knew the times of planting, weeding and harvesting. Work was therefore understood as a life's requirement for all people regardless of age or sex. Men, women and children shared the work. But there was a dual sex organisational principle behind the structures of Abaluyia economy, governed by prohibitions. Men and women worked in different areas and were skilled at different tasks, prepared and trained for their work in different ways. They achieved common goals by doing different jobs. Men cleared the bushes and prepared land for planting. They did construction work building houses and making fences for protection. They were also in charge of their own beer straw, but it is the women who brewed the beer. The women gathered the firewood, prepared the fire, brought in water, prepared the salt and cooked the food. They prepared the houses for stay by smearing the walls and levelling the floors, cleaning the cattle pen, and watching the food in the granary. As well as this the woman was in charge of rearing domestic animals such as goats, sheep and fowl.

Even though men and women had to work hard in order to survive in an agricultural economy, women's work was dominated by immediate tasks. Providing food was both an immediate and a long-term task because it meant taking care of the food store, and preserving the seeds for the next planting season. The division of labour was done in such a way that women worked all the time. It was the hard working

⁴⁷ Loice Eregwa, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

women who earned the name of a respectable woman and those who failed to reach such a standard were cast in male folklore as 'lazy and busy bodies.'⁴⁸

It would appear that the sexual division of labour in the economy of the Abaluyia was strictly defined in the transformation of products centring in the household rather than in production. Women could not make essential items such as houses, granaries, hoes etc just as men could not make pots, grind millet, brew beer or make salt. This division was not based on biological differences but was culturally determined.

1.3.3 REPRODUCTION.

The presence of a woman in a home personified the availability of food for her family, guests and the community, but more than this her presence personified the continuation of the lineage because of her reproduction. This is why it was easy to reinforce the *engoko* taboo since it was linked to a woman's role as a mother which gave her a social standing in the community. Childbirth itself was a ceremony received with jubilation as it not only added new life to the community, but with it came security for old age. The future and strength of the clan lay in the number of children that were born into it.

Although a fairly even sex distribution of children was appreciated, sons and daughters were not valued equally. It was considered a misfortune if only daughters were born to a family. Among the Tiriki, for example, marriage was only considered truly consummated by the birth of at least three children. If a woman bore only one or two children and no more her husband had the right to send her home. If his wife had given birth to many daughters but few or no sons, he would very likely use the cattle received at the marriage of one of his elder daughters to pay bride-wealth for a second wife in order to bear him sons.⁴⁹

Because it is the sons who continued the lineage of a family, there was more value placed on them than daughters. Lack of sons meant 'the end of life' and the 'end of the clan.' It was the sons who bore the name of the clan because of the patriarchal nature of Abaluyia society. Sons were valued for the security of the community against wild animals and enemies. Even though women were significant as those who bore the sons, girls were not regarded with high esteem because they were a

⁴⁸ Chango group, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

potential loss to the lineage into which they were born. They transferred their productive and reproductive powers from their natal home to their marital homes.

Women were therefore socialised into a 'child bearing' role, which gave them a status symbol in the society. To be barren was a major tragedy for any Abaluyia woman.⁵⁰ Barrenness created hostility between a wife and husband and also between their clans. After a number of childless years, the term *omugomba* (barren woman) was used as a characteristic of the woman; the use of this appellation continued even long after a woman had passed childbearing age. Among men sterility and impotence were culturally recognised, but they were not deemed a moral stigma as in the case of women

Thus a marriage without children was incomplete. Ironically, if there were no children in a marriage the blame was borne by the woman and remedy was sought in polygyny as will be discussed under the section on the types of marriage.⁵¹ Since children were and are significant in the Abaluyia society, pregnancy and childbirth were treated with care. Pregnant women observed strict rules about food consumption in order not to harm the baby and prevent it from growing too big to make its birth difficult.⁵² Similar views have been noted in other groups as well.⁵³

The birth of a child was called *yakwitulisaku* meaning that a woman had defeated death. To die at childbirth meant she died herself and the community had lost both her and the new member. Such a death was usually blamed on the husband because it was believed 'that it is his spear (*lifumo*) or "Knife" (*omubano*) which caused the death, in other words it was his social actions that caused the death of his wife.'⁵⁴

With a successful birth, the mother was confined for two days if the child born was a girl and three days if it was a boy. This was meant to give the child and the mother

⁴⁹ Sangree, *Age Prayer and Politics*, 21.

⁵⁰ Enis Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996.

⁵¹ This thesis is using the term polygyny instead of polygamy which is the usual term because it is more precise. Polygyny means a matrimonial situation in which there is one husband but more than one wife.

⁵² Loice Abiria, Oral Interview, 28/12/1995.

⁵³ For example among the Yoruba, Olajubu notes that 'it is a taboo for pregnant women to eat snails or snake meat. Oyeronke Olajubu, 'The Effects of Taboos on the Health of African Women: The Yoruba Experience,' in Elizabeth Amoa (Ed), *Where God Reigns: Reflections on Women in God's World*. Accra: Sam-Woode. 1994. 27. Among the Malay Wilson has also noted that pregnant women are forbidden from eating food rich in protein. Christine Wilson 'Food Taboos of childbirth: the Malay Example' in John Robson, *Food Ecology and Culture: Readings in the Anthropology of Dietary Practices*, London: Gordon and Breach, 1980. 68.

some time to rest, and to protect the child from the evil eye. To announce the birth of a child and the sex, 'the husband suspends a small triangular piece of cow skin (*ekeselo*) from the middle of the doorway if the infant is a boy and a piece of calabash (*engogoto*) if a girl'.⁵⁵

Both the days of the mother's confinement after delivery and the symbols used to announce the sex of the child demonstrate *engoko* ideology. Concerning the days of confinement, a boy was believed to be more delicate at birth and needed extra care but at the same time it was also believed that his birth exhausted the mother more than the girl's. This was expressed by the symbols of a more permanent skin for the boy and a temporary piece of a broken pot for the girl. The more durable skin signified the boy's permanent membership to the clan while the less durable piece of a broken pot symbolised the girl's short lived membership to the clan.⁵⁶

1.3.4 NAMING CEREMONY

A child's naming ceremony took place three days after the birth of a baby girl and four after that of a boy. The nature of the naming ceremonies pointed to the significance of identity, position and role of each child. The type of names differed from one community to another, but ancestral names were important for the continuity of the clan. Both Wagner and Luvai describe the naming ceremony in the following manner. For the boy

The mother of the child comes with the child to the yard. His grandfather takes the *engulikwa* (an iron wristlet) and puts it round the infant's right arm. He then utters a blessing for the child and names the child.⁵⁷

Similarly, the girl

is named in the evening after the sun has set and not outside in the yard but inside the hut in the *vuhilu*-partition [Living room]. The ceremony is likewise performed by the brother of the child's paternal grandfather, but no *engulikwa* is tied round the girl's wrist.⁵⁸

Besides giving a child an identity, the naming ceremony showed how society viewed the differences between the sexes and the roles which each sex was expected to play in society. This is in connection with the time, place of naming and the gifts given

⁵⁴ KNA: E. A. Andere: *Abaluyia Customary Law Relating to Marriage and Inheritance*, 1952. 23.

⁵⁵ Wagner, *The Bantu*, 304; Luvai, *Miima*, 15.

⁵⁶ Loice Abiria, Oral Interview, 28/12/1996.

⁵⁷ Wagner, *The Bantu*, 320, Luvai *Miima*, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,

during the ceremony. For a boy, early morning symbolised strength and power which he was expected to grow into. For a girl, the evening symbolised her dependence on the power of the man, even though she was expected to be a hardworking person.

The place of naming symbolised the roles which the boy and the girl were expected to play in the society. The boy was expected to be a public and permanent figure symbolised by the yard, while the girl was expected to be private, symbolised by the house which also symbolised her transitory position in the community. A house would be built and destroyed while the yard was a permanent place. Apart from the place the gift of the iron wristlet given to the boy was a symbol of ownership. He was expected to inherit and be a custodian of the property of the family.

1.3.5 THE FIRST ANCESTRAL RITE ON BEHALF OF A CHILD

The first ancestral sacrifice offered on behalf of a child took place two or three months after birth. Describing the ceremony, Luvai says,

When the family of a child saw that the time for the rite was due, they prepared themselves by choosing the animal of the sacrifice. If the child was a girl the animal of the sacrifice was a she goat. But if the child was a boy the animal was a he goat. The animal of the sacrifice had to be one without any blemish. The women prepared the flour, which would be used during the sacrifice. On the day of the sacrifice an *ovwali* (altar) was built on which the animal was killed and roasted. An elder led this ceremony by first blowing *obwanga* (mixture of water and flour with herbs) on the child known as *okovida* (to sprinkle) which was followed by the ceremony of feeding the spirits.⁵⁹

Even though this was a sacrifice on behalf of an infant, the roles of men and women were defined differently. The leaders of the ceremony were special men who acted as *Omusalisi* (the priest) and the *Ombidi* (the blower of *Obwanga*).⁶⁰ While these men performed the ritual, the women cooked and served the food.

1.3.6 TSING'ANO (FOLK TALES.)

To fit into the Abaluyia social structure, boys and girls went through various forms and stages of socialisation. Up to the age of six, the women assumed all the responsibilities for the children such as feeding and nursing. After that, other members of the community introduced the children to other aspects of society.

⁵⁹ Luvai, *Miima*, 20.

⁶⁰ Herbert Asava, Oral Interview, 25/3/1996.

Women, men and peer groups were involved in this process which took various forms, but mainly *tsing'ano*.

Both women and men told *tsing'ano* to the children, but because children spent more time with their mothers and grandmothers, and it is their stories that the children remembered. *Tsing'ano* were used as a form of initiating the young into the day-to-day life of the community. And to help them understand themselves and the environment in which they lived. In her analysis of *tsing'ano* Kavetsa observes that both the language and themes were significant for the initiation process.

In examining the language of *tsi'ngano* we find that it is descriptive and straight forward, making reference to everyday activities, characters who are readily identifiable and familiar objects - both functional and environmental. This style had concrete immediacy to which children can relate without difficulty⁶¹

The language of *tsing'ano* was simple and easy for the young to understand, and identify with. In addition to this, the themes of *tsing'ano* were true to the day-to-day life of the young because the subject matter centred round family life, friendship bonds, collective obligations and overriding and embracing all these, the importance and necessity of work.⁶² The aim of *tsing'ano* was not just to point to the positive aspects of life but also the negative realities as well. Accordingly, some *tsing'ano* showed how people who behaved contrary to the socially accepted norms, were punished.

The themes on motherhood in some *tsing'ano* illustrated and emphasised the importance of mothers in relation to work and life in the community. *Tsing'ano* on motherhood did not entertain individualism, but portrayed and advocated the positive attribute of self-sacrifice for the well-being of the children.⁶³ Self-denial for the sake of others on the part of mothers was an aspect strongly defined by the *engoko* thinking which was instilled into daughters more than sons. Mothers were believed to have no life of their own in the community.

1.4 THE RITES OF PASSAGE

Van Gennep uses the phrase 'Rite of Passage' to refer to that period in life when ceremonial rituals are performed during the process of transition of an individual

⁶¹ Kavetsa Adagala, *Language Literature in Primary Schools: Llogooli ne Tsingano tsia Valogooli*. Nairobi: Institute of African studies University of Nairobi, Paper No. 21. 1979. 2.

⁶² Ibid, 6.

from one status of being to another. Rituals which are organised around the life cycle of a young person provide a healthy psychological and psychosocial climate for a smooth and healthy transition.⁶⁴ Along the same line Mbiti has noted that many African societies have rites of passage that are psychologically designed to assist a person to enter into the corporate life of the community. The transition is multidimensional because it is experienced physically, socially and religiously both by the individual and the community.⁶⁵ Abaluyia like other African groups had designed rites of passage in every stage of life. The following section looks at some of these rites to show how the rites of passage for women were different from those of men and indicated the place and roles that each of the sexes played. The rites also illustrate the position that was accorded to women both as children and as adults.

After puberty, both young men and women were initiated into adulthood. The initiation process was different between the sexes and it involved physical and moral preparation for adult life. As it has been noted early in this chapter, the young men were initiated into manhood through the rite of circumcision. For them circumcision was both a social, physical and ritual event. Circumcision was a means through which men attempted to purge out from boys anything that was feminine and impart to the men knowledge and history of their clan which defined their roles and identity in society. Through song and dance, vital information was passed to the initiates. Myths and sayings were used to supplement this during the information period. The language, which was used to pass information to the initiates, gave them an understanding about the worldview of the clans and how they fitted into it. This kind of information shaped their identity as members of the clan in contrast to the women's identity formation.

1.4.1 CLITORIDECTOMY.

The initiation rites of women differed among the Abaluyia groups. While all Abaluyia groups practised male circumcision, Abatachoni also practised clitoridectomy. Because it was only in one group, and not widespread, and has now disappeared, little is said or known about it. But since it is one of the issues that the

⁶³ Ibid, 8.

⁶⁴ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960. XIII.

⁶⁵ Mbiti, *African Religions*, 121.

Quakers dealt with in relation to women it is important to mention it here. Clitoridectomy had two aspects to it: one was the physical operation and the other was the social aspect which was in the form of song and dance.

Clitoridectomy was carried out by women on teenage girls before they got married. The time of clitoridectomy was similar to the boy's circumcision, but the girls went to the home of a woman who was specialised in the act and she performed the operation on them. The girls were expected to go through the operation without flinching their eyes, as this was a sign of courage. After the operation the initiates were taken into a special hut known as *likombe* to recover. While they were in this hut they were known as *bafulu* (initiates) and older women took care of them while their mothers sent food through younger girls.

Several things took place during the recovery period. First the initiates learnt to brew beer and brewed for those who were minding them. This was followed by another ceremony known as '*khubapa kamechi*' (to bathe) when the initiates went to have a bath at the river. This was a symbol of the fact that they were recovering well. After this they entered a period of dancing which involved other women. The dance was known as *etinda* and it was performed in the nude.

Before the initiates left their seclusion hut the ceremony of *khulichha engwe yie bakas* (to tie the leopard of women) was performed. This was a major secret rite by the women and for the women. It was believed that if a man saw this rite he would die. The rite symbolised women's power and men did not dare go anywhere near it. The items of this rite were provided for by the father of the girl and they included three *chikoba* (ropes), two *chisachi* (pots) filled with ghee, and one empty *enyungu* (small clay pot). These items were used to perform the rite of tying the leopard. The leaders of these rites were three women known as *omwiseli*, *omupeyi*, and *omuteki* (the leader, assistant, and the cook). They led the women through the ceremony by initiating the *bafulu* into the rite while the other women sang and danced. When the ceremony was over the women swept the home where it was taking place. The leaders were given food and gifts to take back to their houses.⁶⁶

Although clitoridectomy among Abatachoni had both a physical and social aspect, it was largely a social event in comparison to male circumcision. Through

clitoridectomy women united together to define their identity as women but not as integral members of the clan. Their role in the clan was to enhance it through their reproductive powers. For men, circumcision initiated them into the clan, making them part of its history by teaching them the secrets of the clan. Circumcision was not just a social event for men but a ritual event too. Through circumcision they were able to participate fully in the life of the clan. Clitoridectomy for women lacked this dimension, and thus women remained on the periphery of the clan. The women's bond was on the level of motherhood.

1.4.2 TATTOOS

Apart from the female circumcision practised by Abatachoni, in other Abaluyia groups women were tattooed as an initiation into womanhood and for decorative purposes. Describing the tattoos Abiria says

Tattooing was done by old women. The woman who was being tattooed knelt before the old woman and while she was kneeling she raised her hands and clasped around the neck of a friend who stood behind to support her. Using a small hatchet and a little hook she caught part of the flesh with the hook and cut the flesh with the hatchet.⁶⁷

Again as initiation to womanhood, the young woman was expected to go through the ceremony without flinching her eyes. This served as an indication that she was mature and had the ability to share in the community's life. It illustrated the fact that a woman could acquire courage to face the pressures of family life such as childbirth. Other than its initiation aim, tattooing also served as an indication of a woman's endurance of pain to obtain beauty marks an action which was held in high esteem in the society. The tattoos on the abdomen were followed by marks on the face and the piercing of the lower lip and ear lobes. The absence of such marks on a young woman meant cowardice and jeopardised her marriage opportunities.

Since physical marks had no ritual attachment; they did not transform the status of women in the society, but acted as an opening to marriage. At the same time there was no bonding among women apart from the biological ties to their own families. Women remained as individuals who found their identity with each other in

⁶⁶ Rabeka Nasibwondi, Oral Interview, 13/3/96.

⁶⁷ Loice Abiria, Oral Interview, 28/12/1995.

marriage, procreation and motherhood and this is what was impressed upon them as young women.

1.4.3 MORAL PREPARATION

Among Abaluyia, a person was judged according to the role which was expected of him or her as an adult, either as a father or a mother. To the young men for example, it was important that they understood their duty to provide for and protect their families, although if they failed they were not as stigmatised. On the other hand women who failed in their duties were seen as bad women and their misdeeds were made public. The faults attributed to women were described as laziness, quarrelsomeness, untidiness and adultery.

To be regarded as a good woman, one had to maintain purity, discipline and be hard working. These aspects were taught to young women at their grandmother's hut which was their sleeping place and school from puberty to marriage. A person in charge of the education of girls was a woman of the status of a grandmother, free to share with young women those intimate aspects of womanhood. Through the medium of stories she was able to pass on what society expected of them as women in terms of physical, moral and social roles.⁶⁸ It is during this time that all the taboos of the tribe were relayed to the girls but especially those that affected them and their role in the society.

Apart from 'grandmother tuition,' young women and men met and socialised freely in open places such as dances and community events like weddings and funerals. Close social life existed for the groups in the grandmothers' huts as reported by Andere:

Although *okhufumberera* or *okwarira* [to charm] was allowed and boys and girls were permitted to meet freely and spend the nights together in the *mwisabo* or *esiimba* [young men's huts] without any restrictions, promiscuous sexual intercourse was strictly forbidden by customary law. Every girl was expected to be a virgin at the time of marriage.⁶⁹

Social freedom was not a licence to promiscuity, but a way of practising discipline among young men and women. It was against customary law for a man to defile a young woman because they happened to be together. The culprit was fined a goat or

⁶⁸ Ruth Barasa, Oral Interview, 7/3/1996.

⁶⁹ KNA: Andere, *Abaluyia Customary*, 10.

a bull, which was slaughtered and consumed by the elders who were related to the girl.⁷⁰ Even though self-discipline was expected of young men and women, there was more pressure on young women to be careful because they bore more guilt if they failed to practice restraint. Sexual discipline was a mark of moral discipline and a pride for her and her clan.⁷¹

Young women had other fears of indiscipline. One such fear was single motherhood in a community where the condition was unacceptable. A young woman who became pregnant before wedlock was treated with shame, and branded with the derogatory term *ekedwadi* (single mother). Marriage to old men was the way to get rid of those young women who became victims of the social stigma in society. Comparatively, women enjoyed less social status than men because of this public ridicule. Socialisation therefore differed between young men and women stressing sexual restraint for women while masculinity, equated with virility, violence, valour and authority, was impressed upon young men.

In addition to sexual discipline, young women were prepared and expected to be obedient and submissive to husbands and older members in the clan. Because obedience was a characteristic expected from young women, this conferred little or no room for them to react or question a system, even if it was repressive of their abilities. Obedience and submission were interpreted as passivity, and were used as a means to control women and their reproductive powers. Faithfulness, obedience, and hard work were qualities that made a good woman; these characteristics were reinforced with the coming of Quaker missionaries as will be discussed later.

1.5 MARRIAGE.

As noted earlier, through the *engoko* taboo, society ensured that women got married and became mothers, but it was the men who initiated marriage contracts. Marriage

⁷⁰ Ibid. 12.

⁷¹ Elise Nandaria, Oral Interview, 1/5/ 1996. Nandaria says that young women had to refrain from sex with young men because they were tested before marriage to see if they were virgins. On the morning of the wedding the young woman and her bridesmaids were asked to stand on a goat's skin to be adorned with oil and *simsim*, (sesame) before she received the words of encouragement and blessing from the elders. It is only those girls who knew they were virgins who stood on the goat's skin. If she was aware that she was not a virgin she did not dare to stand on the skin because it would put a curse on her.

was an essential part of the lifecycle, and people rarely remained single.⁷² Marriage was and still is both exogamous and patrilocal whereby a prolonged part of women's lives was located in the husband's residence even though they are not fully integrated into the men's clan. Exogamy ensured that the network of relatives was widely distributed and it forestalled female sex solidarity on a clan basis because women come from different clans. As in any patrilineal society, in the Abaluyia society it was the sons and brothers, rather than wives or daughters who inherited land and wealth. Patrilineality established male control over children, so that if women left a marriage, they forfeited rights to their children as well. This was all possible due to *uvukwi* (bride wealth).

1.6 UVUKWI (BRIDEWEALTH)

The custom of a man giving bride wealth for a woman before a marriage takes place has been the subject of many debates.⁷³ Its analysis and interpretation has been shown by some writers as debasing the woman to nothing but a chattel. This is how the Quaker missionaries interpreted the practice after their arrival among the Abaluyia.⁷⁴ Each custom has its advantages and disadvantages and it is true that this practice re-inforces the attitude of the low status of women. For our purpose it is of particular interest to look at *uvukwi* from the point of view of how the Abaluyia people saw it before the missionary intervention.

To the Abaluyia, it is '*uvukwi*' which brought a marriage into effect as expressed in the following song.

Ngombe yambila, Ngombe yambila
Mukana ni Ngombe Yambila
Eh! Ngombe yambila mumanani.
(The cow leads me. The cow leads me
Towards the dragons, the cattle
Eh! The cow will take you where it will).⁷⁵

⁷² Although marriage is still very significant in the society today, there are single people mostly women. Several reasons include the ambivalence to polygyny, and more openings for women in careers and economic independence.

⁷³ For example Jack Goody and S.J.Tambiah, *Bride Wealth and Dowry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973; Jean Gahamanyi 'Two Problems: Bridewealth and Polygamy Intervention, Synod of Bishops 1980' *Afer* 23: February - April 1981. 104-106.

⁷⁴ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 38.

⁷⁵ Taban Lo Lyong, (Ed), *Popular Culture of East Africa*. Nairobi: Longman 1972. 19.

The cow represented the price to be paid for not remaining single, for that was a woman's shame. But the cow sent the bride to the dragons who represented the unknown awaiting her in the new strange family. In the end therefore it was worse to remain at home cow-less, than to face the unknown.

Uvukwi among the Abaluyia ensured the legality of the marriage since 'it is against customary law for a man to keep somebody else's daughter without paying the necessary *uvukwi*. Marriage contracted without payment of some *uvukwi* is illegal'.⁷⁶ The legality of the marriage was ensured not just among the living but it was extended to those whom Mbiti calls the 'living dead'.⁷⁷ It was through *uvukwi* that a woman had burial rights in her marital home, which was, and still, is viewed with honour.

A woman who lives with a man who has not given out *uvukwi* is regarded as unmarried. If she dies she can only be buried at her ancestral home [where she was born]. She can only be buried in her marital home if *uvukwi* has been given.⁷⁸

The link between the living and the dead in relation to '*uvukwi*' shows its deeper significance in a marriage, not least because it provided for a woman's burial place. The significance of this lies in the fact that for a woman to be buried in her ancestral home after marriage was both a shameful and humiliating act. It was presumed among the Abaluyia that every young woman had to be married to secure her own place of burial.

Burial sites for unmarried women were in the backyard (in the banana grove). While men and married women were buried at the front of the house. To be buried at the back of the house symbolised a lack of identity and place in the society. It implied that one was a stranger to the family and one was not significant. Through marriage and *uvukwi*, women obtained family membership, which entitled them to front burial sites. If a man died before the giving of *uvukwi*, burial did not take place until it had been given because the giving of *uvukwi* ensured an honourable burial for married men as well. Failure to do this nonetheless did not deny him the honour of being buried in front of the house as a son.

⁷⁶ KNA: Andere: *Abaluyia Customary*, 11.

⁷⁷ John Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, Nairobi: OUP. 1972. 104.

⁷⁸ Agneta Igonga, Oral Interview, 9/2/1996.

As well as legalising the marriage, the giving of *uvukwi* was regarded as a means of protecting women against 'excessively harsh treatment and/or divorce.'⁷⁹ Even though *uvukwi* was used to deter harsh treatment, Abaluyia marriages were not dissolved easily because *uvukwi* was difficult to repay: *uvukwi* was not static, but was passed from one clan to another making it difficult to trace. It was therefore difficult to return *uvukwi* to its original home; consequently, the women were expected to bear the harsh treatment for the sake of harmony among the clans.

Through *uvukwi* a woman gained 'user-functionary' rights of land and livestock which she would not have had if she remained single. Men had rights to the land for cultivation and grazing simply by virtue of their membership in a patrilineage and they could transmit their land rights to their sons. But women obtained access to land only through marriages and enjoyed these rights so long as their marriages continued; they had no rights of transmission. Ownership of any property in a home was a man's right although a woman could hold some sheep or goats and even a cow from her daughter's *uvukwi*.⁸⁰ If, for some reason a marriage had to be dissolved, the wife received neither property nor a right to her own children:

When a man divorces his wife all the children remain to him. His wife does not take anything except things which came from her home. He gets his bride wealth back depending upon the number of children his wife has born.⁸¹

There was, and still is, no uniformity in the nature and amount of *uvukwi* in Abaluyia communities apart from the basic requirements such as a hoe, a knife or a bracelet, which were non-negotiable. These articles were symbolically significant either in relation to the role played by a family in bringing up a bride or the expected role of the wife in the family. A hoe for example was a symbol of hard work necessary to

⁷⁹ Wagner, *The Bantu*, Vol. 1 45. Wagner observes that although wife beating occurs and is not considered a serious disgrace to the matrimonial relationship, there are safe guards against husband's cruelty. The wife can always return to her parents or brothers, where she is given protection until some agreement has been reached or the marriage is formally dissolved by the return of the marriage cattle.

⁸⁰ Enis Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996.

⁸¹ KNA: Andere, *Abaluyia Customary*, 33. Sangree, *Prayer Age and Politics*, 17 Sangree has observed from his study on the Tiriki that: 'A woman owns nothing- indeed is nobody - in her own right. She has her clan by virtue of her father, and she achieves her status as a mother and a grandmother. Thanks for her offspring and the payment of the bride-wealth by her husband and his family.'

feed a family. Such articles would accompany herds of goats or cattle as agreed by clans.⁸²

Historically the number of animals given for *uvukwi* has not remained static among Abaluyia but has undergone constant changes. Despite these changes the intrinsic value of *uvukwi* remains. My interviewees argued in favour of *uvukwi* as an important legal token of marriage and argued against its demise.⁸³ Its demise is not envisaged even among the younger generation despite the fact that the tradition has been commercialised leading some parents to demand more than what some people can afford to give.⁸⁴

1.7 FORMS OF MARRIAGE.

Having dealt with marriage and *uvukwi* in the preceding section one form of marriage has been covered. This was the conventional marriage which every man or woman was expected to contract. In the following section we deal with two other forms of marriage which were also practised and accepted because of the social needs they met in society.

1.7.1 IMBALIKA (POLYGYNY)

The proverb an 'ugly girl does not become old at home,' meant that the looks of a girl should not stop her from getting married since this would deny her the role of womanhood. Polygyny among Abaluyia was one way of ensuring that every woman was married. The practice of polygyny was wide-spread among many African societies. With the introduction of western culture through Christianity this practice was challenged although it has persisted up to the present time.⁸⁵ This section

⁸² Sarah Lukalo, 'The Logooli' in Molnos Angela, *Cultural Source Material for Population Planning*. Nairobi: East Africa Publishing House 1973. Lukalo observes that 'from traditional times there was a fixed number of cows, goats or sheep. With the introduction of money economy the situation changed such that one had to pay in both animals and money. In 1940 *uvukwi* was four cows and sixty shillings. After the Second World War it went up because of the young men who came from the war and had earned more money. In 1942 *uvukwi* was four cows and one hundred shillings. This later moved to four cows, one bull and one hundred shillings. The amount continued to go up with the education and employment of women.'

⁸³ Rebecca Mackenzie, Oral Interview, 9/2/1996.

⁸⁴ Priscilla Misaki, Oral Interview, 28/2/1996, Norah Musundi, Oral Interview, 20/3/1996.

⁸⁵ John Cairncross, *After Polygamy was Made Sin, the Social History of Christian Polygamy*, London: Routledge and Kegan, 1974; Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: African Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975; John Mbiti, *Love and Marriage in Africa*, London: Longman, 1973; David G. Maillu, *Our Kind of Polygamy*, Nairobi: Heinemann.

discusses the practice of *imbalika* among Abaluyia before the Quaker missionaries challenged it. In order to understand the custom of *imbalika* among the Abaluyia, it is important to point to the fact that the system did not and still does not operate in a vacuum but through the kinship systems. And, as Robin Fox has observed, 'kinship systems are responses to various recognisable pressures within a framework of biological, psychological, ecological and social limitations'.⁸⁶ *Imbalika* therefore served the social, economic, political and religious needs of the people.

In his analysis of *imbalika*, Luvai gives the following reasons for its institution

Those who practised it [*imbalika*] did it because of a need. For some men it was because they were wealthy and so they desired more wives. Others did it because they wanted to have children especially sons. There are those who did it because of ill health of the first wife.⁸⁷

Wagner along the same lines observes that

An indispensable condition for attaining a leading position in the clan is economic wealth. One who possesses a large herd of cattle, whose granaries are always filled, and who has several wives and retainers that can brew beer and wait on hosts, will find enough people to sing his praise, and his homestead will become the favourite gathering place of all clansmen, especially of elders.⁸⁸

From the above observations, there is a link between wives, wealth, children and status. One could easily argue that women are the basis of wealth, children and status. It is the woman's productive, reproductive and social capacity that creates *imbalika*. The system through which *imbalika* operates is designed in such a way that women are perceived as both agents and victims of the custom.

As the agents of the practice, it is the women who are expected to work and produce wealth for the family. In the process of producing the wealth they have to deny themselves the right to enjoy what they produce so that it is accumulated. The accumulation of wealth leads to *uvukwi* for another woman by the man.

A man with many wives had a higher social standing in the society. He could serve on the council of male elders (*abakhulundu*) who were responsible for the allocation of clan land and arbitration in civil and criminal cases. His home offered the best hospitality for meetings and entertainment. It was the work of his wives which

1988; Makanzu Mavumilisa, *Can the Church Accept Polygamy?* Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1983. Bernard T. Adeney, 'Polygamy: How many wives in the Kingdom of God?' In *Transformation* 12. 1-4 January March. 1995.

⁸⁶ Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage*, London: Penguin Books, 1967. 25.

⁸⁷ Luvai, *Miima*. 11.

⁸⁸ Wagner, *The Bantu*. 79.

brought the wealth which gave him his social standing and it was the work of the wives which provided the hospitality. *Imbalika* therefore was a means through which the cultural expectation of hospitality was realised.

Imbalika not only was a means by which a man might acquire wealth and a leading position in society; it also ensured that the man would be provided with male heirs, which was important for him and his clan. *Imbalika* therefore was an investment for men but not for women. For a man, not only was it a social-economic investment, a ladder to a 'political career,' but it also served to define and re-enforce the junior place for women in society.

Although *Imbalika* enhanced the concept of inequality among women, and their subordinate position to men, it did not mean that the women were subjugated, because it was possible for a woman in *imbalika* to use sex as a weapon against subjugation and escape marital rape. This would not be possible in a monogamous home. It can be argued that the man in this circumstance would go to the other houses and have his desires met, but refusal to have sex with one's husband implied defiance and denial of rights. Ultimately it was a challenge to a husband's authority over his wife.

The relationship among women in *imbalika* was affected by a competition for the husband's attention, producing jealousy and ill-feelings towards each other. This state of affairs found expression in the term *muhalikwa* (co-wife) used to denote a woman rival. The rivalry became more acute when a wife failed to produce a child, even though in some cases it was not her fault but that of her husband. Nevertheless a barren wife justified the practice of *imbalika*. Because bearing children was significant among Abaluyia, *imbalika* did not help a barren woman, but put her in an even more disadvantaged position. By contrast the man's problems of begetting children was solved by *imbalika*; if he was impotent he could acquire surrogate children through his kinsmen.

Imbalika was based on the concept of *engoko*, which reinforced the peripheral position of women in the society. *Imbalika* justified the prejudices against women and against their ability to lead independent lives and develop their own potential.

1.7.2 LEVIRATE MARRIAGE.

Levirate marriage, like polygyny illustrates the concept of *engoko* among the Abaluyia people. This type of marriage took place between a widow and a relative of the deceased husband such as a brother or a member of his clan. The aim of levirate marriage was to provide a husband for the widow and to ensure continuity of the deceased family.⁸⁹ Levirate marriage just like *imbalika* was informed by the social, economic and religious needs of a patriarchal system.

Socially, levirate marriage seemed to provide a form of partial companionship for a widow, even though she became a co-wife to other women. It also protected her from sexual harassment and the slander of other men in the society. The surrogate husband took over all the duties of the deceased, and the widow was expected to treat him with honour and respect as a husband.

Economically, levirate marriage was used to retain the property of the deceased among his own family and clan. Departure of the widow would disrupt the life of the home. To retain the widow in the same home was to continue the name of the deceased. The surrogate husband chosen by the clan provided and raised a family for the deceased. This is why it was important for *musatsa wu mwandu* (a *levir*) to be a married man because the children he raised with the widow were not counted as his own but as those of the deceased. A widow in this case became a subsequent or additional spouse to the 'man'.

Levirate marriage shows that Abaluyia did not regard marriage as ending with death. So long as a deceased had given *uvukwi*, until her death his widow was expected to stay within the marital home and be the guardian of the grave. It also shows that a woman in the Abaluyia society had limited or no choice in making independent decisions. She was expected to operate within the patriarchal system, which was designed to keep her on the periphery.

⁸⁹ Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Sex and Gender in an African Society*, London: Zed Books, 1987. 131. Amadiume has also noted among the Igbo people, 'widow inheritance was a means of retaining property, including wives, in the lineage, as well as ensuring social continuity and guaranteeing economic security for elderly women.'

1.8 RITUALS OF DEATH.

As much as the *engoko* taboo influenced the role and place of woman in the society, it reinforced other taboos about the role of women in the rituals of death. The rituals of death were performed for both the dead and the living, and those that were performed for the living portrayed *engoko* thinking about women. Not only did these rituals increase the prohibitions on women, they also pushed her further to the margins. The death rituals were performed in accordance with the Luyia beliefs about the dead. Even though death was, and is said, to be a way through which one left the world of the living to join the 'spirit world', it was important that they were ushered in through several rites. These rituals were meant to hasten the transition of the deceased from the world of the living to the 'spirit world,' otherwise the deceased remained in a liminal state posing a problem for those who are still living. As well as helping the deceased, these rituals were also meant to help the living come to terms with the death and re-establish a normal life. However Otiende has noted that the rituals had more negative implications on women than they had on men.⁹⁰ The following section will illustrate this by looking at each ritual briefly.

1.8.1 AMAGENGA (LIGHTING THE FIRE OF THE DEAD).

It was a custom of the Abaluyia men to light a fire for the dead outside the home, symbolising the life of the ancestral spirit. This fire was kept burning until after the burial had taken place. The purpose of this fire was twofold: firstly it was a social gathering for the lineage members who were observing the wake; secondly it acted as a place of meeting for the clan members to discuss issues regarding the deceased.

Women were excluded from the lighting of the fire and sitting around it, because they were not lineage members. They were excluded from the decision-making bodies, even though the lineage would not be there without them. Women instead stayed indoors beside a separate fire, which was used to cook food for the mourners.

1.8.2 THE SACRIFICE TO THE SPIRIT.

In order to facilitate the entry of the deceased person into the life of the spirit, it was important to perform a sacrifice. The animal for the sacrifice was expected to come from the *uvukwi* of one of the daughters, a cow for a woman and a bull for a man.

Even though the animal for the sacrifice was provided through the women, they were excluded from taking part in the ritual.

The women were excluded for these reasons: firstly, they were not members of the lineage, but regarded as outsiders. In this situation women were treated as marginal, even though they were at the same time under the control of the lineage. Secondly women were excluded from the lineage sacrifices because of their menstrual blood which was associated with impurity and believed to have the power to contaminate the rituals. Other than this, there was also a fear that if they took part in the rituals of the dead they would be contaminated and cease to have children, thus bringing an end to the lineage.

1.8.3 *LIKUNZAKALA (WIDOWHOOD)*

The death of one spouse was believed to leave the other in a widowhood which was a state of ritual impurity. The impurity was believed to emanate from a dying person and it affected all those who were close associates especially spouses. The phrase *nuria no omukunzakali orenga ma ukudze* (If you associate with a widow/widower your skin will adopt a yellow colour as of a ripe banana, it will become itchy and then you will die.) is an indication of the extent to which widowhood was feared.⁹¹

Even though both men and women were affected by the state of widowhood, when a spouse died, it was believed that women were less pure than men. Thus widows were subjected to more rituals than widowers in order to purge them of the impurities. A widower would start going about his business after the shaving rite had been done, but a widow had to observe weeping, eating and mobility rituals until she was allowed to restart life again. Even after these rituals, she was expected to show sorrow for the loss of her husband.

Though these rituals were also meant to help her go through bereavement and come to terms with the death of her spouse, they were designed in such a way that they hindered her from making decisions about her life. The rituals determined her new role for the rest of her life; she was in the margins of society even if she was capable of leading an independent life. She had to depend on the *levir*, thus being controlled like other women in the society.

⁹⁰ Otiende, *Habari*, 27.

1.8.4 THE MOURNING RITUALS.

Asked about what rituals women performed in the traditional society, Mugesia said, 'Women moaned through *zindzikulu* (dirges or laments) chanted by the mourners.'⁹²

As soon as a husband died there was an initial and violent moaning by all, but women were expected to mourn longer and louder than men. The first mourning was meant to announce the death; it was also done because of the belief that if it was not done it would upset the dead who were supposedly aware of what was going on.

While mourners sang the dirges in public to show grief for a widow, it went beyond a show of grief. It was also a time to prove to the community that she has been faithful in her marriage. This was shown by the place she chose to sing the dirges. A faithful woman sang her dirges in *emugidze* (front of the house) which was regarded as a public place; she was also allowed to sit on her husband's stool which she would do when he was alive or if she had been unfaithful. While the unfaithful woman sang hers in *echandango* (the backyard or banana grove.) and would not sit on her husband's stool or handle anything of her husband.⁹³

1.8.5 THE EATING RITUALS.

As far as food was concerned the widow was expected to eat less or starve, in order to show remorse for her loss. Apart from eating, food was also used to test the strength of her ritual impurity. In order to do this Mwengu explained that:

Ubushuma [stiff porridge made from finger millet or maize] was cooked and served to the widow. What remained was put aside overnight. The following morning this food was checked. If the food was found moist, the widow's ritual impurity was strong; if not her ritual impurity was weak.⁹⁴

The state of the widow's ritual impurity determined her mobility and social contacts. In the case where a widow's ritual impurity was deemed to be strong she and those around her took extra care because of the belief that she could contaminate them.

1.8.6 MOBILITY RESTRICTIONS

The mobility of a widow was curtailed because of the belief that her state of ritual impurity was a source of ritual danger for all those who came in close contact with

⁹¹ Luvai, *Miima*, 38.

⁹² Enis Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996.

⁹³ Chango group, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

⁹⁴ Roselida Mwengu, Oral Interview, 19/2/1996.

her. She was expected to stay within a defined area while observing certain regulations.

The widow had to avoid visiting the homesteads and especially entering houses of other people, lest the things she might touch are contaminated with *ovokunzakari*. If people went near her, they had to avoid her shadow; children in particular were warned not to step on it. She was also careful that her shadow did not fall on the children.⁹⁵

The belief in the potency of the impurity of widowhood excluded a widow from people and the life of the society, when she most needed them. The irony of this ritual was in the fact that although a woman was believed to be the source of life to the community, in her state of widowhood she was treated as a threat to its very life. Widowhood contradicted the place of women in society, for in one sense a woman had power of life and in another, power to destroy it.

1.8.7 *LOVEGO* (THE HAIR SHAVING RITE.)

Lovego, which comes from the root word *kovega* (to shave), was performed a few days after the funeral and brought to a completion the activities of the deceased and helped the members to start again.⁹⁶ It was an occasion when the clan was able to talk about the deceased as well as come to terms with their loss and settle pending issues.

The hair-shaving rite also served as a purification rite for the members of the clan of the deceased. As part of purification the members had their hair shaved in order to do away with the state of impurity and have a new beginning. As part of a new start, the rite served as an occasion when the property of the deceased was reorganised and the discussion about a *levir* for the home took place.

As required in the Abaluyia society, the distribution of a man's property was carried out among his sons. It had to be done in public to ensure that fairness was practised. If distribution was done prior to death the matter was simply made public. From a man's property, the widow was given sources of basic necessities and artefacts, for example, a cow for milk, foodstuffs, chickens and baskets. A widow did not inherit

⁹⁵ Wagner, *The Bantu*, 497.

⁹⁶Otiende, *Habari* 18; Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview, 13/2/1996.

property such as land because it was passed on to her sons. If there were no sons in that family, the property was passed on to the brothers of the deceased.⁹⁷

1.9 THE NOTION OF SPACE.

The preceding sections of the chapter have shown how the *engoko* ideology mirrored the authority of men over women. Male superiority was reflected in the physical and ideological separation in a homestead. A Luyia traditional house was divided into several sections which were associated with the activities of the family members.⁹⁸ The front section of the house with the main entrance and the front yard was known as the men's side. The rear section, with the cooking stones, the side door and the back yard, was the woman's side. The front section of the house was where the ceremonies that accompanied the rites of passage took place. It was the place where guests were entertained and it had seats because it was the privilege of men to sit on chairs.

The women's section was the back yard, which was a place where the non-prestigious activities took place. The expression for going to the toilet was 'going to the backyard'. Rubbish was also thrown there. The backyard was the place where women had their gardens and spent most of their time. Women were therefore physically and ideologically associated with mess and dirt, because women's daily chores in the backyard were quite messy.

The division of space was adhered to, ensuring that each person carefully took the roles that were defined for him or her. It was the men who built the houses and the women who prepared them for accommodation. It was taboo for a woman to build a house, but she was in charge of making the building into a home by putting mud on the walls, making the floors level and smoothing them with clay and cow dung.

The sexual division of space meant that women associated more with each other and they formed groups to help each other with work. Khasiani has observed that these groups were *ad hoc*, lacked formal structures and were temporary. Among some Luyia groups the groups were known as *bulala* or *buhasio*.⁹⁹ Men also had working groups on male projects like building houses or they met together to drink but

⁹⁷KNA: Andere, *Abaluyia Customary*, 41.

⁹⁸ Luvai, *Miima*, 3.

⁹⁹ S. A. Khasiani & E.L. Njiro, *The women's Movement in Kenya*, Nairobi: AAWORD, 1993. 116.

women were excluded from drinking with men. If a woman wanted a sip of beer, she would go to the hut where the men were drinking and crawl to where her husband was sitting. He would then pass her his drinking straw to take a few sips, then leave. It was not any woman who had this privilege but only those who were elderly and had earned the respect of the clan.

1.10 CONCLUSION.

In this chapter the thesis has demonstrated that the place of women in the Abaluyia society was defined by an *engoko* ideology which permeated all sectors of the society. *Engoko* ideology was a social construction formulated in such a way that the basic biological differences between men and women were converted to justifying inequality between them. *Engoko* ideology worked in two levels: on the one level it was a food prohibition, on the other it was an ideological framework through which the subordination of women was expressed.

Both the political and religious structure of the Abaluyia people was patriarchal where leadership was exclusively male. This was because it was only the males who were initiated into ritual existence and as a result could take on leadership in the community. Women took part in the socialisation process of children at early childhood and for girls as they grew into adulthood, but the framework within which the socialisation took place was determined by *engoko* ideology.

In an economy which was heavily dependent on the production of food and multiplicity of livestock, the *engoko* was the basis on which this economy was built. *Engoko* was linked to the process of reproduction as a means of production. Women were like *zingoko* (PI), domesticated by men and kept for the purpose of reproduction, to multiply through breeding and bring wealth to the owner. This structural equivalence between chickens and women was explicitly recognised in the importance of *uvukwi* which was the link between the reproduction of labour and the means of production upon which the dominance of male elders was based. Women were therefore barred from consuming what was metaphorically like, and structurally equivalent to them; in the same way, they were barred from controlling their own reproduction.

The taboo of *engoko* taken by itself was no more than a supportive reflection of sexual inequality among the Abaluyia social relations, marking sexual distance in

ritually important situations such as sacrifices and subordinating women to male privileges. The strength of the taboo however lay in its reputed means of enforcement: It carried the power to threaten the woman with failure to get married and perform the very role which gave her status.

While *zingoko*, (chickens) have powers which provided wealth for the owners, women also had reproductive powers which provided wealth and status for their owners. Women and chickens are therefore partners in the clan's productive and reproductive system and therefore quite clearly women and chickens should not eat each other.

CHAPTER TWO

2 THE QUAKER MOVEMENT: THE ROLE OF WOMEN WITHIN THE MOVEMENT LEADING UP TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE QUAKER MISSIONS.

2.1 INTRODUCTION.

In the preceding chapter we looked at the position of women among Abaluyia, and in this chapter we will analyse the background of the Quaker women missionaries which shaped their thinking about mission work. The end of the 19th century was a period of major mission expansion from Europe and America to other parts of the world, especially to Africa. Increasingly this involved women who were missionaries in their own right rather than simply missionary wives.¹⁰⁰ It is only in recent times that the lives and work of these women missionaries have become a subject of academic research.¹⁰¹ For the purpose of this study it is important to understand the context out of which the Quaker women missionaries came and which shaped their ways of organising mission work. This will help clarify their motivation and work in Western Kenya.

The aim of this chapter therefore is to locate the context of the women's mission work by providing an overview of women in Quakerism and a background to mission work. Even though only some American Quakers got involved in mission work among Abaluyia women in Kenya, it is important to understand their background in the context of Quaker historical development. We shall then be able to

¹⁰⁰ R. Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A Feminist Movement in North America*, Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1968; L. Byrne, (Ed), *The Hidden Journey: Missionary Heroines in Many Lands*, London, 1993.

¹⁰¹ Patricia R. Hill. *The World Their Household: The American Women's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation 1870 – 1920*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985; Nancy, F. Cott. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977; Dana L Robert *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice*, Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1996. Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in the Turn of the Century China*, New York: Yale University Press, 1984.

distinguish those practices of Quakerism with which they identified themselves, and point out those other practices which they modified and represented. Some of the aspects raised in this chapter will be analysed at length in the chapters that discuss the interaction between missionaries and Abaluyia women.

2.2 **QUAKERISM**

‘The Society of Friends, (Quakers)’, as it came to be known, was founded during the period of seventeenth century English Puritanism.¹⁰² This period of English history was marked by political and religious turmoil. The Reformation of 16th century England had deposed the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church and split the Protestant world into many different schools of thought, each believing that they had a superior form of Truth.

George Fox (1624-1691) the founder of Quakerism was born in Fenny Drayton in Leicestershire.¹⁰³ His father was a weaver and served as a churchwarden, and was known as a ‘righteous christer,’ and his mother Mary was of ‘the stock of the martyrs’.¹⁰⁴ As a young man Fox was very dissatisfied with the church in his hometown. In 1643 he left home to travel and seek someone who could answer his yearnings. Although he met several groups that appeared to teach some truth, none of them could speak to his condition because their teachings were based on outward symbols. In 1647 he went through a religious experience as he wrote afterwards:

There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy... and this I knew experimentally.¹⁰⁵

This experience laid a firm foundation for a personal faith, and also shaped the nature of his ministry, which was to ‘turn people to the witness of God within them, though

¹⁰² Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964. 8. Godfrey Davies, *The Early Stuarts 1603 – 1660*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1937. XIX.

¹⁰³ J. Gordon Melton, (Ed), *The Encyclopaedia of American Religious Creeds: A Compilation of More than 450 Creeds, Confessions, Statements of Faith in USA and Canada*, Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Co. 1988. 347; H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. 19.

¹⁰⁴ Ingle, *First Among*, 22.

¹⁰⁵ Nickalls, *Journal of George Fox*, 11.

they were in darkness.’¹⁰⁶ Fox and his followers did not develop a system of doctrine or creed since they believed that Christ was the ‘Inward Teacher’, ‘the true Light that lightest every man who cometh into the world.’ And therefore there was no need for religion to deviate the teachings.¹⁰⁷ Every person had the potential to receive this Light and in Fox’s own words ‘there was that of God in every person’.¹⁰⁸ By laying emphasis on the ‘Inner Light’, the Quakers sought to deal with the theological, social and gender barriers which encompassed their society. This is why they insisted on practices such as the use of ‘thou’, ‘thee’ and ‘thy’ as familiar forms of address for ‘ye’ ; ‘you’ was only used when addressing superior persons or strangers. The use of Christian names rather than surnames and titles. They refused to take off their hats to anyone as a sign of respect and also refused to serve in the army.

It is in this connection that Morison termed the Quakers ‘the anarchists’ of the Protestant Reformation because,

Puritans substituted the authority of the Bible for the authority of the church, but the Quakers denied both and rested on the word of God as spoken to the human soul. They required no church and no priesthood and so all were equal addressing one another as thee and thou and literally observing the divine command, ‘thou shalt not murder even under the name of war.’ To persecution they opposed passive resistance, and like the early Christians they gathered strength from oppression and victory.¹⁰⁹

The Quakers were distinct from other Puritan groups because they were anti-dogmatic, anti-clerical, politically radical and egalitarian. These are some of the features which made them ready to accept the ministry, leadership, and mission of women. Elizabeth Vining has noted that when Quakersim came to the scene the position of women in the western society had reached its nadir.¹¹⁰ During his travels George Fox had met with people who held that women had ‘no more souls than goose.’¹¹¹ He reproached them, arguing that women’s souls could be seen in Mary’s

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 13

¹⁰⁸ ibid, 335.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Elliot Morison and Henry Steel Commagar, *The Growth of the American Republic*, London: OUP, 1958. 73.

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Women in the Society of Friends*, The Ward Lecture, 1955. 6.

¹¹¹ Nickalls, *George Fox*, 9.



praise: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'¹¹² It was not long after this that Fox met with Elizabeth Hooten, the first convert to Quakerism from Baptist background and the first Quaker woman minister. Hooten spent the rest of her life spreading the new faith and like other Quakers, she was in prison several times; by 1655 she had been in prison four times.¹¹³

Other women such as Mary Fisher and Katherine Evans are remembered for their efforts to carry the message to the Mediterranean lands.¹¹⁴ Fourteen women were among the pioneer Quaker evangelists known today as the 'valiant sixty'.¹¹⁵ Margaret Fell who later became Margaret Fox, and whose name is as intimately bound up with Quakerism as that of George Fox himself, was one of the key figures in the Quaker movement.¹¹⁶ She wrote widely in defence of women's ministry and her first tract is historically important, as Hugh Barbour has observed:

It was probably the first tract entirely on women's religious equality and the first such by a woman; secondly, where other writers focussed largely on a woman's right to speak as an instrument of the spirit, Margaret Fell shows women's ability to respond and take full part on all aspects of religious life as an equal of men.¹¹⁷

Through her writings Margaret Fox spread the knowledge of the Quaker interpretation of Christianity and gave unity and fellowship to a scattered company of men and women of varied backgrounds and experience.¹¹⁸ Because Quaker women were involved in general ministry, George Fox constantly defended them against priests who quoted Pauline injunctions.¹¹⁹ He defended the women's involvement because he believed that a new Gospel order had been inaugurated and

¹¹² Nickalls, *George Fox*, 10.

¹¹³ William, C. Braithewaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (CUP), 2nd Edition, 1955. 44.

¹¹⁴ William, C. Braithewaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*, Cambridge: CUP, 2nd Edition, 1961. 271.

¹¹⁵ Elfrida Vipoint, *George Fox and the Valiant Sixty*, London: FSC, 1975. 15

¹¹⁶ Bonnelyn Young Kunze, *Margaret Fell and the Rise of Quakerism*, New York: Macmillan, 1994. 143.

¹¹⁷ Hugh Barbour, *Margaret Fell Speaking*, Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 1976. 27.

¹¹⁸ Isabel Ross, *Margaret Fell, Mother of Quakerism*, London: Longman, 1949. 10.

the pre-fall status of sexes had been restored. Those men and women who had heeded the call of Christ could once more live as 'helps-meet'.¹²⁰ Although the views of Fox were not held by everybody, including other Quakers, women took a large part in publishing the Quaker message both as preachers and travelling ministers. To Fox, therefore women were called to 'take up the cross and follow Christ daily.'¹²¹ Trevett in her book *Women and Quakerism* has noted that women were attracted to Quakerism because 'it offered them unheard of opportunities for action in the sphere of religion and a rationale for public activity which was liberating.' She goes on to say that those women who got involved in public ministry were 'thought to be unfeminine, and dangerous, lewd and probably heretical'.¹²² But the Quaker women and their supporters defended themselves by their

fervent belief in the breaking of a new Christian order, the Inner light, of which they preached and which knew no gender-based distinctions and in the fulfilment in the Gospel times of the Prophecy of Joel (2:28 – 32), that God's spirit was poured out on all flesh, so that sons and daughters alike should prophesy.¹²³

Although this theology encouraged women to participate in the spread of the Quaker faith, it has been noted that for some women it was not easy to put spiritual priority over domestic responsibilities.¹²⁴ Most of the Quaker women who took on a travelling ministry left behind children and domestic chores to be undertaken by the husband. The behaviour of Quaker women was frowned on by society in general, it was rooted in the doctrine of the spiritual equality between men and women and was derived from the apocalyptic worldview of seventeenth century Quakerism.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ *The Woman Learning in Silence, Concerning Sons and Daughters, and Prophetesses Speaking and Propheying in the Law and the Gospel*. London: Epistle, 1658.

¹²⁰ Nickalls, *George Fox*, 28.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 266.

¹²² Christine Trevett, *Women and Quakerism in the Seventeenth Century*, York: Ebor Press, 1995. 14.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 15.

¹²⁴ Margaret Hope Bacon, *Mothers of Feminism: The Story of Quaker Women in America*, London: Harper & Row, 1986. 24-41.

¹²⁵ Ursula Jane O'Shea, 'Women in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers): The Relevance of Their Experience in Envisioning a Gender Inclusive Church,' In *Listening: A Journal of Religion and Culture*, Vol. 27, spring 1992. 148.

By 1660 some system of organisation was needed for the movement to promote unity among the members and preserve the revealed truth. In 1666 Fox initiated such a plan. Small neighbourhood groups continued to meet weekly for worship. Business and administrative matters were discussed by a number of weekly meetings in a single Monthly Meeting. All the Monthly Meetings would gather annually for a Yearly Meeting. The duties of the Monthly and Yearly Meetings included arranging Meetings times and places, assigning itinerant ministers to visit a series of member meetings, supervising the admission of new members into society, conducting welfare program for members, and enlisting support in the struggle for social reform. The Friends strongly opposed a 'hireling ministry' as being the antithesis of their belief in the equal capacity of all human beings to perceive Truth; however, a visiting ministry was found necessary to preserve unity and to share experience between meetings.

As well as the system of organisation for the movement, Fox advocated for separate meetings for women. When Fox initiated these meetings in 1679 they met with a 'storm of opposition', even by those who had accepted women preachers calmly.¹²⁶ But because he was keen to have these meeting and he had the support of Margaret Fell, he responded to his critics by asking them allow women to go ahead and hold the separate meetings.

Why did Fox take the initiative to set up separate women's meetings in an organisation that preached about equality and was meant to be egalitarian? According to Fox, separate women's meetings were essential because they liberated women's gifts in the organisation, even though these gifts were channelled into women's activities such as charity and education. These separate meetings were also in charge of investigating a couple's 'clearness' for marriage although most Quaker men objected to this power given to women. As well as responsibility for marriages, the women's meetings were in charge of relief for poor and pastoral aid for the people and up to the 19th century the Quaker women's meetings played an important

¹²⁶ Brailsford, *Quaker Women*, 282-283.

role in the promotion and organisation of religious and moral activities.¹²⁷ However the separate meetings for women did not have equal powers as the men's meetings; and this is perhaps why the separate meetings continue to receive a lot of attention by scholars of Quakerism since they challenged the concept of the equality between men and women as preached by the Quakers.¹²⁸

It seems to me that separate meetings for women were about sharing authority or dealing with inequality between men and women in the meetings. Some historians have argued that separate meetings for women were meant to keep the women happy but not to give them equality. Braithewaite, for example, has noted that, the separate meetings 'were designed to give women some share in church government but not an equal share with men'.¹²⁹ In actual reality separate meetings did not give women a share in the church government at all because their meetings were subordinate to the men's meetings. Despite this Dunn and Bacon have argued that these meetings benefited women in the long run, because on their own women exercised authority which otherwise they would not have had if they stayed in the men's meetings. They learnt how to run their own meeting, how to raise and manage funds, how to keep records and to draft their own public statements.¹³⁰

The separate women's meetings remained a feature of Quakerism until the 19th century when they were challenged by women who argued that their presence was an indication of inequality in the Quaker movement.¹³¹ In the London Yearly Meeting, the separate men's and women's Yearly Meeting met in a joint session for the first time in 1880 and in 1896 women were made a constituent part of Yearly Meeting.¹³²

¹²⁷ Elizabeth Hope Luder, *Women and Quakerism*, Wallingford: Pendle Hill 1969; Punshon, *Portrait*, 17; Trevett, *Women*, 94.

¹²⁸ Kunze, *Margaret Fell*, chapter 7; Phyllis Mark, *Visionary Women Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. Chapter 8.

¹²⁹ Braithewaite, *The Second Period*, 273.

¹³⁰ Mary .M. Dunn, 'Saints and Sinners: Congregational Quaker Women in the Early Colonial Period' in J.W. James, *Women in American Religion*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980. 45-46. Margaret .H. Bacon, 'The Establishment of London Women's Yearly Meeting: A Transatlantic Concern.' in *The Journal of Friends Historical Society*, 57 1995. 163.

¹³¹ Bacon, *Mothers*, 179.

¹³² *Ibid*,

In North America, Lucretia Mott started calling for a change in 1836 and by 1840 some Quaker meetings heeded the call to merge the meetings. Gradually more Yearly Meetings adopted the idea of merging the meetings.¹³³ Even though the women's separate meetings no longer exist in many parts of Quaker world, they are still maintained among Quakers in Kenya.

2.3 QUAKERISM IN AMERICA

As well as being involved in mission at home, Quaker women were active in spreading the faith abroad. In America the first people to spread the faith were women. In 1665 Mary Fisher and Ann Austin arrived in Boston from Barbados ready to spread the Quaker faith. Unfortunately the anti-Quaker pamphlets had arrived before them and these women were banished after an imprisonment of five weeks and examinations to see if they were witches. In October 1656, the first law against Quakers and their writings was passed in Boston, but Mary Dyer flouted it by preaching about God's love, which led to her expulsion. In 1661 she returned to Boston for the third time and she was hanged, but this did not stop other women from preaching about their newfound faith. As with early Christianity, when persecution added courage to the Christians to spread the Gospel, the persecution of Quakers made them even more active in trying to win converts.¹³⁴

The growth of Quakerism in America was especially noticeable in the Quaker colony in Pennsylvania. William Penn received Pennsylvania from King Charles II as a settlement of a debt which the King owed Penn's father. Guided by the Quaker principles, Penn decided to make Pennsylvania a colony, which reflected ideals of Christianity as he interpreted them. He objected to having an established church, but made it a requirement for all office-bearers to be believers in God. The moral code of the colony opposed gambling, racing, card playing, drinking, toasts or the taking of oaths.¹³⁵ Like Fox, Penn was determined to promote women by making full use of their potential in those aspects of which he thought women were capable. The colony

¹³³ Ibid,

¹³⁴ Punshon, *Portrait*, 64.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 99.

maintained Quaker customs of plain style of dating and marriage without ministers¹³⁶ which ensured that women did not take on a subordinate role in marriage. For the first century in North America, Quakers established themselves and became very prominent in the life of society at large.

During the 18th century things began to change and Quakers began to lose their prominence in society. As the number of non-Quaker immigrants grew, the Quakers increasingly became a less influential minority. They neglected to promote higher education among their members. They became successful in business, and there was a noticeable decline in the zeal to proclaim the faith. The death of the original leaders and the growth of religious toleration led the Quakers into an Age of Quietism which lasted for a century.¹³⁷ The Quakers of this period turned their attention inward in order to conserve their faith. Their theological emphasis was mysticism alone and their religious pursuits stressed the silent, personal approach to Truth. The result of this was an emergence of a life style which encouraged high moral standards, exclusiveness and reticence in worldly affairs.

As a result the movement became more institutionalised which resulted in women loosing 'their place of prominence.'¹³⁸ Elders who were 'solid weighty and experienced' were appointed by Monthly Meetings to advice itinerant ministers and the entire membership.¹³⁹ These Elders maintained a discipline that took no notice of the social changes in the world at large, but which in time was bound to be influential to a minority. Nevertheless the quietist period produced some noticeable achievements by Quakers in social welfare and philanthropic work. Although Quakers often remained aloof from ordinary social activities because of their religious convictions, their reverence to human life and universal equality often generated a deep social concern especially for the poor and the downtrodden. Friends became prominent in the anti-slavery movement and Indian welfare.

¹³⁶ Bacon, *Mothers*, 51.

¹³⁷ Punshon, *Portrait*, 101.

¹³⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, (Eds), *Women of the Spirit: Female Leadership in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979. 20.

¹³⁹ Russell, *The History*, 220, 281-282.

The quietist period was brought to an end by a series of challenges on the American society at large.¹⁴⁰ First there was the impact of the American and French revolutions, which disseminated new ideas of liberty and personal freedom and provoked a re-examination of all kinds of oppression. This new wave of thinking made an impact on the way people approached issues that affected them in society.¹⁴¹ Secondly there were shifts in population westward after the American Revolution and Quakers were among those who emigrated towards the end of the 18th century. These Quakers left the southern states in order not to be influenced by slavery and to obtain better land. With these migrations new Quaker strongholds were formed in Ohio, Indiana, and Iowa.¹⁴² Their westward migration and pioneer experience brought them into closer contact with non-Quaker Christians and forced them to adapt their religious practices. Frontier conditions also made communication between the Meetings difficult leading to a decline of spiritual and moral life.

But what was to set the Quakers on a new trend was the rise of 18th century evangelicalism which was associated with the Wesley brothers in England. Evangelicalism affected American Quakerism leading to a series of divisions. Describing Evangelicalism among Quakers Punshon has noted that

The story of the reception of evangelical principles is a complex one, involving the nature of quietist Quakerism, the changing social structure of the big cities of Britain and America, a number of outstanding personalities, an intellectual climate that was receptive to this revival theology, and, last, its congruence at many points with the original Quaker message.¹⁴³

Evangelism was introduced to America by British Quakers, at a time when American Quakers were divided into two parties, a doctrinally liberal and a conservative group.¹⁴⁴ In addition to the doctrinal divide the Quakers were also divided between urban area and rural areas. The Quakers in the urban areas had grown wealthy from business and were liberal in their approach to the earlier Quaker

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 284; William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America*, New York: Harper, 1950. 145.

¹⁴¹ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, vol. 1. New York: Image Books, 1972. 82.

¹⁴² Barbour & Frost, *The Quakers*, 155.

¹⁴³ Punshon, *Portrait*, 166.

¹⁴⁴ Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, Vol. I. London: Macmillan, 1942. 474.

principle of simplicity. Rural Quakers on the other hand were more conservative in their approach to the Quaker principles of faith and therefore maintained most aspects of the Quaker practice. The rural Quakers perceived their urban counterparts as worldly, giving less attention to the true tenets of Quakerism.

The divide between the urban and rural Quakers had other implications. The organisation and authority of the meetings was urban-based, which led to the rural Quakers feeling that insufficient attention was being given to their views in the life and work of the society. The poor interaction between the rural and urban Quakers created tensions which became more evident in the wake of the Evangelical movement. The Evangelical movement, under the leadership of some British travelling ministers spread rapidly in America. It emphasised the scriptures as an outward and final authority, and tacitly identified right doctrines with the Scripture and allowed no other interpretation.¹⁴⁵ These ideas were accepted and propagated by some Quakers who desired everyone to conform to the new interpretations, but there were those who challenged it on the basis of the traditional Quaker teachings, among them Elias Hicks.

Although Hicks was of a quietist tradition, he was influenced by the rationalism of the period and sought to work out a rational position regarding the 'Inner Light'. He argued that the 'Inner Light' was the basis for all spiritual growth in human beings because it was the source of all revelation.¹⁴⁶ Hicks opposed the evangelical emphasis on the divinity of Christ, the authority of the Bible and their views on the atonement. He stressed the 'Inner Light' because the evangelical teaching was introducing an 'outward' form of religion, which the early Quakers had detested. The

¹⁴⁵ Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, London: Macmillan, 1942. 288. The tenets of the evangelical teaching were :-

- 1) The plenary (or even verbal) inspiration and final outward authority of the Bible.
- 2) The total depravity of human nature as a consequence of the fall,
- 3) The "deity" of Christ and
- 4) His "substitutionary" death on the cross and
- 5) The necessity of a definite personal religious experience.

¹⁴⁶ Jones, *The later period*, 448.

controversy between Hicks and the mainstream Quaker group came to a head in 1827 and resulted in a division between the Orthodox Evangelical Quakers and the Hicksites. The theological divide was built on the existing divide between the urban and rural Quakers.

The 1827 split of the Quakers opened the way for other splits. In 1845 the orthodox Quakers were divided into two groups. This division came as a result of the teachings and influence of Joseph J. Gurney, the brother of Elizabeth Fry. Gurney was a Biblical and linguistic scholar who followed the evangelical disciplines of prayer and Bible study. He was well known as a fundraiser and organiser for the British Foreign Bible Society and the antislavery society.¹⁴⁷ He also supported his sister Elizabeth Fry in the prison reform movement.

Other than his involvement in the social issues of the Friends, Gurney was also very keen to put Quaker views of this period into a theological framework. His theological views were published in 1824 under the title, *The Observations on the Religious Peculiarities of the Religious Society of Friends*.¹⁴⁸ His influence contributed to a fresh interest among the Quakers in education and Biblical scholarship; it also intensified the growing evangelical tendencies. On his visit to North America Gurney, thought he would help heal the rift between the Orthodox and the Hicksites but he encountered opposition.

Gurney presented Quakerism as a system of evangelical theology, where Scripture rather than spiritual communication with God, was the basis of authority. Central to his preaching was the belief in the atonement, which he claimed to be the theme of the Bible from the Old to the New Testament. Human beings were sinful but they were made righteous through the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Gurney's views challenged Fox's exposition of the 'Inner Light' which acknowledged that all people had the potential of turning to the 'Light of Go'. Gurney argued that it was not until people were justified that the spirit of God was given to them:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 518f; Barbour & Frost, *The Quakers*, 193-194.

¹⁴⁸ Joseph Gurney, *Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of Friends*. London: J. Archy 1834. Reprinted in 1979 as *A Peculiar People*.

In our fallen condition - all our faculties and powers are crippled by sin, our bodies subject to disease and death, our minds intimately associated with them, and partaking of their infirmity.... Our senses, the avenue through which information reaches us from the eternal world, may deceive us.¹⁴⁹

Consequently, humanity was seen in terms of total depravity or extreme sinfulness rather than the 'Inner Light'. Thus the Quakers who were influenced by evangelicalism rejected the concept of the 'Inner Light' in all human beings, which had been the basic understanding of early Quakers. For them the Holy Spirit could only dwell in the hearts of those who were sanctified. Having challenged and denied the concept of the 'Inner Light,' the belief in original sin was embraced. This was because they could justify original sin from Scripture. These views met with resistance from other Quakers, especially from John Wilbur and his followers.¹⁵⁰

John Wilbur, a minister of New England, travelled about and warned people about the 'heresy' of Gurney's teaching. Even though both Wilbur and Gurney belonged to the orthodox group, they differed in terms of the emphasis each gave to his understanding of the faith. Wilbur emphasised the 'Inner Light' rather than the Bible, which was Gurney's emphasis. Wilbur saw the systematic study of the Bible as a mere 'creaturely activity.'¹⁵¹ The two men also differed because Gurney taught the Wesleyan idea that sanctification followed justification as a second work of grace. Wilbur on the other hand was of the view that justification and sanctification proceeded together.

In 1843, New England set up a committee to look into the matter and Wilbur was asked to withdraw his opposition. He objected and his monthly meeting was asked to disown him but they refused. A Quarterly Meeting was asked to dissolve the Monthly Meeting and pass its membership to another Monthly Meeting but there was an uproar over this decision and in 1845 the meeting divided into two, a larger Gurneyite group and a smaller Wilburite group. Even though the Wilburites were small and their views were not widely held by most Quakers, 'they did prove capable

¹⁴⁹ Thomas D Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism or Orthodox Friends 1800-1907*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988. 123.

¹⁵⁰ Barbour & Hugh, *The Quakers*, 377.

¹⁵¹ Jones, *Later Period*, 871.

of sustaining a small but permanently influential group known as Conservative Friends.¹⁵²

Thus by the 19th century, North American Quakers were divided into three distinct groups even if these are not the only divisions in American Quakerism. The Hicksite minority were centred primarily in the east where they retained a moral mystical faith and showed no interest in evangelical innovations. The Gurneyite majority, representing the more rural and western areas were the most evangelical, authoritarian and theologically conservative. The Wilburites were in between the Hicksites and Gurneyites. They resembled the Gurneyites in theology, the Hicksites in their modes of worship and they were not keen in innovations.¹⁵³ The position of women in each of these groups was also different.

2.4 THE IMPACT OF DIVISIONS ON WOMEN

The place and role of women in each of the groups was perceived differently. Even though Braithewaite has noted that ‘spiritual equality between men and women was one of the glories of Quakerism, with divisions in American Quakerism, this aspect of it disappeared from some of the groups.’¹⁵⁴ The differences were more prevalent between the Gurneyites and the Hicksites, with the latter being more liberal than the former.

Bacon notes that most Hicksites maintained Quaker teachings and shunned reform movements. And as a result they were not influenced by ideologies which defined the roles of women in 19th century American society. Thus the Hicksites who owned farms or businesses shared responsibilities between husbands and wives.¹⁵⁵ Since they maintained the traditional Quaker teachings, they were more liberal in their outlook and they produced women like Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony among

¹⁵² Punshon, *Portrait*, 198.

¹⁵³ Howard Brinton, *Friends for Over Three Hundred Years: The History and Beliefs of the Society of Friends since George Fox Started the Movement*, Wallingford: Pendle Hill, 1983. 193.

¹⁵⁴ Braithewaite, *The Second Period*, 270.

¹⁵⁵ Bacon, *Mothers*, 93-97.

others, who were leaders in the women's rights and suffrage movements of the early twentieth century.¹⁵⁶

In the Hicksite group, the women's meetings displayed more independence than in the Gurneyite group:

The Hicksite women became more assertive, initiating actions and undertaking concerns without waiting for the approval of the men. The corresponding [Gurneyites] orthodox women's minutes show no such change; in fact there was more tendency to defer to the 'brethren' for decisions.¹⁵⁷

The position of women in the Gurneyite tradition was a mismatch between the Quaker teaching and the prevalent ideology about women. The wealthy urban Quaker men who dominated the Gurneyite tradition appear to have absorbed from their non-Quaker business colleagues the 19th century ideology of domesticity, which defined the sphere of woman.¹⁵⁸ Gurney himself also contributed to the views about women in this tradition. As a Victorian gentleman, he viewed the place and role of women with ambivalence. He was torn between what the Quakers taught about women and ministry and their public roles. He therefore defended women's right to preach if they were led by the Spirit but warned them against usurping power from men

For we all know that there are no women among us, more generally distinguished for the modesty, gentleness order, and a right submission to their brethren, than those who have been called by their Divine Master into the exercise of the Christian Ministry.¹⁵⁹

Gurney was alarmed when he realised that there were more women than men in the ministry. To him this was a mistake that needed to be rectified because,

the stronger sex [he argued] ought to fight the battles of the Lord. Women should not be left to fight these battles because of their 'physical weakness and delicacy' which render them less fit for combat.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Carol & John Stoneburner, (Eds), *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History: Biographical Studies*, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986. 201.

¹⁵⁷ Bacon, *Mothers*, 93.

¹⁵⁸ Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. *Family Fortunes. Men and Women of the English Middle Class*, London: Routledge, 1992. 137-140.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted and cited in Bacon, *Mother*, 95.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 95.

In reaction to the women's rights activists he made it clear that he did not think it was proper for women to speak publicly. In a letter to his family he wrote,

Some talented women in this country are making a grand effort to obtain the same political rights and privileges as the man. They are aiming to be voters, orators... etc, etc. What shall we all come to? I do not approve of ladies speaking in public, even in the antislavery cause, except under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. Then and then only all is safe. Should my dear ladies have to speak in this way, I have no objection.¹⁶¹

Despite this growing ambivalence toward the public role of women, evangelical women such as Sybil Jones, Esther Frame and Elizabeth Comstock who became involved in mission work came from the Gurneyite group.¹⁶² Some women from this group also became involved in the Revival preaching which led to Quakers involvement in mission abroad.

2.5 REVIVAL AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICAN QUAKERISM

The history of Revival in America is a complex issue but historians have noted four major periods of awakenings between 18th and 20th centuries: the Great Awakening of 1740s; the second Great Awakening of late 1790 to 1800; Revivals of 1820 to 1830's; Revivals of the late 1850's.¹⁶³ Although Revival in America is a complex event, it is the Revivals of the late 1850s that had a big impact on the Quakers, especially those of the Gurneyite tradition. Prior to this, the 1830 Revival led by figures such as C. G. Finney and P. Palmer laid the foundation for what was later to influence some Quakers. Finney was a small-town lawyer in upstate New York who wrote a textbook on revivals, and led one in Rochester in 1830, and established doctrines of Perfection and Holiness.¹⁶⁴ Palmer was a chiropractor's wife in New York City who led the 'Holiness' or laymen's revival around 1858, centring on

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 95.

¹⁶² Barbour & Hugh, *The Quakers*, 317, 340; Hamm, *The Transformation*, 221.

¹⁶³ Charles C. Cole, *Social Ideas of Northern Evangelists 1826 – 1860*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1954; Edwin J. Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening: An Account of the Worldwide Evangelical Revival Beginning in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Rev. Edition 1964. 13-37.

¹⁶⁴ Charles Finney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology Embracing Moral and Physical Depravity, Natural Moral and Gracious ability, Repentance, Faith Justification & C*, London: W. Tegg, 1851.

weekday prayer meetings, blessed but not usually led by pastors.¹⁶⁵ This led on to holiness camp meetings, usually led by ministers without churches but including Quakers such as Hannah Whitehall Smith. It is the holiness camp meetings, which fuelled revival among the Quakers in the 1870. According to Hamm,

to speak about Revival among Quakers in the 1870s was to speak of an event that included five elements: (1) services focusing on small groups of preachers; (2) an emphasis on instantaneous experience, whether it be conversion or sanctification; (3) the employment of altar calls and mourners benches; (4) the use of hymns and congregational singing; and (5) the toleration and even encouragement of extreme emotionalism.¹⁶⁶

This revival started with town-wide (interchurch) meeting in places like Iowa, Ohio, and Indiana, before it became a common feature of the Gurneyite orthodox meetings. Small groups began to meet for Bible study and prayer meeting. A number of young revival leaders emerged and began to stir those meetings with fiery messages. Fundamentalist in theology and exciting in their presentations, the revivalists created among the audiences a desire for redemption and new life.¹⁶⁷ The Bible was renewed and revitalised for the listeners and was eagerly studied for spiritual guidance. Gradually the Quakers began to adapt new forms of worship by introducing programmed meetings with the singing of hymns, the preaching of the word and a distinctive role for a pastor. Theologically the Quakers adopted a 'fourfold gospel of conversion, sanctification, faith and healing, and the Second Coming.'¹⁶⁸ This theology influenced the Quakers in a number of ways.

First there was a change in structure and organisation of the meetings to accommodate those people who were influenced by revival. Otherwise such people were prone to drift away in search of meetings which could nurture their faith. Secondly the meetings began to adopt a paid ministry leading to programmed

¹⁶⁵ Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, London: The Scarecrow Press, second edition, 1996. 55; Charles E. White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmers as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist and Humanitarian*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Francis Asbury, 1986.; Richard Carwardin, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790 -1865*, London: Greenwood Press, 1978. 182-183.

¹⁶⁶ Hamm, *The Transformation*, 75.

¹⁶⁷ George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925*, New York: OUP, 1980. 15.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 102.

services instead of silent meetings.¹⁶⁹ The pastor began to occupy a central place in the meeting and there was need to create room for a pastorate in the organisational structure of the society. It seemed logical and in accordance with Quaker practice to have the meeting of Elders and Overseers responsible for the services of worship and pastoral work. It was this body that initiated the choice of a pastor and made recommendations to the monthly meeting. The latter body extended the official invitation to the pastor and was responsible for the financial arrangements of the work done. It was not every meeting that adopted the pastoral system, but in those that did, the system had serious implications for the ministry of women because they were infrequently chosen as pastors

As well as the programmed services and the introduction of the position of a pastor, Revival motivated the Quakers to join other Protestant groups in sponsoring foreign missions. Concern to improve the human condition had been a mark of Quakers and they had produced notable leaders in anti-slavery, temperance and peace movements. Quakers had also been prominent in founding schools and academies in which to educate their own children in literacy and Quaker attitudes.¹⁷⁰ These things that were being done in the home front through revival were extended to foreign lands. Just as in the earlier decades, individual Quakers continued to feel inspired to travel widely to preach and teach. The revival reinforced this and paved a way for a new dimension of disseminating the Truth. Revival brought an intense concern for saving souls, both at home and in foreign lands. Like many 19th century missionaries, evangelical Quakers began to think of taking 'light' to the Dark Continent.¹⁷¹

The effects of Revival, the development of the new meetings, the changes and adaptations in the structure and organisation, and the differences in theology all combined to accentuate the diversity in Quakerism. In order to unify this diversity, Indiana Yearly Meeting called a conference at Richmond in 1887 which produced a declaration of faith, which was 'soundly orthodox and unequivocally evangelical.'¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Jones, *The Later*, 915.

¹⁷⁰ Barbour & Frost, *The Quakers*, 191.

¹⁷¹ Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, London: 1965. 2nd edition, 34-35.

¹⁷² Jones, *The Later*, 931.

The Richmond declaration of faith unified a section of Quakers and they developed a unified Book of Discipline and agreed to meet every five years. This resulted in the establishment of the Five Years Meeting (FYM) and later the Friends United Meeting (FUM) that is in existence today.

2.6 QUAKERS AND MODERN MISSIONARY MOVEMENT.

Traditionally Quakers had relied on travelling ministers, men and women, to do missionary work. They refrained from organised mission work because it was incompatible with the basic Quaker dependence on the leading of the Spirit and the fear that it would lead to the development of structures involving a 'hireling ministry' [paid ministry]. But with the 18th century evangelicalism in Britain and the 1860's Revivals in America, Quakers were caught up in the spirit of foreign missions and they began to go out to preach and do philanthropic work. In 1868 British Quakers founded the Friends Foreign Mission Association (FFMA) in London and it established mission work in Madagascar, India, Ceylon and China. In 1896 FFMA set up an Industrial mission on the island of Pemba off the East Coast of Kenya which was a free slave colony.¹⁷³ The American Quakers did not become involved in mission in Kenya until 1902.¹⁷⁴

The involvement of some American Quakers in mission work is a complex subject because of the divisions in American Quakerism, hence here we will concentrate on how mission affected women. Hamm has noted that in the 1860s American Gurneyite Friends began to send their own missionaries and publish information about mission work and missionaries through the *Friends Review* and *American Friend*.¹⁷⁵ Mission work began with individual missionaries being sponsored by individual Yearly Meetings. In 1867 for example New England Yearly Meeting in line with the British Quakers sponsored Eli and Sybil Jones to start work in Ramallah, Palestine. In 1871 Indiana Yearly Meeting supported Samuel Purdie in

¹⁷³ Henry T. Hodgkin, *Friends Beyond the Sea*, London: Headley, 1916. 64, 114.; *The Past Calls to the Present: Friends in Madagascar 1867 – 1967*, London: Friends Service Council, 1967.

¹⁷⁴ A detailed discussion of American Mission work in Kenya is in Chapter three.

¹⁷⁵ Hamm, *The Transformation*, 58.

Mexico.¹⁷⁶ By 1887 Friends were engaged in mission work in six foreign territories and a lot of support for mission work was born by women.

2.7 QUAKER WOMEN AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

As noted above the Quakers who got involved with foreign missions mostly came from the orthodox Gurneyite tradition. The situation of women in this tradition was not different from the situation of women in other Protestant denominations where women were subordinate to men in the church. But the 1860 Revival enthused and encouraged women where as before,

The voice of a woman in church action was rarely heard in expression of a personal opinion. The usual answer was 'I unite' or 'I am free' and never I may say, to evolve a system of organised work, which should bring out the energies of the young portion of members... The women were earnest but timid, some of them frightened at their own voices and fearful to take hold and step out into a new field. [sic]¹⁷⁷

Revival enthused and encouraged most women to speak and to take part in the organising mission work at home and later abroad. At home women were concerned with the fate of young people who had been influenced by revival and who would be lost if the meetings did not cater for them. Rhoda Coffin and a few women from Indiana Yearly Meeting discussed this issue and agreed that it would be important to form an organisation which would help young people to deal with the effects of revival in their lives. The women chose the name for the organisation to be the Women's Home Mission Association of Friends (WHMAF.)¹⁷⁸

However these women were afraid of advertising this initiative to other to women, because they had not asked the men's Meeting to endorse their decision. Rhoda Coffin who was the mastermind of the organisation knew that if the women had gone to consult the men's meeting, it would take time before the idea was given a go ahead. She decided to make a notice for the meeting of women about a missionary association to be read out together with other notices. But to be on the safe side she

¹⁷⁶ Others include Iowa Yearly Meeting in Jamaica. In 1883, Tokyo and Japan in 1885 from Philadelphia.

¹⁷⁷ Christina H Jones, *American Friends in World Mission*, Richmond IN: Brethren Publishing House, 1946. 70.

invited three men, one of whom was her husband, to attend the meeting as well.¹⁷⁹ The three invited men and the women who were attending the Indiana Yearly Meeting sessions attended the early meeting announced by Rhoda Coffin. The members received the suggestion about a missionary association for the sake of young people and the impact of Revival on them very well. The formation of WHMAF was passed and the women were to go ahead and begin working.

The WHMAF organised cottage prayers and Sunday schools, visiting prisons and poor houses. They disseminated their information through the distribution of tracts, which led to the foundation of new Quaker Meetings. With the formation and activities of WHMAF in 1866 a way was opened for the establishment of Quaker Woman's Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS). This was not realised until 1881, long after other denominations became involved in mission work abroad.

The WFMS was established through the efforts of women like Eliza Cox who took up the challenge to organise the Quaker women for foreign mission after visiting her parents in Butlerville near Monrovia, Indiana. There she discovered that some Quaker women had been attending a missionary meeting organised by the Methodist church.¹⁸⁰ The fact that Quaker women were willing to participate in missionary work with other denominations was a sure indication that they were interested in missions but they needed organisation in their own church.

Cox decided to share her vision about a Women's Foreign Missionary Organisation with individual women, as well as writing letters to the leaders of the women's Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings of the Western Yearly Meeting. In her own Meeting at Hopewell she went ahead with other women and formed such an organisation. Most of the women who received her letter responded positively to her idea of a WFMS and some went ahead and made plans for such an organisation in their Meetings and others formed a WFMS. Cox had sent her letters to the various

¹⁷⁸ Jones, *American Friends*, 71.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁸⁰ Mary Edith Hinshaw & Ruth R. Hockett, *Growth and Development Service Unlimited: The Story of the United Society of Friends Women Centennial Edition 1881 – 1981*, Indianapolis: United Society of Friends Women, 1981. 1.

Meetings in March 1881 and by September eight quarterly Meetings had gone ahead and formed a WFMS. The next question was how would the work of these societies be co-ordinated.¹⁸¹

This question was dealt with in September 1881 during the annual session of the Western Yearly Meeting at which the women from the eight Quarterly Meetings with WFMS's and others who were interested were invited to attend. During this meeting the women formed an organisation through which all the WFMS's in the Western Yearly Meeting would be co-ordinated at Yearly Meeting level. The constitution which had been formulated by the White Lick and the Hope Well Meetings was adopted and the leaders for the WFMS were elected. These were Eliza Armstrong Cox as President, Rebecca May Morris as recording clerk, Jessica Cook as corresponding secretary and Jemima Taylor as the treasurer. It was agreed that all leaders of the Women's Quarterly Meetings would act as vice presidents to the president. The women did this without consulting the men's meeting although it was the procedure that decisions passed by the Women's Meetings had to be ratified by the Men's Meetings.¹⁸²

Information about the WFMS at this stage was disseminated through the Quaker journal known as the *Christian Worker*, which was published in Chicago¹⁸³. The news about the organisation spread quickly and women in other Yearly Meetings joined the movement by establishing their WFMS's. For example in 1882 a Woman's Foreign Mission was formed in Philadelphia, and 1883 Iowa, Indiana and New England did the same. By 1884 thirteen WFMS's had been established and this became an outlet through which women would participate in the work of the church without affecting the existing structures. In 1885 the WFMS's launched the *Missionary Advocate*, a magazine through which they disseminated information about Mission. In the editorial of the first issue Cox wrote the leading article entitled *The World for Christ*.¹⁸⁴ In this article she expressed the significance of foreign

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁸² Ibid, 3.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 11.

¹⁸⁴ *The Friends Missionary Advocate*, Vol. I. No. 1. January 1885.

mission work, especially by women to women who had not had a chance to hear the word of God.

For six years the WFMS's worked as a regional missionary organisation for the Quakers who were involved in organised mission work. The members of the WFMS from the Western Yearly Meeting, which was the mastermind of the missionary organisation, decided to push the regional missionary organisations to become a national organisation. In 1888 the Women of the Western Yearly Meeting called a meeting for all the regional WFMS's, and they met at the Friends First church, Indianapolis. They did this in order to form an organisation which could co-ordinate the women's missionary work. During the 1888 meeting, it was observed that:

In the recent revival of missionary zeal amongst us there sprung up an almost unaccountable demand for a Woman's Association. No one of us can trace the movement precisely to its source, or tell what caused it so rapidly to extend, but the result has been a large percent of advance in missionary interest and effort, leading us to believe that the Woman's Foreign Missionary societies are providentially in the church of Christ at this time and that the co-operation of men and women in the spread of the gospel can be more effectively secured through separate organisations.¹⁸⁵

The 1888 meeting prepared for the first major conference of 1890 at Glens Falls which made changes for the WFMS. In the 1890 conference it was decided that the organisation be called 'Woman's Foreign Missionary Union of Friends in America' (WFMU) with a constitution and by-laws. Phoebe S. Adeyot was elected the first National President of the union. It is at this conference that the women agreed to meet once in three years calling these meetings Tri-ennial Conferences of the WFMU. The work of the union was organised into the departments of 'missionary literature, junior and juvenile, systematic giving to the Organisation.'¹⁸⁶

The WFMU sent out women to various fields of mission some of which were in pioneer areas like China. For instance Esther Butler from Ohio Yearly Meeting went to China in 1890 and was a pioneer in American Friends work in China. Esther Baird and Delia Fistler served in India, Ann Hunnicut served in Alaska, and Ruth

¹⁸⁵ Jones, *American Friends*, 1946. 73.

¹⁸⁶ Hinshaw & Hockett, *Growth*, 4.

Esther served in Guatemala.¹⁸⁷ It is in this connection that Bacon has noted that: 'Quaker women missionaries served as equal partners, and sometimes as the most important member of the team.'¹⁸⁸ Although Bacon's observations are true they only apply in cases where women missionaries served on their own. In cases where the mission had both men and women, the working relationships and structures were different.

With sending out and supporting missionaries, WFMU was gaining ground in foreign missions which caused the Five Years Meeting (FYM) to begin to deliberate how best the Foreign Missions could be co-ordinated, especially those that were managed by individual Yearly Meetings. In 1892 there was a discussion about forming a central body to co-ordinate the work of foreign Missions and in 1894 the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions (AFBFM) was established by the Five Years Meeting to co-ordinate its work of mission which was run by individual Yearly Meetings.¹⁸⁹ AFBFM was to serve only as co-operative and consultative body with no employed personnel. As a result AFBFM was hampered with problems of inadequate finances and administrative control. One would think that since there was already a WFMU, FYM could have looked into ways of involving everybody in this organisation rather than creating another mission organisation. But this was not the case. So what was FYM saying by creating a new organisation?

By setting up AFBFM, the FYM appear to have ignored the existence of WFMU. However the women were concerned about the relationship between their organisation (WFMU) and the AFBFM. In the 1902 session of the Five Years meeting the women raised the issue of relationship between WFMU which was co-ordinated nationally and the AFBM. The truth about how men in FYM saw WFMU came out during the discussions. Some men were of the opinion that the WFMU ought to be left to operate as a separate and auxiliary body just as the women's organisations in other denominations. In reaction to this view, Mary Whitehall

¹⁸⁷ Anna Louis Spann, *The Ministry of Women in the Society of Friends*, Unpublished PhD Thesis University of Iowa, 1945. 180.

¹⁸⁸ Bacon, *Mothers*, 178-179.

¹⁸⁹ Jones, *American Friends*, 44.

Thomas argued that the place of Quaker women in the church is side by side with men, not separate and subordinate. Instead of an auxiliary missionary society run by women, she advocated for a general society composed of men and women and asked the men to remember the place of women in the Society of Friends.

The women in the Society of Friends have a position that is not allowed them by their brethren nor given them by the man. It is given them by the head of the church, the Lord Christ Jesus. The society is the only society that professes that women should have this place, and it is organised on that basis and we are not going to let you forget it, and it will come up continually and I do say that the men of the society of Friends need to be reminded of it.¹⁹⁰

This plea did not lead to the creation of one missionary organisation and WFMU and AFBFM remained separate bodies. In 1907, FYM strengthened AFBFM by appointing a salaried secretary in order to deal with some of the financial and administrative difficulties facing it.

In 1916 WFMU asked FYM to recognise it as a closely affiliated organisation so that it could be more involved in the work of FYM not only in foreign missions.¹⁹¹ However nothing substantial was done to get WFMU more involved in other areas of FYM until 1939. In the mean time WFMU decided to change its name to Woman's Missionary Union. Although the word foreign was dropped, the organisation supported the work of foreign mission by providing educational material, paying salaries for missionaries and supporting their children's education. They also provided for money to put up churches at home and abroad.¹⁹² The WMU continued to meet in Tri-ennial meetings and disseminate information about mission at home and abroad

In 1939 FYM decided to allow the WMU more involvement. The president of WMU, who was also the editor of the *Missionary Advocate*, was allowed to become a regular member of the board of missions in FYM. In the forties the WMU realised there were more women's groups, which were concerned with issues in society that were not necessarily missionary oriented. At the same time some of the groups that

¹⁹⁰ Bacon, *Mothers*, 181.

¹⁹¹ Hinsaw & Hockett, *Growth*, 8.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 4.

had been keen on mission, had lost their zeal. In order to revitalise and incorporate other groups into the union they decided to look for a broader and inclusive name.

In the 1948 Triennial conference which met at Poughkeepsie, New York with a theme 'Committed Unto Us', two major issues were brought before the WMU. The first one was that WMU take over the Travel Fund of \$11,400 in order to support missionaries to and from Africa.¹⁹³ The second issue was for WMU to approve the change of its name to USFW, a change that signalled a desire to shift from an exclusively mission profile to include groups that were not necessarily mission oriented. Even though some members to this meeting were hesitant with the change of name, fearing it would lead to a neglect of the missions, there was no strong dissenting voice. Among other things this society was committed to was to share in the mission of the church everywhere.

Until 1974 USFW was an American Quaker women's organisation. It co-ordinated the work of the women's societies in those American Yearly Meetings that were members of the FYM which by then had become Friends United Meeting (FUM).¹⁹⁴ But in 1974 the word 'International' was added to the title of USFW in recognition that the work of the society was international in scope, making it the United Society of Friends Women International (USFWI). This was because the East Africa Yearly Meeting which was established in 1946 and the Jamaica Yearly Meeting were no longer mission fields but Yearly Meetings in their own right and members of FUM.¹⁹⁵ The women from these Yearly Meetings were beginning to participate in the USFW Meetings as members too. Even though USFWI is now formally an international organisation, it is still overwhelmingly American because the women from the overseas Yearly Meetings only attend the Triennial conferences and are not

¹⁹³ For example, Edith and Leonard Wines were leaving for Africa to take over from Jefferson and Helen Ford who were returning back to America in 1948.

¹⁹⁴ From 1960 the Meetings of the FYM changed from every five years to three years and in 1966 the name Five Years Meeting (FYM) became Friends United Meeting (FUM), the name which is still used for the organisation today.

¹⁹⁵ Chapter six of this thesis discusses how the women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM was affiliated to the USFW leading to the organisation adopting the name United Society of Friends Women International.

involved in other business as equal partners. USFWI is still very maternal to the Women's Yearly Meetings overseas, treating them as mission fields.

The relationship between USFWI and FUM is a complex one because both of them are international organisations even though they are largely American with maternal and paternal characteristics. USFWI and FUM are autonomous but they co-operate at certain levels. The executive committee of USFWI appoints its members to each of the commissions of FUM and the USFWI is represented on the General Board of FUM by its president but not vice versa. USFWI promotes the interests of the Yearly Meetings that are represented and the work of FUM in general. During the FUM sessions, USFWI members especially from the Yearly Meetings of Africa, are given an opportunity to attend and to share in the deliberations. But by and large USFWI works autonomously through its funds to support mission work at home and abroad. USFWI supports the work of missionaries in the Yearly Meetings and projects that are founded by the women's Yearly Meetings. East Africa Yearly Meeting has been a recipient of missionaries, supported by USFWI funding, especially as educators or medical experts.

2.8 WOMEN AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, a distinctive feature of mission during the 19th century was the involvement of women. We finish this chapter by looking at some of the reasons why women got involved in mission work. In her analysis of American women in mission Robert has noted that

Seeking the salvation of the heathen through spreading the gospel motivated much of the female missionary sensibility. The urge to "save the heathen" was often the first motive expressed by women when they were exposed to missionary thinking.¹⁹⁶

The urge to save souls was given impetus by the millennial views which were prevalent and held by most church groups in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These views appeared in speeches and sermons in form of appeal and urgency.

We will have to answer exactly for our stewardship. Our wastefulness will be our Nemesis... How fearful it will be in the last day, to have our Master point to

¹⁹⁶ Robert, *American Women*, 26.

the cowering, wretched, pagan women, and say to us, "Ye knew your duty toward these but ye did it not."¹⁹⁷

The religious fervour of this period led the women to unite with each other for charitable activities, which supported mission. These activities became outlets for women to be involved in public life at a time when it was not socially acceptable. In addition to millennial views, women were motivated for mission by their concern for what they understood of the status of women in Africa and Asia. The type of literature which was being disseminated, enforced such assumptions.

By 1900 American women were familiar, if not conversant, with an entire vocabulary that implied the degradation of women: Zenanas and harems; the seraglio and the bagnio; female infanticide and suttee; concubinage and polygamy; bride sale; foot binding; consecrated prostitution and sacrifice; bastinado; child marriage and slavery.¹⁹⁸

It was maintained among church and mission circles, that in 'non-Christian religions' women were 'trapped and degraded' and they could rise to the status of women held in Christian countries only through education, medical work and evangelism.¹⁹⁹ The women thought mission work, Christianity, which was normally equated with Christian civilisation, would raise the status of African and Asian women.

As well as freeing and raising the standards of women, it was believed among Protestant circles that Christianity would only take root in these continents with the establishment of Christian homes and families. These could be created only if women in those lands were converted and were taught the virtues of Christian motherhood.

Protestantism cannot flourish until the women are thoroughly renovated, and their old superstitious notions are rooted out. Converting women was in their view more important than reaching the heathen men in realising their ultimate goal of christianising whole cultures.²⁰⁰

African /Asian women were identified as the missiological object and this led to the development of a mission theology which sanctified the domestic roles of women.

¹⁹⁷ Hill, *The World*, 65.

¹⁹⁸ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, 'Zenana and Girlless Villages the Ethnology of American Evangelical Women: 1870- 1910.' in *Journal of American History*, vol. 69. September 1982. 357.

¹⁹⁹ Robert, *American Women*, 133.

²⁰⁰ Hill, *The world*, 58.

This theology was to be disseminated by women missionaries through home visitations, sewing lessons, childcare, and prayer meetings.²⁰¹ The American women missionaries were not acting in a vacuum because their outlook on mission work had been influenced by the Victorian ideals of womanhood which stressed women's domesticity and female subordination.²⁰² The evangelical faith with which most of these women were brought up reinforced their belief that a woman's place was in the home which was likened to an 'oasis in the desert, a sanctuary where sympathy, honour, virtue are assembled'... This was in contrast to the world outside the home, which was regarded as a place for 'economics and political activities, an arena of selfishness, exertion, and competition.'²⁰³ Mary Ryan has noted that the cult of true womanhood was 'a gilded pedestal for a sexual division of labour and social roles, thus turning the home away from production and into the locus of reproduction and consumption'.²⁰⁴ The establishment of Christian homes was the basis of evangelical concepts of Christian family and society.²⁰⁵

The women were expected to cultivate qualities such as piety, purity and submission which would fit the atmosphere of the home. Through this she would 'exhibit the excellence of character which God had in view in creating her'.²⁰⁶ The pulpit was used by the ministers of religion to bring home this point.

The clergy stressed the unobtrusive and private nature of women's appropriate duties and directed them to devote their energies to those departments of life that form the character of individuals and to embodying that modesty and delicacy which is the charm of domestic life.²⁰⁷

²⁰¹ Robert, *American Women*, 69.

²⁰² Hill, *The World*, 25, Catherine Hall, 'The Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology,' in Sandra Burman (Ed), *Fit Work for Women*. London: Women's Studies Series. 1979. 24. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 108.

²⁰³ Cott, *The Bonds*, 133.

²⁰⁴ Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class. The family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 187.

²⁰⁵ Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. 49.

²⁰⁶ Jeanne Boydston, "The Pastoralization of Housework" in Linda K. Kerber, Jane Sherron De Hart *Women's America Refocusing the Past*, Oxford: OUP, 1995. 145.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 147.

Although the Victorian domesticity pushed women into the private sphere, women did not challenge their situation but instead sought ways to empower themselves and exercise their authority rather than upset the system which was in existence.²⁰⁸ One way was to be involved in philanthropic works and missionary work offered a means to this end.²⁰⁹ Beaver has noted the formation of women's missionary organisations was as a response to the sexual discrimination in missionary organisation of the period.²¹⁰ Robert on the other hand has argued that woman's work for woman was a dominant force in western mission theories of the late nineteenth century.²¹¹ The American evangelical women did not challenge their own position in the society but used it as a yardstick to measure the position of women in other cultures.

The mass of American women came to use cross-cultural information to support rather than to challenge gender and family arrangements in their own country. Church going women largely preoccupied with ameliorating what they considered to be the degraded condition of their non Christian sisters, were generally sceptical of, if not downright hostile to the emergence of an indigenous feminist political movement and its critique of sexual subordination at home.²¹²

According to most women who got involved in mission work, they did not think that sexual discrimination in their land could compare with sexual discrimination in other cultures.

We live in a country where the discussions of "women's rights is ever to the front". We are to study lands where they are just beginning to recognise woman's wrongs-lands where the slogan 'ladies first' is consistently and persistently 'ladies last'.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Ibid. , 152.

²⁰⁹ Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States*, New York: Yale University Press, 1990. F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980. 7-8; Anne Summers 'A home Away from Home-Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century.' In Sandra Burman, *Fit Work for Women*, London: The Oxford Women's Series, 1979. 34. Ruth Bordin, *Women and Temperance: The quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981.

²¹⁰ Beaver, *All Loves Excelling*, 86.

²¹¹ Robert, *American Women*, 136-137.

²¹² Hill, *The World*, 29.

²¹³ Brumberg, 'Zenana and Girlless', 355.

The fact that the women missionaries considered themselves to be in a better position influenced the nature of their work among women. Women missionaries both single and married imported a spiritualised Victorian domesticity and used it to attack and challenge both African and Asian ideologies.

2.9 CONCLUSION.

Elizabeth Isichei has observed that

The equality of men and women in Quakerism was more apparent than real, but the powers open to women were so large compared to their restricted role in other religious-or, for that matter, secular organisations that they deserve to be regarded as one of the most striking elements in Quaker organisation.²¹⁴

This chapter has highlighted the different stages of the position of women in the Quaker movement. The beginnings of Quakerism indicate that the concept of the 'Inner Light' led the Quaker women to play a central role in the formation and the spread of the Quaker movement. Women served as ministers, preachers and missionaries both in England and United States. But at the same time the chapter has shown that the position of women was complex, from the time that George Fox initiated separate Meetings for women. The fact that the separate Meetings for women were subordinate to the men's Meeting illustrated the Quakers' social perception that women were themselves subordinate to the men.

The growth and development of evangelicalism in the 18th and 19th centuries led to many divisions in North American Quakerism. Each of the divisions interpreted the traditional teaching on the 'Inner Light' differently. The Hicksites tried to remain true to the traditional teaching and emphasised the concept of gender equality, in contrast to the reformed teachings of the orthodox Gurneyites who influenced by American evangelicalism, accepted the social subordination of women in a manner comparable to other protestant churches. It is through the early 19th century Revivals that women from the Gurneyite tradition were enthused to take part in Foreign Missions. But the women who became involved with mission work were influenced by the ideology of domesticity of the evangelical tradition in which they were raised.

²¹⁴ Elizabeth Isichei, *Victorian Quakers*, London: Oxford University Press, 1970. 10.

CHAPTER THREE

3 MISSIONARIES AND ABALUYIA: THE EMERGENCE OF EAST AFRICA YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

On the 24th June 1902, a team of three Quaker missionaries arrived in Mombasa. Their arrival coincided with two significant events which changed the history of Kenya in terms of its administrative structure and its developing system of communication. Politically, the borders of the British protectorate of East Africa which was later to become Kenya Colony, had just been extended to Lake Victoria, and a permanent boundary between Kenya and Uganda had been established. Western Kenya where the three Quaker missionaries were heading was transferred from Uganda Protectorate to East Africa Protectorate. As regards communication, 1902 was the year when the Kenya-Uganda railway had reached Port Florence at Lake Victoria later known as Kisumu. The three Quaker men travelled to their destination on the first passenger train.

This chapter locates the context to which the Quaker missionaries came and presents an overview of the missionary circumstances leading up to the formation of the East Africa Yearly Meeting and its developments up to 1979. The chapter will focus on issues concerning the status and activities of women, but will not give a full analysis of EAYM because it has been given much coverage already.²¹⁵

3.1.1 THE CONTEXT

The Quaker missionaries were not the first people to come into contact with the Abaluyia people. There had been an interaction between Abaluyia and other neighbouring communities and even with people from afar. Among the people from afar to come into contact with Abaluyia were the Swahili traders from the coastal region from 1840. The Swahili traders were known to be shrewd and fierce people and when they came to a region they plundered whole areas in search of ivory and slaves. They used to travel in long caravans from the coast to the interior of Kenya,

²¹⁵ For a historical analysis of EAYM, the following sources cover a wide range. Painter, *The Hill Vision*; Smuck, *Friends in East Africa*; Rasmussen, *A History*.

Uganda and Tanzania. The Abaluyia were spared their activities for a while because of the Maasai and Nandi groups who resisted the Swahili traders and prevented them from crossing through their land into the interior.

As a means of protection the Maasai and the Nandi people not only defended themselves against the Swahili traders but they attacked them fiercely too.²¹⁶ The Swahili traders therefore avoided this area and either went through present Tanzania into Uganda or used alternative routes which avoided the region of the Maasai and the Nandi. One of the alternative routes went round Lake Victoria and led them into the land of Abaluyia. In the Abaluyia region the Swahili traders set up a camp in Chief Shiundu's compound and did their business from there.²¹⁷

This became the headquarters from which they raided the Abaluyia people, especially the Bukusu. The methods of capturing slaves affected mostly women and children. The traders would settle down and request a large stock of food for their trip back to the coast. They would bid to pay for this food at a higher price than what is offered in the market, which meant that they would get the food faster. It was mostly women who brought in the food, often from a great distance and when they came into the compound they were seized and made prisoner. One such woman who managed to escape from the slave-raiders was Bahati.

A few days before we started for Kavirondo a slave woman came into the camp, having run away from the caravan of Abdullah bib Hammed near Nzawi. She had been captured in Ketosh, and when she had heard we were going to Kavirondo, she asked to be taken back to her country. Her request was at once granted and after an issue of cloth to hide her nakedness, she was handed over to the tender care of old Said. Her name was Bahati.²¹⁸

Slavery was humiliating to the people and the society at large. The captured slaves were subjected to harsh and cruel treatment with the march to the slave market at Mombasa. They were sold to Arab traders who equally treated them harshly. The people who had been raided and had their family members abducted suffered hardship and deprivation.

Apart from traders, the explorers too had an impact on the Abaluyia. For instance Joseph Thomson, a British geologist and explorer, travelled through various

²¹⁶ A. T. Matson, *Nandi Resistance to British Rule 1890- 1906*, Nairobi: EAPH, 1972. 40.

²¹⁷ Were, *A History*, 143.

²¹⁸ Sir Fredrick Jackson, *Early Days in East Africa*, London: Dawson, 1969. 168 – 169.

communities in Kenya such as the Kikuyu, the Maasai, the Nandi and Abaluyia. He made comments about these groups, commenting about Abaluyia women as follows:

The village in which we passed ... had an undraped young lady, certainly not less than seven feet in height. One of my men who stand six feet three was quite dwarfed by comparison with her. She was unmarried, which would seem to indicate that even in Kavirondo they can have too much of a good thing.²¹⁹

Having been attracted to the Abaluyia women, Thomson taught them waltz dancing. He showed them how to do the spirited movements of Scottish dance. Apart from the beauty of single women, other explorers were taken aback with the amount of loads the women would carry and still walk straight

It was always a wonder to me how the latter,[women] with both hands and fully loaded with market produce plus a baby on their backs could march along gaily, and chattering, with heavy bowled pipe with a foot long reed stem and iron tube mouth piece sticking out their mouths at right angles and without any support.²²⁰

It is this kind of sight which later led the missionaries to conclude that women among the Abaluyia needed emancipation but it could only be done if the men were taught skills as it is discussed later in the chapter.

Even if the traders and explorers influenced the Luyia people, it is the advent of British rule that had a long lasting impact on them. Although British rule did not start until 1894, their presence was felt from 1887 through the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). This was a private company chartered by the British government partly to trade and partly to further British interests in the interior. Basing themselves at the port in Mombasa, the company's agents rapidly set up a string of posts across Kenya, in order to reach Uganda in the interior of East Africa.

After six years the company went bankrupt because of high costs of caravan transport across the five hundred miles from Mombasa to Uganda. In 1894, the company handed over its administration to the British Foreign Office, which set up a Protectorate over Uganda and in 1895 a Protectorate was declared over Kenya too. Between 1895 and 1897 the British protectorate officials established their rule in the region through military campaigns known as 'punitive expeditions' which were

²¹⁹ Joseph Thomson, *Through Maasai Land*, London: Sampson Low, Martson Searle & Ravington, 1885. 60.

²²⁰ Jackson, *Early Days*, 227.

intended to punish those groups that resented British rule and promote those that collaborated with the British.²²¹

Having taken over the activities of the region, the British government decided to build a railway-line from Mombasa to Lake Victoria. Between 1895 and 1901 the railway line was built and it transformed the interior of Kenya politically, economically, socially and religiously.²²² While the railway was being built, the British government decided to encourage European settlement whose agricultural technology would produce crops for export to help pay for some of the railway expenses.²²³ In 1901 the railway line was complete and it was opened in 1902, the same year when Western Kenya which was under the Uganda Protectorate was transferred to East Africa Protectorate.²²⁴

The British rule in this region and in Kenya as a whole lasted for over fifty years, first, as a protectorate and later as a colony. During the protectorate the British ruled through chiefs and headmen, who were responsible for collecting taxes and putting into action what was required. When the British declared Kenya a colony they developed an infrastructure of locations, districts and provinces administered by a hierarchy of administrators who governed with African chiefs.²²⁵

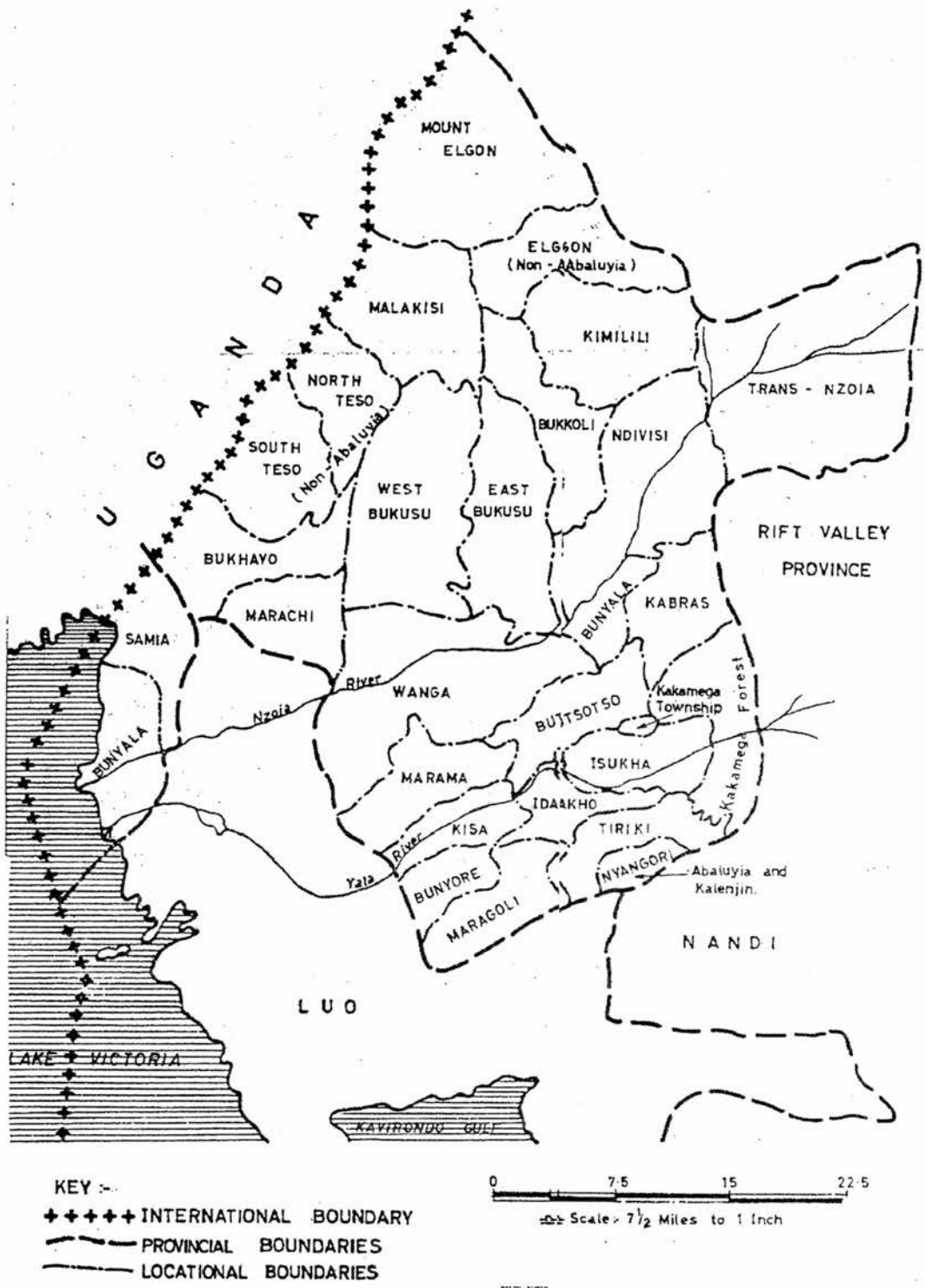
²²¹ Were, *A History*, 165

²²² For the building of the Railway line see Marvyn F. Hill, *Permanent Way: Being the Official History of the Development of Transport System in Kenya and Uganda* 2nd edition. Nairobi: East Africa Railways and Harbours, 1961.

²²³ Elspeth Huxley, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya*, 2 vols. 2nd ed. London: Chatto and Windus, 1953; Ross, W. McGregor, *Kenya From Within*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1927.

²²⁴ Were, *A History*, 155, 169.

²²⁵ See map four on page 84.



Map 5: Abaluyia locations: Taken from Were, page 38.

Several aspects of British rule affected Abaluyia and had serious implications for women. These were the powers invested in chiefs, the introduction of the hut tax, the creation of the white highlands and the introduction of cash crops. These aspects put Abaluyia under pressure to meet the demands of British rule. The men were forced into migrant labour which led to the break up of the Abaluyia social structure. This left the women to carry a greater burden of the family as they had to take care of the farms and families left behind.

The establishment of British rule in 1902 coincided with the arrival of the first Quaker missionaries and the establishment of their work. However they were not the first missionaries to this area. As early as 1877 the Church Missionary Society had started work in Uganda. Early in 1885 Bishop James Hannington of the Diocese of Equatorial Africa in which Uganda fell visited the region where he met his death in 1885.

In 1892 Bishop Alfred Tucker passed through Western Kenya and expressed his concern for the evangelisation of the region.

Can nothing be done for Kavirondo? If only Christians at home could see us, surrounded by swarms of these ignorant people, and unable to promise them teachers, they could surely have pity on us and them, and provide the men and means of this vast field and most blessed and Christ like work.²²⁶

In 1894 there was an attempt by CMS to start work in Mumias but it never took off. It was not until the opening of the Railway line in 1902 that western Kenya saw an influx of Christian missions. The period between 1902 to 1910 could be defined as a decade of missionary scramble for western Kenya. Quakers were among the first groups to arrive and establish mission work in western Kenya, which was an advantage for them because they were able to negotiate with the government about land on which to set up their mission stations. But not long after their arrival there was an influx of other mission groups keen to settle in the same region.²²⁷

²²⁶ Alfred Tucker, *Eighteen Years in Uganda*, London: Edward Arnold, 1908. 102.

²²⁷ The Quaker missionaries were followed by the Mill Hill Fathers who had their first station at Kisumu in 1903 and another mission in Elureko near Mumias the following year. In 1905 CMS opened their first mission station at Vihiga which they later sold to the Quakers and moved to Maseno where they set up a new mission station. In 1905 the South Africa Compound and Interior Mission (SACIM), which was an independent mission opened a station at Kima among the Banyore, an Abaluyia group. SACIM was followed by another independent mission, the Nilotic Independent

Even though these groups came from different countries and represented different denominations, the Protestant groups especially had one thing in common; the 19th century Evangelical theology that stressed personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour without which one was condemned. On the basis of this theology the 'heathen' Abaluyia stood no chance of salvation. The missionaries also believed that they had come from a superior culture and part of their mission work was to make Africans be like them in terms of dress and lifestyle.

Despite the agenda of the missions to evangelise the 'heathen', there were tensions among them in regard to areas of expansion. Scramble for land was an issue, which the Protestant missionaries resolved through the comity agreements of 1907.²²⁸ The comity agreements divided the region into spheres of influence along ethnic lines. The Roman Catholic missions objected to the spheres of influence policy and instead regarded the whole region as their sphere of influence.²²⁹ Each of the Protestant groups respected their sphere of influence and lessened rivalry among them. But rivalry between the Protestant groups and the Roman Catholic Church was very common, not least with the Friends.²³⁰

3.2 FRIENDS AFRICA INDUSTRIAL MISSION²³¹

The person who initiated the idea of an industrial mission was Willis Hotchkiss, a Quaker minister and a graduate of Cleveland Bible College in Ohio. Cleveland College was founded in 1892 as a response to the needs of the Quakers who had embraced the changes brought to the Quaker movement by the 'Great Revival'

Mission (NIM) from South Africa led by Miss Dorothea Boldt. The American Seventh day Adventist (SDA) started their first mission at Gendia in 1906. For the Seventh-Day Adventist see Nehemiah N. Nyaundi, *Adventism in Gusii*, Kendu Bay: Africa Herald Publishing House, 1997.

²²⁸ Gilbert E.M. Ogutu, *The History of the Catholic Church in Western Kenya*. Nairobi: Palwa Research Services, 1989. 22.

²²⁹ W.B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa 1840- 1974*, Nairobi: Uzima, 1981. 50.

²³⁰ Rasmussen, *A History*, 113.

²³¹ Friends Africa Industrial Mission as a name was used from 1901 to 1911 when industrial was dropped leaving Friends Africa Mission. In this thesis I use FAIM to begin with and then concentrate of FAM. If FAIM is used after 1911 it is because what is being referred to took place before Industrial was dropped.

which began to affect the Quakers in America from 1860 onwards.²³² Hotchkiss first came to Kenya in 1895 with his brother-in-law Peter Scott to establish the African Inland Mission, a non-denominational mission among the Akamba people. He stayed in Kenya until 1899 and returned to America due to financial and administrative problems of the Africa Inland Mission.²³³

While Hotchkiss was serving with the African Inland Mission among the Akamba, he was struck by the simple lifestyle of the people and the lack of adequate tools for agriculture. He realised the heavy burden which the women carried especially in doing all the agricultural duties. The famine which hit the region between 1898 and 1899, led him to conclude that the African people needed more than the Gospel as far as mission was concerned. He was of the opinion that an industrial mission was ideal in this situation because it would train the African man in habits of industry. It would also create in him 'a stability of character otherwise impossible, and without which he will ever be vacillating and unreliable, a wave driven by the wind and tossed; a prey to every evil passion'.²³⁴

With an industrial training the men, according to Hotchkiss, would learn to take the 'galling burden from the shoulders of oppressed and burdened women.'²³⁵ The idea for an industrial mission was not new but it mirrored the views of evangelical Protestants missions, such as the Scottish Missions in various parts of Africa.²³⁶ In 1874 James Stewart of South Africa proposed that the Free Church of Scotland set up Livingstonia mission in Malawi as an 'institution, both industrial and educational, to teach the truths of the Gospel and the arts of civilised life'.²³⁷ In 1891 Stewart led a party to Kenya to set up what was later known as the Kikuyu mission which was to

232 John Oliver, 'J. Walter Malone: The American Friend and an Evangelical Quaker Social Agenda' in *Quaker History* vol. 80 fall 1991. 63 - 83; Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, New York: Macmillan, 1943. 507.

233 Kenneth Richardson, *Garden of Miracles. A History of the African Inland Mission*. London: Victory. 1968. 22; Dick Anderson, *We Felt like Grasshoppers. The Story of African Inland Mission*. Nottingham: Crossway Books. 1994. 23-24.

234 Hotchkiss, *Sketches*, 113.

235 *Ibid.*, 37,

236 Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, London: Longman's 1952. 23.

237 James Stewart, *Livingstonia its Origin: An Account of the Establishment of the Mission in British Central Africa*, Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1894. 47.

be evangelistic, medical, educational and industrial in accordance with the Scottish missionary traditions.²³⁸

Hotchkiss left the AIM to return to America in order to canvass his ideas for an industrial mission to Africa. He began with his own people in the Mid West, who listened sympathetically to what he had to say as it conformed with their own understanding of the Quaker faith. This faith founded on the individual's direct experience of God affected all aspects of practical everyday living. It was in this spirit that Hotchkiss approached the American Friends Board of Foreign Mission (AFBFM) to support an industrial mission in Kenya, but this board could not do so because they had just started to support a mission in Cuba.²³⁹

Having failed with the AFBFM, Hotchkiss approached the members of the Cleveland Bible College, his former college, asking them to support his venture in Kenya. The college, which was under the leadership of Walter and Emma Malone, agreed.²⁴⁰

Arthur Chilson of Iowa, who was convinced that he was called to serve in Africa and had been preparing himself for the work, joined Hotchkiss. The two men succeeded in winning the interest of Edgar Hole, a businessman from Salem Ohio, who had a long interest in missions.²⁴¹

These three men started out at once to present the plan for an industrial mission to Kenya to some of the American Yearly Meetings.²⁴² As part of the campaign for an industrial mission, Hotchkiss's book *Sketches from the Dark Continent* was published. This book which described his early experiences among the Akamba with AIM, had a special chapter on industrial missions.²⁴³ Using poetic language, Hotchkiss described what he saw as the appalling living-conditions of the people and how they were trapped in what he termed as their 'backward ways' of life'. Worst affected he maintained were the women. A woman, he wrote was:

²³⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, *The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. 6; Horace R. A. Philip. *A New Day in Kenya*, London: World Dominion Press, 1936. 16.

²³⁹ Jones, *American Friends*, 53.

²⁴⁰ Barbour & Frost, *The Quakers*, 210.

²⁴¹ Byron, L. Osborne, *The Malone Story*, Newton: 1970. 110.

²⁴² Jones, *American Friends*, 187.

²⁴³ Hotchkiss, *Sketches*, Chapter. XI.

Practically a slave; a beast of burden reckoned as just so much *Mali* (property). Woman is still a slave even though slavery has ended in Africa. Womanhood is reduced to servitude doomed to drudgery as mere beasts of burden. The women are bulwarks of superstition. Womanhood in Africa is womanhood without God.²⁴⁴

Since Quaker mission work was organised by women, they were quick to sympathise with the situation of women in other cultures and thus supported the work of an industrial mission which they considered the most effective way of relieving the situation of these women. Ten Yearly Meetings agreed to support an industrial mission in Kenya and on the 18th February 1901 the Friends Africa Industrial Mission was formed. The secretary to this board was Emma Malone.²⁴⁵ Her role as secretary enhanced the support given to FAIM whose information was disseminated through *Soul Winner, (Evangelical Friend)*. She served as secretary to this board until 1911 when it was incorporated into the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions and the name was FAIM was changed to Friends Africa Mission, dropping the word Industrial even though the practice continued. The aim of the FAIM was

...The evangelisation of the heathen. The industrial feature is introduced into the work for the purpose of exerting a continuous Christian influence over the natives employed with the hope of obtaining the following results, viz., teaching them habits of industry, and ultimately establishing a self-supporting native Christian church.²⁴⁶

The underlying factor to this kind of thinking was the assumption that natives were lazy as the climate allowed them to sit doing nothing and the Europeans would show them how to work.²⁴⁷ To the Quaker missionaries, preaching Christianity alone would not be effective in creating a native Christian church. It was only when the people were given practical skills that they would contribute to such growth. What the missionaries failed to grasp was the fact that practical skills would not create a native church without an adequate understanding of self-sufficiency. Even though the

²⁴⁴ Ibid. 30,

²⁴⁵ John Oliver, Emma Brown Malone: 'Background and Implanting of Quakerism in Kenya'. *Journal of Canadian Friends Historical Society*. No 61, Spring 1997. 17-26.

²⁴⁶ Irene Hoskin, *Friends in East Africa*, Richmond Indiana: American Friends Board of Mission. 1945. 28.

²⁴⁷ This idea is developed by Alatas Syed Hussein, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from 16th -20th Centuries and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism*, London: Cass, 1977. Although this work was written in the Context of Asia, the philosophy applied in Africa too.

missionaries aimed for a self-supporting church, they themselves did not know what type of church would emerge from an industrial mission, because their experiences varied and each had a different background from the other.

Hotchkiss was a revivalist from a non-Quaker missionary background before setting out for Kenya. Hole and Chilson had been influenced by the evangelical theology of the Malones and their Cleveland congregations. Despite these differences which became a source of conflicts in the mission field, the three men left for Kenya on the 23rd April 1902. Hotchkiss and Hole each left behind a wife and daughter. On their way to Kenya these men stopped and toured in England and Ireland for six weeks. The British Quakers were interested in the work they were going to start in Kenya because they too had set up a mission station in Pemba, Zanzibar, East Africa, in 1896.²⁴⁸ The British Quakers gave the American Quakers material for a house which when constructed was named Devonshire House. They also gave them financial support and those who worked in the Pemba mission gave them advice. While Hotchkiss, Hole and Chilson were on their tour, they met with Bishop Alfred Tucker of the Church of England, a Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary to Uganda who told them more about the region where they were going to start mission work.

3.2.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MISSION STATIONS

After six weeks in Britain, the party left and arrived in Mombasa, Kenya on the 24th June 1902, and travelled on the first passenger train to Port Florence. When they arrived in Port Florence, they were well received by C.W. Hobley the District Commissioner, who was preparing Port Florence as a permanent post for administration.²⁴⁹ The acquaintance with Hobley helped the American missionaries in setting up their mission stations. When Hobley asked the missionaries to accompany him on a tour of the district they seized the opportunity because they saw it as a chance to meet the local leaders and acquaint themselves with the people and

²⁴⁸ Henry T. Hodgkin, *Friends Beyond the Seas*, London: Headley Brothers, 1916. 142.

²⁴⁹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 20.

the area. Chilson described the region in very traditional missionary terms as 'a field ripe for harvest but with few harvesters.'²⁵⁰

While visiting Chief Mumia, the missionaries were given two guides as they looked for a place for their mission station. For a period of three weeks this party moved up and down the district trying to find a suitable place for their work. Whilst they were touring both Hotchkiss and Hole became ill with malaria and the team sought a place to camp. Chilson who climbed a tree to look

...espied this grassy slope where we are now located. I hurried and started toward it. Crossing the river, we came up the gradual slope and camped. After getting our tents up and the camp in order, I saw we were in a fine place with many things favourable for a mission location, more than any place we had found yet. There is quite a tract of land unoccupied by the natives, splendid, heavy timber with a large stream running through it, which has good falls and rapids, and splendid drinking water. Hundreds of natives live within reach. The altitude, a little high is 5300 feet.²⁵¹

It is with these notably practical considerations in mind, that Kaimosi was chosen as the first mission centre for FAIM, and it grew to become the headquarters of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends.

After six months in Kaimosi station, Hotchkiss who was the key figure in FAIM, left for America but later returned to establish another Industrial Faith Mission in Lumbwa.²⁵² Perhaps he found it hard to work under a mission board and chose to be independent by establishing a faith mission. Adelaide Hole and her daughter with Virginia and Elisha Blackburn, who were medical missionaries, joined Hole and Chilson in July 1903. In 1904 Deborah and Emory Rees who had been working in South Africa joined the team at Kaimosi before they moved to Vihiga to open the second mission station. This station had originally been set up by the CMS but when CMS decided to move to Maseno and concentrate their work among the Luo people they sold Vihiga to the Quakers.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Painter, *The Hill of Vision*, 22; Chilson, *Ambassador*, 21- 22

²⁵¹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 28.

²⁵² Fish C. Burnette, *The Place of Songs: A History of the World Gospel Mission and the Africa Gospel Church*, Nairobi: World Gospel Mission, 1989. 29; Dick Anderson, *We Felt like Grasshoppers: The Story of Africa Inland Mission*. Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994. 23-24. Perhaps the forth coming book By John Oliver et al, on the *Diary of Willis Ray Hotchkiss*, will shed more light as to why he left FAIM to start an independent mission. It will be published by Ohio University press end the end of 1998.

²⁵³ KNA: FAIM report 1906. Anderson, *The Church*, 70.

Deborah and Emory Rees became the key figures in this station, as a result of their work in putting Llogooli, which was spoken by Avalogoli, into writing after which it became the *lingua franca* in FAM.²⁵⁴ The third mission station was set up at Liranda in August 1906 and it was managed by Adelaide and Edgar Hole, assisted by Cherubim Matolas who was loaned to them by the British Industrial Mission of Pemba. It is at Liranda that a girl's boarding school was started in 1915 and later moved to Kaimosi in 1921 where it continues today.

The fourth mission station was opened in April 1913 at Lugulu, known then as Kitosh. Originally headed by Doctor Estock, he was replaced by Helen Farr and Jefferson Ford who became the theologian of FAM. Malava was the next largest station after Lugulu even though they should have been started at the same time but Malava was delayed because of lack of government permission.²⁵⁵ Edna and Arthur Chilson served at Malava until they left in 1926 to start another mission in Burundi.²⁵⁶ As far as the work of establishing missions stations was concerned, it was the men who negotiated with the government and the chiefs about land, a crucial question for the mission, especially for Quakers whose vision for mission was industrial.

In setting up these mission stations, the Quakers had a fourfold ministry; that is evangelism, education, industrial training and medical work. The aim of each one of them was to achieve conversion for Abaluyia.

All are needed in the healthy growth of the people in Africa. Teaching them the love of God first, accepting Christ as their saviour, and the study of the Bible, and in order to grow as Christians they must learn to read, teach and develop along all lines.²⁵⁷

Thus the Quaker approach to mission was not just spiritual but encompassed the physical, social and economic aspects of life too. The Quaker missionaries intended to create a church, which was both self-supporting by industrial training and self-propagating by evangelism.

²⁵⁴ Elizabeth H. Emerson, *Emory Rees, Language Pioneer: a Biographical Sketch*, Richmond Indiana: American Friends Board of Foreign Missions, 1958.

²⁵⁵ See map of mission stations page.10

²⁵⁶ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 126.

²⁵⁷ Hoyt, *We Were Pioneers*. 31.

3.2.2 EVANGELISM

The Quaker missionaries to Kenya like other Quakers did not have a confessional doctrinal statement to which people could subscribe. They were independent people who were united by a conversion experience and a call to be a missionary. Other than the training that some of them had received as ministers, their theological presuppositions were based on Revival principles which had brought an intense concern for the salvation of souls. But it was harder for them to determine whether Abaluyia had experienced the same salvation unless they saw some outward signs. Thus the missionary reiterated that

Our aim, first and always, is the definite, positive salvation of the individual and coupled with this, to help these destitute people to become strong and self-reliant, and to cause them not to be satisfied with a coat of grease and clay or a filthy piece of skin, and to live in a miserable hut, swarming with vermin, but to long to be superior in every way to their present heathen condition.... While the mission was organised primarily to give the Gospel to the African people those in charge soon felt that industrial work must be used as one of the means to this end.²⁵⁸

Even if education, industrial and medical training could contribute in changing the Abaluyia lifestyle, it was not enough unless they had obtained what the missionaries defined as 'Positive salvation of the individual'. This is something that the missionaries themselves understood, and in order to realise it they prohibited what they found questionable in the Luyia practices, which included things in their social life such as beer drinking, dancing and relationships between members of the opposite sex. They also forbade people from the rituals of naming, initiation, eating sacrificial meats and working on Sundays. Although 'positive salvation of the individual' was the goal of evangelical Christianity, the first converts to Christianity were women and men who had been attracted to the mission station for some other secular reason.

Among the first people to come to the station were young men who were alienated from their community because of being socially disadvantaged, for example as orphans. Since they could not rely on the traditional community, the mission station became a place where they could gain social mobility. Christianity was seen as a tool for power for those whom the community had categorised as powerless. The position

²⁵⁸ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 40.

of these young men made the missionaries aware of the plight of the disadvantaged in the community and the need for work.

The second group of people were young men from the opposite end of society,

The headmen and chiefs saw advantages in risking an offspring and several relatives to exposure to unsavoury mission company because of the useful knowledge and skills they might acquire.²⁵⁹

This group also made an impact on the missionaries' views. The missionaries realised that the people of this group, being influential in their own communities, would be able to effect the conversion to Christianity of their communities.

The third category was girls and women. Some writers of mission history have noted that this group went to the mission stations as a place of refuge from either harsh labour or forced marriages.²⁶⁰ While this is true even among the Quakers, it is also necessary to distinguish between those who were genuinely running away and those who wanted to receive the new knowledge that the men were receiving. But this was denied them because of the way the missionaries and the Abaluyia viewed the role of women in society. This made the missionaries use such women as brides for the early converts. Maria Maraga, for example, went to the mission station to seek for knowledge; and she was employed as an ayah by the Hole family and was married to Daudi Lung'aho who played a key role in the Quaker mission work. And so she remained on the periphery of mission work as a wife and mother and not a pioneer Quaker.²⁶¹

Other than people like Maraga there were those women and girls who came to the mission station because they saw it as a place of refuge, after alienation from the patri-clans. Some of these women were orphans, some, such as Mutua who will be discussed at length in chapter seven, came to the mission station as a place of escape from a forced marriage. Likewise these women were married off and did what was seen as women's work.

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 127.

²⁶⁰ For example R.W. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya 1875-19*, London: Heinemann, 1978. 52-55.

²⁶¹ Hoyt, *We Were*, 36.

3.2.3 LANGUAGE

Lamin Sanneh among others has observed that the translation of the scriptures to local languages contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity in Africa.²⁶² The Quakers like other mission groups had to choose the language with which to communicate the Christian message and use for the translation of the Bible and any teaching material. They were faced with Kiswahili which was in print and was used as a language of trade, and several Luyia dialects which were not in print.

The local dialects were much more important for our work than was Swahili. Better acquaintance with the vernaculars about us convinced me that though difficult, the learning of one or more was not the hopeless task it had first appeared to be. Having reached this conclusion the decision to devote to the vernacular was easily made and steadily adhered to.²⁶³

Emory and Deborah Rees who became the language teachers were living among Avalogoli and they chose to learn and use Lloogoli as the language of Quakerism. Llogooli therefore became the *lingua franca* for Quakers in Kenya, but not without problems. Llogooli was one of the eighteen dialects used by Abaluyia. To use it as the official Quaker language was a disadvantage to those other groups among whom Quakers worked.²⁶⁴ These problems were not envisaged when Emory and Deborah Rees reduced Lloogoli into writing and used it for translation because they did not think that the differences were very significant. Their aim was to have the Christian message naturalised so that it ceased to be foreign, and this was only possible through a native language.

With the help of the local people they established a Lloogoli grammar, only a year after their arrival (1905) they had succeeded in translating the Song 'Hamba Khu Yesu (Come to Jesus) which held and still holds a popular place in the church.²⁶⁵ This

²⁶² Lamin Sanneh. *Translating the Message: Missionary Impact on Culture*, New York: Maryknoll, 1989; Ype Schaaf, *On their way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1952.

²⁶³ Emerson. *Language*. 15. On of my informants explained how the student from Bukusu would fail exams because they used a word which the missionary did not know even though it was the correct one. For example the name of a sheep. In Llogooli it is known as *rigondi* but in Bukusu it is *rikese*. In an exam the correct answer was *rigondi* because the missionary did not know that *rikese* was equally a sheep.

²⁶⁴ Kaimosi Office: 'The Reasons Why Elgon Broke Away from EAYM'. Ms. dated 27th October 1973.

²⁶⁵ Ruth Kellum, 'Milestones on the African Trail, Conquering and Using the Language,' *In American Friend*, February. 1931. 157.

was followed by a first reader printed in 1907 by the Church Missionary Press in Uganda, which represented a break through for literacy and education.

This first publication was a step forward, big out of all proportion to the thin booklet. The one thin book grew into a graded series of three booklets with introductory reading sheets to familiarise the pupils with the syllables that were the basis of all their words. In the following decade hundreds were to master the art of reading.²⁶⁶

This paved the way for the translation of the Bible which began in 1908. Mark's gospel was the first section of the Bible to be translated and printed in 1911. The other sections of the New Testament were accomplished through the work of the local people such as Amugune and later Joel Litu and by 1926 the whole of the New Testament had been completed.²⁶⁷ The translated sections of the Bible were extensively used in literacy education in schools.

Our mission stations have thousands of scholars in scores of schools for most part taught by native teachers, who are evangelists first and teachers afterwards. The Bible is used as a textbook in the schools continuously. In every session there is a Gospel service in which the Bible truth is presented and sinners urged to seek forgiveness of sins. Education is used merely as a means to the conversion of the individual and the building up of a strong, self-supporting, self-propagating native Christian church.²⁶⁸

Literacy was equated with being a Christian because the first converts were referred to as *avasomi* (readers). Other than reading the Bible, literacy included arithmetic, reading and writing. The chief aim of literacy was conversion, which was understood as a shift from traditional cultural beliefs to the Christian faith. Even though this literacy programme did not exclude women it was harder for them to join because the parents did not see its value.²⁶⁹

It was easier for the boys and men to be involved in the literacy programme especially the sons of the chiefs. It was assumed that they were the future leaders of the society and they would effect change which their fathers might not be able to.²⁷⁰ Most chiefs encouraged their sons, relatives and other people in their jurisdiction to

²⁶⁶ Emerson, *Language*, 18.

²⁶⁷ Adede, *Joel Litu 27*, Amugune, *A Christian Pioneer*, 8.

²⁶⁸ KNA: Letter from Arthur Chilson 3rd February, 1921.

²⁶⁹ Stafford Kay, *The Southern Abaluyia, The Friends Africa Mission, and the Development of Education in Western Kenya 1902–1965*. PhD. University of Wisconsin. 1973. 32.

²⁷⁰ KNA: Kisumu District quarterly Report, DC/CN/1/5/1/, Nandi district quarterly report, December 31, 1909. DC/NDI/1/1.

become readers but they did not themselves because to become a reader (Christian) required them to do away with traditional customs for which they were custodians.

In 1912, chief Standa approached Chilson and inquired about a mission station in his region so that his children and people could become readers. Chilson was glad to start a mission station at the invitation of the chief because he saw it as an opportunity for evangelism. He and the chief remained friends without Chilson forcing him to become a Christian and in 1915 the Chilsons went to chief Standa region and started a mission station which came to be known as Malava.²⁷¹ Chief Shivachi sent to Kaimosi School two of his sons plus his nephew Ngaira to look after them. Ngaira as a result was employed as a servant in Chilson's house. He became a Christian and got married to Maria Mwaiti who was also a house servant to the Chilson's. Both Mwaiti and Ngaira moved to Malava with the Chilson's and helped to set up Malava station.

The Quaker missionaries did not impose Christianity upon the chiefs neither did they demand that the chiefs take on a missionary lifestyle which the other people were subjected to. The missionaries were careful to retain their good relationship with the chiefs so that their work in the area would be made easier. This was not unique to Quakers but something that other mission groups did too as Anderson has noted in both the Church of God Mission and CMS.²⁷²

3.3 INDUSTRIAL TRAINING.

Being practical people the Quaker missionaries used various forms of industrial training in order to establish mission work. It is in many cases the industrial training that attracted most Abaluyia to the mission stations. According to the missionaries the aim of the industrial training was threefold. Firstly it was to provide equipment for the other mission departments. 'When one contemplates the work of the industrial department one is impressed by the opportunities which it offers of service to the other departments of the mission as well as to various African projects.'²⁷³

²⁷¹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 93.

²⁷² Anderson, *The Church*, 70.

²⁷³ Study Unit, *Outreach of Friends of the Five Years Meeting*, Richmond Indiana: AFBFM, 1932. 17.

Secondly it was to teach practical skills to the Luyia men so that they could improve their lifestyle. 'In many ways the people are enjoying a higher standard of living that has come to them as a natural result of the Gospel working in their hearts and lives'.²⁷⁴ Thirdly it was to be a means of getting to know the African men: 'One learns to love and appreciate these African men after working side by side with them day after day for so many years.'²⁷⁵ The missionaries were attempting to bring about an outward change since the spiritual transformation would be reflected in a change of lifestyle:

While we expect God to transform the inner man, we believe he is looking for us to transform the outer man, and as he by the Holy spirit raises the spiritual so we by manual training propose to raise the outer, thus bringing the whole being to a higher plan.²⁷⁶

The men were taught skills such as carpentry, brick-making and construction of houses as well as constructing roads.²⁷⁷ According to Chilson the construction of roads was yet another method of civilising Abaluyia men: 'road making and other forms of industrial efforts mean hard labour. But they put the native in close contact with the daily life of the missionary where he has the best opportunity of observing Christian character.'²⁷⁸ For Abaluyia footpaths were enough but the missionaries needed wider roads through which they could transport heavy material for industrial work. The roads saved the Abaluyia men from carrying the missionaries on their shoulders. Even if some forms of industrial training were gendered, road construction was inclusive of men and women.²⁷⁹

Through industrial training the Quaker missionaries succeeded in changing the Abaluyia lifestyle and transforming the 'outer man'. But the women's day- to- day workload did not change or decrease. Neither was their position in society changed because the industrial training did not challenge the ideology on which the women's

²⁷⁴ KNA: Fred Hoyt, Personal Report, 1918.

²⁷⁵: KNA: Fred Hoyt, Personal Reports, 1945.

²⁷⁶ *African Record*, April- July. Vol.2. 1907. 6.

²⁷⁷ KNA: Annual report of the Industrial department, 1934.

²⁷⁸ *African Record*, October –December Vol. 9. 1913. 6.

²⁷⁹ *Twenty-five years in East Africa A description of the field held and work of Friends Africa Mission*. Richmond Indiana: American Friends Board of Missions. 1925. 15.

roles were based. The industrial training in itself was gendered so that the skills, which the men received, failed to challenge their thinking as far as women were concerned. The industrial training in carpentry, masonry and practical construction made the men marketable and moved them away from the homes because of the demand in the country for carpenters and artisans. There was a stream of letters to the mission station for qualified people in such trades.²⁸⁰

Because men were able to use their skills to earn a wage, they also became economically powerful, increasing their economic superiority over women. The industrial training reinforced the imbalance which existed between men and women, and failed to empower women who were becoming the chief supporters of the church.

3.3.1 AGRICULTURE

The other form of industrial training which benefited the mission and the Luyia people was in the area of Agriculture. The introduction of new agricultural skills, especially farming with animals, encouraged the men to take part in agriculture thus helping the women. Frank Conover, an Iowa farmer, who came to Kaimosi in 1913, helped to expand the agricultural programme through mixed farming. The animals, which were reared at the station included mules, cattle, and pigs. Mules and oxen were used both for transportation and cultivation purposes. The elders were persuaded to train oxen to plough their fields instead of having their women do the digging.²⁸¹ The new agricultural skills also benefited the mission institutions because they promoted self-sufficiency in food production.²⁸²

Kaimosi farm produced many crops and fruit including orange, lemon, grapefruit, papaw, mango and later tea and coffee were introduced as cash crops. In the other mission-centres only fruit and vegetables were grown for use in the homes of the missionaries and the institutions. The new skills in agriculture and the introduction of new crops were intended for the students' homes as well and it seems that this policy was relatively successful.

²⁸⁰ White Mildred E. and Farr, Wendell G. *Economic life in our Mission fields*. Richmond Indiana: AFBM, 1925. 16.

²⁸¹ Hoyt, *We Were*, 72.

²⁸² Painter, *The Hill*, 92- 93.

Almost in every mission-related home or village we found in the well kept yards varieties of fruit trees of any selection in the following list: tangerine, lemon, grape fruit, papaw, guava, avocado, mango and trees bearing strawberry like fruits. In the gardens or low lying fields around streams were food stuffs like sugar cane pineapples, potatoes, groundnuts, and vegetables like cabbage, peas, carrots, tomatoes, onions and beans, as it has been noted, 'they all grew our vegetables.'²⁸³

The merits of the new agricultural practices were realised through improved health as a result of eating more fruit and vegetables; and establishing an economy in the area based on the trade in these commodities.²⁸⁴ With the introduction of new farming skills and new crops such as maize came the grinding mills, which became popular in the 1920's after being introduced by Chilson and spreading to other mission centres. The grinding mills relieved the women from using two stones to grind millet for meals, which took a lot of time and energy. Most early male converts bought these mills partly as a financial investment and partly to help their wives with work.²⁸⁵

3.3.2 MEDICAL WORK.

Medical work also played a significant part in the establishment of the Friends Industrial Mission because it confronted two aspects of the Luyia society. The first aspect was that of a traditional healer in the Luyia society, whose practices the missionaries regarded as superstition.

The native method of doctoring consists of certain ceremonies to appease evil spirits. This may include the killing of an animal, tying pieces of flesh on the neck or wrists of the patient; or worse still, rubbing the vilest filth into the sore.²⁸⁶

When Elisha Blackburn performed his first operation it earned him the name *Amaganga* from the root word *mganga* in Swahili which means a medicine person.

On a crude workbench under a shed tree and by means of a magnet, Blackburn located a deeply imbedded metal spearhead in a man's flesh. Putting the man to sleep by some mysterious substance,[anaesthesia] he cut back the flesh and removed the spear. After cleaning the wound, he sewed the flesh together and put on a dressing. Within a short period of time the man recovered.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ Hoyt, *We were*, 39.

²⁸⁴ Wagner, *The Bantu*, Vol. 2. 166.

²⁸⁵ Painter, *The Hill*, 92.

²⁸⁶ *African Record*, January- March, Vol.7. 1911. 7.

²⁸⁷ Painter, *The Hill*, 19.

The success of this operation partly undermined the role of the traditional healer because the scientific methods of the missionary were seen as superior, even though since then the role of a traditional healer still persists.

Kaimosi Hospital, which was started in 1911, was ready for use in 1918 and it became a major Christian contact with the people according to Blackburn.

Those who come for hospital treatment come in contact with Christian teaching and have opportunity to observe the lives of Christian people. As we shall recall what an important part the healing of disease had in the ministry of our master and how often it was the precursor of the salvation of the recipient, we may be sure that medical service rendered to the people will be instrumental in winning some to Christianity.²⁸⁸

Kaimosi served as a main hospital while other mission stations developed a health ministry in the form of clinics. Lugulu developed to become another mission hospital.

Even though western medicine succeeded in treating numerous ailments, the expense and expertise of western medicine is beyond the means of most Abaluyia people and they still depend on the traditional medicine men and women.

The second aspect of the Luyia society which was confronted by the missionary work was circumcision, both male and female, but particularly female. The custom of female circumcision, also referred to as clitoridectomy, was and still is controversial in many African communities.²⁸⁹ It was a subject of big debates between the African communities and the Christian missions who made attempts to stop it, especially in the Central Province of Kenya among the Kikuyu people.²⁹⁰ The Quaker missionaries had to deal with a similar issue because Abatachoni practised clitoridectomy and it was accompanied by *engwe* (secret leopard ceremonies). These rites were believed to be harmful to those who came into contact with them but were not participants.

²⁸⁸ KNA: Elisha Blackburn personal reports, 1919.

²⁸⁹ Alice Walker & Pratibha Parmar, *Warrior Marks: Female Genital Mutilation and the Sexual Blinding of Women*, London: Harcourt & Company, 1993.

²⁹⁰ E.N Wanyoike, *An African Pastor: The Life and Work of the Rev Kamawe*. Nairobi: EAPH. 1974. Robert McPherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya: An Account of the Origins and Growth of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa*, Nairobi: PCEA 1970; Jocelyn Margaret Murray 'The Kikuyu Female Circumcision in the CMS Sphere of Influence', PhD. University of California, 1974; Esther Mombo, *The Persistence of Female Circumcision Among the Abagusii of Kenya*. BD dissertation, St. Paul's United Theological College, 1983.

Jefferson Ford, and Petero Wanyama who was himself a member of Abatachoni group, and one of the first converts in Lugulu invaded and exposed the *engwe* rite. The two men took the ritual artefacts and displayed them in the church. The people expected these two men to die but they did not. The fear of these rites gradually decreased though women continued to practice clitoridectomy.²⁹¹ Although Ford and Wanyama exposed the *engwe* rites, clitoridectomy did not become a controversial issue between the church and the local people. It persisted but privately.²⁹² Several reasons explain why clitoridectomy among Abatachoni did not become a controversial issue between the Quaker Missionaries, as is the case. First it has been observed that the practice was not originally of the Abatachoni but it seems to have been 'copied' from the neighbouring Kalenjin people who practised both female and male circumcision.²⁹³ Secondly there seems to have been a combined effort to end this practice between the Quakers and the Roman Catholics.²⁹⁴ And third the government gave the missions support in dealing with the practice as well as other practices too.

There are certain native customs, which are opposed to our sense of justice, and morality and which must of necessity be suppressed or voluntarily departed from when tribes come under civilised form of government.²⁹⁵

In 1924, the chiefs of North Kavirondo adopted a resolution in support of the abolition of female circumcision.

A chief's Baraza held at Mumias in January discussed various matters affecting the social conditions of the natives. They were unanimous in condemning the circumcision of girls, and destruction of property and crops of deceased persons as part of the funeral ceremonies.²⁹⁶

It is also true to say that the practice was not tied up with the issues of land alienation, as was the case in Central Province. Even though both the missions as well as the government through the chiefs were keen to see an end of this practice it has been observed by Wanyonyi that clitoridectomy for girls was still being practised

²⁹¹ Ford & Andersen, *The steps*, 54.

²⁹² St. Paul's United Theological College (SPUTC), Petero Wanyama, Oral Interview, 18/12/1966.

²⁹³ Were, *A History*, 26.

²⁹⁴ KNA: Mumias Safari Book June 4, 1921, SPUTC. Jacob Sukura, Oral Interview, 23/12/1966.

²⁹⁵ KNA: DC/CN/3/6, Ainsworth – Northcote, February 23, 1916, Political record book. 5.

²⁹⁶ KNA: DC/ 1/5, North Kavirondo District annual report, 1924.

among Abatachoni until the 1970s.²⁹⁷ The demise of female circumcision was gradual since people continued to practice it secretly. The gradual demise of female circumcision is an indication of how ineffective regulation is in stopping a traditional practice.²⁹⁸ Bringing medical grounds as a reason to abolish clitoridectomy was hardly successful because in the view of the native population there was no correlation between health and what was done to the sexual organs. For Abatachoni and other groups female circumcision was seen as an initiation rather than a mutilation of a sex organ.

The Quaker missionaries challenged Clitoridectomy because they saw it as an unhealthy practice for women. But male circumcision was challenged because the missionaries saw the ceremonies of music, dance and the secret teachings during the seclusion period as evil.²⁹⁹ Since the missionaries did not understand what was going on and nothing could be divulged to them, they tried to show that these rituals were not in line with Christianity which they were teaching. Circumcision was acceptable so long as it was performed without the traditional paraphernalia; in this case the hospital provided an alternative since it was hygienic and in public. In doing this the missionary failed to understand that male circumcision was not just a physical operation but it was an initiation into adulthood and the ceremonies that accompanied the physical operation were part and parcel of the education for the initiate.

The young people were encouraged to shun traditional circumcision and instead go to the hospital. Those who heeded this call went to Kaimosi or Lugulu for circumcision. Edna Chilson in her diary noted that her husband had an endless stream of young people for circumcision.³⁰⁰ The new form of circumcision was

²⁹⁷ Pius Wanyonyi Kakai, 'Cultural Aspects and Social Integration: A study of Tachoni Initiation Ritual Ideas.' In *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 24, 1995. 218.

²⁹⁸ L.M. Thomas, 'Female Circumcision and Administration' In *Journal of African History* vol. 39. 1998. 121-145.

²⁹⁹ Hoyt, *We were*, 73.

³⁰⁰ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 156.

nicknamed *olupao* (piece of timber)³⁰¹ and created tensions since the operation was often performed by missionaries rather than qualified doctors.

The reaction to male circumcision was varied among the different Luyia groups with some boys being ostracised from their families for being circumcised by the missionaries and not in their customary manner.³⁰² For example in Maragoli, the last fully traditional circumcision was held in 1910. From 1917 Abaidakho and Abaisukha began to modify their circumcision rites to cope with the modern changes. In these places circumcision ceased to be a volatile issue.³⁰³ But among groups such as Abatiriki the issue of circumcision continued to be sensitive with the Tiriki refusing to reveal any of their initiation secrets to the Quakers or to modify their practice to suit missionary interests.

The missionaries campaigned hard to have the secrets divulged and using three male converts they claim they succeeded in hearing some of the secret rites.³⁰⁴ But this was not without its consequences which were interpreted differently by the Tiriki and the missionaries. One of the men who took part in revealing the secrets fell ill after two weeks. He was taken to the hospital and diagnosed to be suffering from some form of plague. His people told him that he had been cursed because he revealed the secrets of the circumcision. When he died the missionaries saw it as death from a plague but they were satisfied that he had died a Christian. The death of a convert made mission work among the Tiriki harder than in other places of the FAIM sphere of influence.

The male circumcision controversy retarded the work of education and evangelism among the Tiriki compared to what went on among the Maragoli for example. Those Tiriki boys who left the classroom to go for circumcision ceremonies found it hard to return because both their parents and the educational authorities viewed them with

³⁰¹ *Olupao*, symbolised the hospital form of male circumcision. It meant that those who were circumcised at the hospital lay on a wooden table. This was contrary to the traditional way of circumcision where the boys did not lie down but stood before a circumciser. Standing up also symbolised the courage with which the boys went through the ceremony while lying down was seen as a weak way. Those who went through the *olupao* circumcision were not given any respect.

³⁰² SPUTC: Daudi Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 26/12/1960.

³⁰³ KNA: DC/EN/3/2/3/ North Nyanza Political records Book 1, Entries for Idakho, Isukha and Maragoli.

³⁰⁴ Hoyt, *We were*, 77.

suspicion. The parents feared that they would be tempted to reveal the secrets and suffer the wrath of the tradition. The church and educational authorities on the other hand saw these boys as a threat first to their work and secondly to the Christian girls. Having gone through the secret rites the boys had been taught of their sexual privileges over the women and it was feared that they would 'molest' the Christian girls whom they saw as rebelling against the traditional culture.³⁰⁵

Among the Tiriki people traditional circumcision for men became a matter of discipline so that those parents who took part in the traditional circumcision by allowing their boys to go through it were placed under discipline. For most women the discipline was as a result of the husband's decision to take his sons to a traditional circumcision because it was his prerogative to decide where the sons got circumcised. The women had to do what the men decided. But the church disciplined both parents even in cases where it was only the woman who was the member of the church.

Other than having their boys circumcised in the hospitals the Christian parents formulated their version of circumcision which they regarded as 'Christian circumcision'; the initiates met in a separate camp from the non-Christian camp and they wore western clothes instead of the traditional clothes. It was argued that the initiates were taught Christian ideals of manhood rather than the traditional ideals. But in practice the Christian ideals of manhood were not different from the traditional ideals of manhood. It can also be argued that what happened in circumcision was the change of venue for circumcision but the philosophy behind the rite was the same both for Christians and non-Christians. But 'Christian circumcision' appears to have been sanctioned by the missionaries.

Circumcision remained largely a form through which the patriarchal ideas and norms permeated the Abaluyia Quaker church. As far as the women's role and place in the church was concerned they continued to be sidelined because the rite defined the rights and privileges of man especially in leadership roles. It is for this reason that men have continued to have privileges over women in the pastoral duties of the church, as chapter seven and eight of this thesis will show.

³⁰⁵ Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics*, 147.

3.4 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

The development and growth of the Quaker mission was measured by the number of people accepted into membership. But because the Quakers lacked outward ordinances of baptism and Holy Communion, through which people could be accepted for membership, the missionaries formulated other procedures. Admission into church membership was accomplished through formal stages of inquirers, associate members and full members.

New Christians should have their names put down in the first book for two years during which time they are taught the Bible and what it means to be a real Christian. Then if they have stood true and matured they will be taken into full membership.³⁰⁶

The inquirers were put under the care of the elders of the local congregation. For a period of half a year they received instruction in the Bible and what it meant to be a Christian. The Christian faith was described and defined as being inimical to the Abaluyia traditional religion and people had to denounce it before they were accepted into membership. At the end of the probation period those inquirers were tested publicly by the elders in what was known as the 'question and answer session'.³⁰⁷ Those who passed this examination were recommended by their local Meeting and were accepted by the Monthly Meeting as associate members.

The associate members could be placed under the instruction and observation of the Monthly Meeting for a period of two years. During this time they received further instruction on the Bible, Christian life and the faith and practice of Quakers. When the instruction period was over those who were recommended by the elders as leading consistent Christian lives by attending and supporting the meeting appeared before the examining committee who would then test their knowledge and testimony of faith. This examining committee consisted of Monthly Meeting elders and the Superintendent because it was regarded as an initiation ceremony. The candidates were tested on the subjects of God, Christology, the Bible, and African culture.³⁰⁸ If

³⁰⁶ Hoyt, *We were*, 129.

³⁰⁷ See the full text of the questions and answers. Appendix. VII.

³⁰⁸ Musingu Region, *Shitabu shykhwimilila vilwastsi na valindi va Valina (Friends)*. Musingu: EAYM 1991. 43.

the committee was satisfied with the candidates, they were accepted into full membership of the church which was synonymous with becoming a Christian.

The first members to the church were admitted in 1905 three years after the establishment of the first mission station; they were, Akhonya, Kweto, Lung'aho and Maraga. Four years later, according to Asava twenty-four people were admitted into membership twelve men and twelve women but he only records the names of two women, Sara Luyai and S. Vulimu.³⁰⁹ The names of the men include Andrea Agufana and Yohana Amugune who became prominent leaders of Vihiga and Chavakali mission stations.

In 1914 after twelve years of work there were only 43 recorded members with an average weekly attendance at meetings of worship of about a thousand. In 1924, there were over two thousand recorded members and six thousand in average attendance weekly.³¹⁰ The reasons for the increase of memberships were more social-economic than theological, as the church became a vehicle through which one gained status in a rapidly changing society. There were more people, especially men, seeking literacy with its forms of industrial training because it helped them to secure jobs in the white highlands. In order to obtain the education one had to be *omusomi* (a reader) which meant a Christian. This seems to have encouraged some to go through the formality without being committed.

To be a full member of the church meant a break with the society within which one was born and bred while and at the same time being a witness to those who were not yet Christians. A total break involved doing away with the traditional beliefs and practices such as religious shrines; the rites of naming, initiation, and burial; social life such as dancing and abstinence from brewing and drinking beer; as well as refraining from diet taboos such as those that prohibited women from eating chicken and eggs. Polygyny and levirate marriages were prohibited. Both of these the missionaries condemned as immoral and un-Christian. We shall discuss these issues in greater detail in chapter four for in reality they were much more complex than the Quaker missionaries perceived.

³⁰⁹ Herbert Asava, *Liguula Lie Lihandika*, Kisumu: Evangel Press, 1968. 4.

³¹⁰ Douglas and Dorothy Steere, *Friends Work in Africa*, London: Friends World Committee For Consultation, 1954. 35.

Between 1920's and 1930's, those who were already church members and those who were intending to be, had to live separate from the non-Christians. This was in Christian villages that were known as 'mission lines.'

In 1922 various Christian congregations in Maragoli began to establish Christian villages called Mission lines in which individual homesteads were arranged in two parallel lines. The mission lines separated the Christians from the non-Christians and were used to show what it meant to be a Christian. The mission lines brought together people of different clans under one leader who assumed the functions of the kinship head in the training of children, the maintenance of discipline and the organisation of social and economic life. While the men learnt to make bricks and applied their knowledge on building permanent churches, the women learnt on how to be good mothers in caring for the home.³¹¹

These villages became centres through which western Christian culture was disseminated. After 1930, the colonial government stopped the creation of more mission lines and asked people to leave and obtain their own prices of land as the land ownership was being adjudicated.³¹² The community life was replaced by individual homes with patches of land registered under the man who was the head of his family. Christians and non-Christians began to live together again, distinguished by prohibitions set up by the church which continued to act as the marks of a Christian. Those who failed to adhere to the prohibitions were subject to church discipline.

Church discipline was enforced because it was thought that it would make the converts keep to the high moral standards. Public exposure and confession were thought of as the way to reinforce the message in the minds of the Christians. In exercising discipline, the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments provided the basis. It was always a disappointment when a Christian fell into sin especially when men decided to take a second wife as in this case which Edna Chilson records.

Arthur is just having a shauri [case] with Ahonya's father- in-law who asked to live on the station, but kept it from us that he had two wives, which is not permitted on the station. It is one of the many, many affairs that come to him almost daily.³¹³

³¹¹ Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview, 13/2/1996.

³¹² KNA: DC/EN/3/2/3/, Political records, 1933. 25.

³¹³ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 72.

Renouncing all but one wife became one of the compulsory tests for church membership and if a man took a second wife he was treated as one who had become a sinner and there was no room for him in the mission.

3.5 CHURCH STRUCTURE.

The structure of the church that was set up by the first Quaker missionaries was in line with the Quaker structure of Preparatory Meetings, Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings the Yearly meetings.

3.5.1 MONTHLY MEETING

Having established the procedures of church membership and church discipline, FAM moved to establish a native church structure. This was in line with the aims of FAM of setting up a self-propagating and self-governing church. The native church structure was set up on the model of Quaker Monthly Meetings, Quarterly Meetings and towards a Yearly Meeting. In 1912, FAM leadership made provision for the setting up of a 'native church organisation' but with limited powers.

(a) Each station to have a simple organisation, including a chairman, secretary with appointed committees as required.(b)Local organisation to have power to admit probationers.(c) Acceptance of probationers into full membership to be done publicly and in the presence of two missionaries.(d) Such probationers to have the privilege of changing their names subject to the approval of the mission.(e) Offerings to be looked after locally with missionary oversight.(f) Those already married prior to full membership to be advised to have a Christian marriage ceremony.(g) A social and fellowship committee to be appointed which, in turn will constitute the same of the central organisation.³¹⁴

Each Church had to be in charge of its leadership, finances and membership. These three aspects in the native church organisation were significant, as they were a mark of growth for the church even though the overall supervision of all the Meetings remained under the missionaries until after the country's independence in 1963.

Every Monthly Meeting session was attended by a missionary superintendent to give advice and counsel to the members. Because the Monthly Meetings were scattered, the dates of the Meetings were arranged to fit in with the superintendent's diary, and the Monthly Meeting sessions had different names to help the people remember the dates. 'For example in Maragoli the monthly meeting was called *Omusee* [the elders'

³¹⁴ *The African record*, October-December, Vol.8. 1912. 2 – 3.

meeting] or *sitini* (sixty) [meaning the meeting took place after two months]. In Chwele it was known as *kumi na nane* [eighteen].³¹⁵ There is a sense in which the names of these meetings implied that they were male dominated.

The leadership of these Meetings was under *abakulundu* (male elders). Hoskins has noted that 'this term which is used to designate the leaders of the church is best translated as elder rather than minister. This is used so as to make use of the term most meaningful to the African'³¹⁶ But the leaders of the church excluded women and young people because the term strictly meant old men. These men wielded a lot of power in the community since the church had become the focal point of most social and ritual activities of Christians. Like kinship heads these elders took charge of initiation rites, organisation of marriages for the young people and funerals for the converts. The elders were more than ordinary leaders they had taken a position of ritual power like the clan heads in the traditional Luyia society. In this regard according to Nasibwondi these men wielded a lot of power and they were feared. It was generally believed that if person failed to abide with what they had agreed, they would pay for it.³¹⁷

The role of elders grew stronger as the Monthly Meetings expanded from being meetings of worship to business meetings. At Monthly Meeting things to do with the church, the school and the society were dealt with. By 1922 the Monthly Meetings for example were responsible for paying the teachers salaries. Between 1917 and 1920 five Monthly Meetings were set up, an indication of how fast the church was growing and the responsibilities that the people were ready to take on.

3.5.2 FORMATION OF A YEARLY MEETING.

The development of Monthly Meetings laid the foundation for the establishment of a Yearly Meeting. A Yearly Meeting is the highest organisational unit in the Religious Society of Friends. For Quaker missionaries and their sponsors to allow the establishment of a Yearly Meeting in what was a mission field was a test of their three selves (Self-supporting, self-propagating, self-governing) which was implied

³¹⁵ Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 20/2/1996.

³¹⁶ Hoskins, *Friends*, 44.

³¹⁷ Rebecca Nasibwondi, Oral Interview, 7/3/ 1996.

when the FAIM was being founded.³¹⁸ It was also a test of how the missionaries perceived the Abaluyia people and how willing they would be to share power with them. The transition from a mission field to a Yearly Meeting took a number of years showing how hesitant the missionaries were to allow the Abaluyia be in charge of their church.

For Abaluyia Quakers the desire for a Yearly Meeting can be traced back to the 1920's when they met for what the missionaries called the Native Prayer Conferences (NPC). These annual gatherings acted as renewal meetings with Bible readings, which were used to challenge and encourage Christians in their walk with God. The NPC's also acted as forums through which matters affecting the Meetings were discussed. The leadership of these gatherings was in the hands of the elders and occasionally a woman would be asked to bring a message to the whole meeting. During the annual gathering one afternoon was devoted to separate meetings for men and women so that women were given lessons on Christian motherhood.

Even though the background to the formation a Yearly Meeting was the NPC, the context out of which it was established was one of racial tensions and ethnic rivalries and in both of them the missionaries were central. Although the scope of this thesis does not allow the treatment of the two issues extensively, a brief explanation of each will shed some light on the situation. In the 1930's racial tensions in Kenya were a common phenomenon as Africans had began to resent colonial and missionary paternalism, land alienation, and forced labour.³¹⁹ The racial tensions were expressed in various ways, including the formation of associations such as the North Kavirondo Welfare Association (NKWA), North Kavirondo Central Association (NKCA) in

³¹⁸ Hotchkiss, *Sketches* 111. The words that Hotchkiss used to describe the kind of church they wanted to establish in Western Kenya was an abbreviation of the words of Rufus Anderson who, using the Pauline model of missionary expansion talked about a self government, self support and self propagation church. Even though Hotchkiss did not talk about self-governing, the later missionaries considered it but were pushed to make it a reality with the political independence of the country. As far as the ministry of Hotchkiss and others was concerned it was easier to set up a self-propagating church, but the issue of self-supporting took time to be realised. Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: and Their Relations and Claims*. New York: Charles Scribner and Company. 1869. 110; Gerald Anderson {et al}, 'Rufus Anderson' in *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of Modern Missionary Movement*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. 1994. 548-558.

³¹⁹ Bruce Berman & John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley, Conflict in Kenya & Africa: Violence and Ethnicity, Book Two*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1992. 240; John M. Lonsdale, 'Political Associations in Western Kenya'. In Robert I Rotberg and Ali A. Mazurui, *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, New York: OUP.1970. 620-626.

Western Kenya and Kikuyu Central Association, (KCA) in Central Province.³²⁰ Membership of these associations cut across denominations, as some of the leaders had been students in the mission schools.

The Quaker missionaries were not exempted from the racial tensions of this period. The divisions were between the veteran and the younger missionaries. The divisions were also theological, the veteran missionaries representing a more conservative fundamentalist position while the younger missionaries tended to be liberal and modern. The mission tensions came to the surface in various ways including an outburst of some of the missionaries in their reports. In 1934 for instance Dr. Bond wrote a report entitled 'Proper Christianity' in which he raised several issues including mission paternalism, racism and how they were affecting mission work.³²¹ The views of Dr. Bond were supported by Margaret Parker who likewise argued that the race antagonism which was in existence prevailed against mission work and proper interaction between missionaries and Africans.³²² The things that Bond and Parker raised in their reports were being practised mainly by the veteran missionaries who were not keen to be in tune with the signs of the times as far as the place of missionaries in the field was concerned.

Not only were some of the missionaries concerned about racial tensions; the Abaluyia as well cited acts of racism on the part of some missionaries. For instance the elders from Kaimosi accused Hoyt of several things including beating his students and prosecuting women who were collecting firewood.³²³ They secretly stole the whip which Hoyt was using and sent it to the mission board in Indiana through the help of Dr. Bond. This was another indication of the divisions among the missionaries.

Even though Abaluyia accused some missionaries of racism they themselves were also divided on ethnic grounds. There was a growing disparity between the south represented by Avalogoli and the north by Bukusu. Jefferson Ford who was stationed

³²⁰ Ibid.,

³²¹ KNA: Dr. A.A.Bond, personal report, 1934.

³²² KNA: Margaret Parker, personal reports, 1934.

³²³ Letter from Joshua Anusu to AFBFM office 21st January 1935 cited in Clifford Wesley Gilpin, *The Church and the Community: Quakers in Western Kenya, 1902-1963*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Columbia University. 1976. 222.

in the north was strongly identified with it even though he was the superintendent of the whole mission field. Marita Kekoyi, a wife to Joel Litu, is quoted to have said that she wished the south had a strong a missionary as Ford in the north because he could not only instruct the people on spiritual matters but his wife would help with the women's work.³²⁴

As well as the ethnic division, there was a big concern by the Abaluyia elders about the increase in the number of single girls who were getting pregnant out of wedlock. The elders were of the opinion that this resulted from a moral laxity of the school system. They felt that in order to curb the situation, it was better to return to the traditional system where boys and girls were prohibited from meeting. The veteran missionaries supported the elders but the younger missionaries did not think that this was the way to solve the problem.

The issues in the mission field attracted the attention of the mission board in Indiana and they apologised in writing about the behaviour of some missionaries and sent out a deputation to sort out some of the issues.³²⁵ In 1937 Merle Davis and Willard Trueblood visited FAM during which they met with the missionaries first, and then the Abaluyia, listening to the issues involved in the tensions among the missionaries on the one hand and between the missionaries and Abaluyia on the other hand. They managed to deal with the tensions between the missionaries by reprimanding the veteran missionaries over their attitudes and actions.³²⁶

During the deputation it was also noted that much of the tension in the mission field arose from the 'rugged individualism' of its members and the absence of a centralised structure of authority with a single commanding figure.³²⁷ The FAM mission field was organised in such a way that the missionaries were in charge of particular departments like education, evangelism, health and industrial training. The missionaries met together as staff members but not under any authority apart from those who co-ordinated the various departments

³²⁴ KNA: Helen Ford personal report. 1936.

³²⁵ SOAS: Letter from Merle Davis to J.H. Oldham, January 21. 1936. IMC Reel 245.

³²⁶ KNA: Deputation report, 1937. 4.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

The visit of Davis and Trueblood to Kaimosi helped to restore an appearance of unity between the veteran and the young missionaries and between the various departments. As well as dealing with the tensions affecting the missionaries, Davis and Trueblood also spent time with the Abaluyia Quaker elders who represented the northern and the southern members of FAM. Apart from individual requests which the groups made, they were united on two issues: the establishment of a Bible School to train leaders and a Yearly Meeting in which Abaluyia would be responsible for their own affairs. During this meeting Davis and Trueblood noted the absence of women in the decision bodies of the church and in their report they said,

A considerable part of the business in connection with the monthly meetings is done by representatives at mid- Monthly Meetings or by committees appointed for specific purposes. It appears that women have much less part in business affairs than they should, perhaps even less than formerly.³²⁸

Even after noticing this, it does not appear that anything specific about women and the leadership of the church was done. But the 1937 meeting was a hallmark as far as the beginning of the establishment of a Yearly Meeting was concerned, even though it was not realised until after the end of the Second World War. In the mean-time several changes were effected in the way the mission board ran the affairs of the mission. However the tone and attitude of the mission board had moved from being conservative traditional to modern and liberal.

For example, it was passed that those missionaries who retired had to leave the mission field so that those who took over from them could work independently. The custom of being a missionary for life was done away with. As well as this there was a change in attitude toward Abaluyia customs which called for their integration into the Christian faith. There was also a call to offer Abaluyia higher education not necessarily for conversion but to give them a chance to choose between good and bad. The changes which were taking place in the Quaker mission were not unique but they were along the line of other mission groups as well being the result of the missionaries' awareness of the ongoing changes in the world around them.³²⁹

While the mission board made changes to improve the work of mission, the Luyia Quakers also worked at the growth of the church. Between 1939 and 1945 the church

³²⁸ KNA: Deputation report 22nd September 1937.

³²⁹ Paul Abrecht, *Churches and Social Change*, New York: Doubleday, 1961. 40-41.

membership swelled from 7,000 to 15,000 members.³³⁰ The number of congregations also increased with the development of new Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings founded by local evangelists as the number of missionaries was on the decrease. The expansion was evidently due to an increasingly competent African leadership.³³¹

Even though there was an increase in church membership it was observed by Doctor Bond that the number of men and boys in the meetings was lower than the girls and women. But even though there were more women than men, the business and activities of the Meetings were concentrated in the hands of a few elderly men, a fact that Doctor Bond found 'unfortunate'.³³² The 1940s saw a resurgence of strong groups of women in the Monthly Meetings also with little help from missionaries whose priority was in educational work in the mission stations especially at Kaimosi where most of the educational institutions were based.

With an increase of church membership and a multiplicity of Monthly Meetings the call for a Yearly Meeting got stronger. But before a formal application was made two things took place. Firstly a Book of Discipline for the Yearly Meeting was developed. Ford brought the issue to the attention of the church male elders in 1941 and it generated discussion on what the elders saw as important for their Yearly Meeting. The area that concerned them was the relevance of Quaker beliefs to the Abaluyia society, especially the aspects of marriage and separation, tithing, education, Christian homes and liberation from old time sacrifices. It is interesting that the issues raised by the elders such as marriage, separation and Christian homes involved women but women were not included in the discussion. Unfortunately when the discipline was finally produced, some of these issues had not been incorporated into it because the missionaries who compiled the Book of Discipline failed to understand the significance of the issues that were being raised.³³³ Leaving

³³⁰ Hoskins, *Friends*, 58.

³³¹ Friends Library London: American Friends Board of Foreign missions 12th annual report 1940 - 1941. 10.

³³² KNA: Doctor A.A. Bond, Report From southern District, 1939.

³³³ KNA: Letter from Ford to Davies dated 10th May 1941.

them out meant that the Abaluyia would use their discretion in dealing with matters related to these issues.

The second development was the construction of the Bible school, about which there had been discussion since 1930. In 1942 eleven Monthly Meetings got together and agreed to start the construction of a Bible school at Lugulu. Writing about this Ford said,

the project is having the most uniting influence of any that has been undertaken by a native church for years. One of the most unexpected developments in it was the willingness of the students from Maragoli to come to the Bible school and for the people of the South to put their money into the project in the North.³³⁴

The Friends Bible Institute opened its doors to the first students in 1943 and among the first students were three women, including Rasoah Mutua who is discussed in detail in chapter eight of this thesis.

In 1943 a formal application was made to the Five Years Meeting for a Yearly Meeting to be set up in East Africa. This application was processed in 1945 and approved and on 11th of November 1946 at Lugulu the inaugural ceremony of EAYM took place, and the first leaders were installed.³³⁵ The choice of leaders was influenced by the ethnic composition, to avoid further rivalry, rather than gender. The first leaders were Joel Litu from Maragoli, Benjamin Ngaira from Idakho, Petero Wanyama from Tachoni they were representative of both the north and the south as far as the ethnic composition was concerned. Ethnicity became a silent factor in the proceedings of EAYM for the years that followed, and to this day continues to be a more important factor than gender.

Between 1946 to 1963 EAYM worked side by side with FAM, but the latter retained an exclusive mission board where all the missionaries met alone to make decisions, some of which affected Abaluyia Christians. The Luyia Quakers however had no representation at such meetings. The creation of a mission board which was exclusively white was an indication of how the missionaries in the field maintained racial inequality. They were not ready to relinquish their positions of power in order to work with Abaluyia in EAYM. In 1963 with Kenya's political independence FAM

³³⁴ KNA: A Letter from Ford to Davies dated February 3rd 1942.

³³⁵ Painter, *The Hill*, Chapter VII is a detailed discussion on the ceremony of inauguration.

relinquished its administrative powers to EAYM's general secretary and the general superintendent as the spiritual leader.

The story of EAYM after 1963 is well told by Rasmussen and Smuck. Both of them grapple with the teething problems of EAYM after independence.³³⁶ But in the midst of the problems, there was a marked growth in EAYM in the number of Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings. Most of these Meetings were established in the urban areas like Eldoret, Kakamega, Kericho, Kitale, Nakuru, Nairobi, and Mombasa. The churches in these towns were founded by Quaker Christians who came from Western Kenya but were working in these areas. Kakamega Church was built by the Women's Yearly Meeting and they contributed funds to the building of churches in other towns as well. The post independence period also saw the development of the Women's Yearly Meeting. Smuck notes that one of the challenges that EAYM was facing was the growth of the Women's Yearly meeting.³³⁷

Ten years after independence, some of the teething problems of EAYM came to the surface when members of the Elgon Religious Society of Friends (ERSF) decided to pull out and start a new and independent Yearly Meeting. The split occurred because of a number of reasons including the language of communication in EAYM and the distance between Mt. Elgon and Kaimosi the central office of EAYM. The People from Elgon area had been asking for an independent Yearly Meeting since the late 1940's but the issue was always put off for reasons such as the unity and development of EAYM.³³⁸ The conflicts of EAYM did not end with this division as other areas in EAYM began to raise their dissatisfaction about the leadership of EAYM. Between 1973 and 1978 EAYM's leadership tried hard to hold everybody together but in 1979 it was clear that it could not succeed.³³⁹ 1979 saw EAYM divide into three Yearly Meetings: Northern Friends Yearly Meeting, Central Friends Yearly Meeting and Southern Friends Yearly meeting. This division meant that

³³⁶ Smuck, *Friends*, 44.

³³⁷ Rasmussen, *The History*, 111-139.

³³⁸ Kaimosi Office: *Why Elgon Broke From EAYM*. Ms. 1973.

³³⁹ Kaimosi Office: *Minizi za Mkutano Wa Mwaka 1979*. East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends. August 21-26, Vihiga Quarterly Meeting. Kidundu Friends Church. Minute 40/ 79 *Kugawanya* Yearly Meeting (*Mikutano Mitatu*). (The Division of EAYM into three Yearly Meetings).

EAYM occupied a smaller region than before. The 1979 division of EAYM opened a way for more divisions, such that by the time this research was being done, there were thirteen Yearly Meetings in Kenya.³⁴⁰ These divisions affected the Women's Yearly Meeting forcing the women to be divided too so that in every new Yearly Meeting the women also developed their own Meeting.

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we note the following as far as the position of women is concerned. First the American Quaker missionaries' activity was predominantly male-led and it came into contact with an Abaluyia culture which was equally male-led. It was inevitable therefore that in its initial stages EAYM should be male-led. Second Missionary thinking coincided with Abaluyia thinking in allotting roles and tasks to women which were subordinate to men's roles, even though the subordination in each case was of a different kind. Missionary thinking affected the education, forms of work and the burdens of women.

³⁴⁰ See Map 4, page 236.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 QUAKERS AND THE STATUS OF ABALUYIA WOMEN.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The status of women in the mission field was a major concern for both Quaker missionaries and those who supported mission work. The perception of Abaluyia women's status by the missionaries is what defined their attitudes and the nature of their work among them. Nonetheless, a lack of understanding of the Luyia culture, and the philosophy upon which it operated, led to a false perception of the status and need of Luyia women. Not surprisingly Quaker missionary ways of dealing with the status of Luyia women reveal more about the former's own cultural problems and solutions than it reveals the actual problems of Luyia women. Misreading of Luyia culture, particularly in matters affecting women's status, consequently led to misjudgements, which resulted in the provision of misguided, largely inadequate, and sometimes irrelevant ways of seeking to improve the status of Luyia women.

It is this recognition which makes it necessary to examine the nature of Quaker missionary interaction with Abaluyia in general and as it related to addressing the needs of Luyia women in particular. Quaker missionaries perceived Luyia women as victims of Luyia traditional food prohibition, and marriage, which deprived them of equal treatment and dignity in society. The customs regarding eating *engoko* (chicken), giving *uvukwi* (bridewealth), and *imbalika* (Polygyny) attracted a lot of missionary interest and attention because they were viewed as incompatible with Christianity. They became the focus of missionary denunciation on moral grounds. Demands were made for reforms aimed at liberating Luyia women, and a body of rules to govern relationships between men and women was developed. The aim of this was to infuse into Luyia people and society what the missionaries saw as Christian values and virtues.

In this chapter, Quaker missionary perception of these customs and how they set about dealing with them will be examined and discussed. These customs were deeply ingrained in the fabric of Luyia society, defining the position and place of women and men in society. They were the framework which held the society together, and gave meaning to the religious, social and political activities of Abaluyia people. Thus

there was a need for an adequate understanding of these customs if Quaker missionaries were to succeed in changing the status of Luyia women. The chapter is divided into three sections, each dealing with one of the customs. This is followed by a discussion on the establishment of the Quaker Christian marriage.

4.2 THE PERCEPTION OF ENGOKO

In his book *Good to Eat*, Harris has noted that,

If food ways are largely emanations of ignorant, religious or symbolic thoughts then, it is what people think that needs to be changed. If on the other hand, what seem like harmful religious or symbolic thoughts are actually themselves embodied in or constrained by practical circumstances surrounding the production and allocation of food resources, then it is these practical circumstances that need to be changed.³⁴¹

This observation could have served the missionary endeavour in dealing with *engoko* taboo among Abaluyia. But as it happened the Quaker missionaries failed to grasp that *engoko* taboo had to do with the thinking of Abaluyia people and if anything needed changing it was the thinking rather than the 'practical circumstances surrounding the production and allocation' of *engoko*. As has been discussed in chapter one of this thesis, Luyia women were traditionally forbidden to eat *engoko* for various reasons. First the taboo was a representation of other dietary rules that pregnant and lactating mothers were expected to observe. Secondly the taboo exemplified the dietary advantages which men designed for themselves at the expense of women. Through the taboo the women exploited themselves as well as being exploited by men. Thirdly because the taboo was linked to marriage and childbearing, it was believed that, those girls who broke it would be cursed and men would refuse to marry them and thus they would be deprived of playing a significant role of motherhood in society. Even though the tradition was associated with marriage relationships, it was used by men as a symbol of their domination in all spheres of society.

The Quaker missionaries viewed the tradition simply as a diet issue, which meant that women had poorer nutrition than men did. In the interest of good nutrition for the woman, the Quaker missionaries rejected and condemned the tradition and forced the women to eat chicken.

³⁴¹ Marvin Harris, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986. 236.

There is a custom among the natives, which forbids a woman to eat chicken. Recently this has become a test to a woman's willingness to do what has been considered a disgrace for generations and we are sure she will grow more in her Christian life since she has made the sacrifice and broken the customs that binds so many of the women, often the husband is unwilling for his wife to eat this meat but again the husband will encourage his wife to do it.³⁴²

The missionaries argued that there was nothing supernatural and wrong about eating *engoko*. If it was good food for men, it was equally good food for women. But in order to implement this, they needed the local people who were enthusiasts to help with breaking the taboo. It was Amugune³⁴³ who became a crusader of this view and introduced eating *engoko* in the church in Maragoli in 1911. Charity begins at home, as the saying goes, and Amugune started by allowing Labeka Amigidzi, his wife to eat *engoko*.³⁴⁴

Having succeeded with his wife, with no supernatural effect, his next target was the girls who were *avasomi* (readers). Since it was not easy to convince them to break the taboo, he employed deceitful means to make

Kayaro wa Kahi, Kadenge wa Ngonera, Luyai wa Boyi and Marita wa Ayima drink chicken soup. After they had drunk the soup he mocked them by saying 'I thought women do not take *engoko* but you have just been drinking *engoko* soup, so it is not true that women do not eat *engoko*'³⁴⁵

When the news about this act spread in the village, the families of these girls as well the wider community were very angry. They went out with weapons to hunt for Amugune and the girls. They swore to kill these girls because they believed that they were under a curse and no one would marry them. Since the taboo on eating *engoko* was linked to marriage and reproduction, the girls who had broken it were believed to have forfeited that opportunity.

The families feared that they were encumbered with young unmarriageable women. They considered these women as good as dead and this is why they swore to kill them. It was insensitive of Amugune to trick these girls into breaking the taboo. The fact that they were *avasomi* complicated the matter even more as they were trying to

³⁴² *American Friend*, No 5. March 1920. 272.

³⁴³ Amugune, *A Christian Pioneer*.

³⁴⁴ Labeka Amigidzi Amugune is remembered as the first woman to eat chicken in Maragoli and to convince other women to do so. She also encouraged the women to adopt western lifestyles especially clothing. She became the first presiding clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting. Amigidzi influenced other women like Maria Kekoyi Litu wife of Joel Litu to become civilising agents in the Maragoli Community.

³⁴⁵ Asava, *Liguula*, 7.

break away from traditional culture, and he rushed them on what was very sensitive in the Abaluyia culture.

Amugune's move was arrogant because these girls were not his daughters, and because they were still single they had more to lose. Even though Amugune had allowed his wife to eat *engoko* too she was in a different position compared to these girls. It could easily be argued that she had nothing to lose compared to the girls because she was already married with children. On the contrary these girls had lost the future for their lives. According to Festo Lisamadi, there were songs of shame and ridicule sung about these girls and any woman who dared break the taboo.³⁴⁶ Since songs were a medium of communication, they were used not only to ridicule offenders but to warn those who would think of doing the same.

The first girls to break the taboo were physically beaten by members of their families. 'Marita wa Ayima was beaten most because she was the sister of Kisala the Headman'.³⁴⁷ Her brother felt she had brought shame to both their family and his administration because as a Headman he was like a custodian of the traditions of his people and if his own sister was going against them, then his work was at stake. Although these girls suffered both physical and psychological torture, they got married to some of the early converts who like Amugune were keen to break the Taboo. Through the suffering of these girls the *engoko* taboo began to be challenged. The news about the breaking of the taboo by Quaker women in Maragoli began to spread to other places where Quaker missionaries had set up mission work. In 1926 Quaker women in Lugulu among Babukusu followed the example of their sisters in Maragoli

We ate chicken on the 14th of September 1926. It was a big thing. There was darkness when we ate chicken. The men did not like it. Those of the world [reference to those who had not joined the church.] began singing songs about us saying 'the people of Ford eat things that smell'. We were blamed for it but because women in Maragoli had already eaten and nothing had happened to them it was argued that God had confirmed the eating of *engoko*.³⁴⁸

It was not only the Quakers who confronted the taboo on *engoko*. Other missions did as well, for example, the South Africa Compound and Interior Mission (SACIM)

³⁴⁶ SPUTC: Festo Lisamadi, Oral Interview, 14/12/67.

³⁴⁷ Asava, *Liguula*, 7.

³⁴⁸ Rasoah Mutua, Oral Interview, 27/2/1996.

today known as 'The Church of God' which set up its first mission station at Kima in 1905. In 1920, ten years after the first Quaker women broke with the taboo, the first woman of this mission broke the taboo. Like the Quakers it was the wife of Daudi Otieno, the first man to be trained as a teacher with SACIM who took the initiative. Daudi Otieno was the Son of Chief Otieno who welcomed the SACIM missionaries to his compound and helped them to set up the first mission station. He never became a Christian himself but allowed his son to be taught by the first SACIM missionaries and to be trained as a teacher. Like Amugune, Otieno allowed his wife to eat *engoko* and break with the taboo.³⁴⁹ CMS also encountered the issues of *engoko* taboo because some of its stations were among Luyia people.³⁵⁰

Even though many of the Quaker converts were beginning to accept that women could eat chicken, and break the taboo without suffering ill effects, most men were still shocked when their wives, sisters or relations broke the taboo. In a letter to a missionary on leave, one convert wrote,

My friend greetings many to you and your wife. But we ourselves we are well together with our wives. Also the women of Kaimosi they ate chicken on May the 3rd. Angu she ate and Kerangis and Maraga and the wife of Minamo and Mudonyi the wife of Chahali and Krindulu all these they are really.³⁵¹[Sic]

Once women began to break the taboo, Christian Abaluyia men begun to use it as a right of passage for women to enter the church where they maintained control over them. Some women tasted *engoko* to pass the test but did not eat it afterwards.³⁵² The men who did not care for Christianity used the taboo to maintain the Luyia traditions against Christianity. In Maragoli the issue of women eating *engoko* created friction among men between 1917 and 1921.³⁵³ The men who were pro breaking the taboo and those who were against breaking the taboo were defending their positions but not in the women's interests.

The Quaker missionaries saw the breaking of the taboo as a liberation of the women, but Luyia men saw it as a way of establishing a church which accommodated their interests. There is a sense in which the enthusiasm with which the for breaking the

³⁴⁹ Anderson, *The Church*, 112.

³⁵⁰ Provincial Unit of Research (PUR), *Rabai to Mumiasi: A Short History of Church of the Province of Kenya 1844-1994*. Nairobi: Uzima, 1994. 77.

³⁵¹ KNA: Letter from Isaac Shinadira to Mr Conover, dated 23rd November. 1920.

³⁵² Enis Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996.

³⁵³ KNA: Report of Maragoli stations, 1921.

taboo group dealt with the issue contributed further to the failure of the missionaries to understand the deeper meaning of the taboo. Since the missionary had interpreted the taboo as a diet issue, the Christian men acted very fast in forcing the women to eat *engoko* but retained their positions of authority and superiority over them.³⁵⁴

For the non-Christian men, if women were going to be allowed to change this tradition it meant that they would challenge their roles and place in society against the social privileges which the men enjoyed. They wanted the tradition to be kept intact otherwise it would undermine the whole social fabric of the society.

While both groups argued about the tradition, the women were kept in their place, because the issue was being dealt with by the men and on their terms. As a result the men both Christian and non-christian came to an agreement that women could eat *engoko* on condition that certain parts were kept for the male figures in the family- these are *emondo and esundi* (the gizzard and a section of the back).³⁵⁵ Most women today will still preserve these portions for their husbands or senior males in the home, not out of fear of a curse but as a sign of respect. It is a way of showing that a woman knows and keeps to her position in a home as subordinate to the man.³⁵⁶

To perceive the prohibition against women from eating *engoko* in purely dietary terms revealed the Quaker ignorance of the immense complexities and importance of the issue in traditional Abaluyia society. Some Luyia men saw this failure as an opportunity to take over the issue from missionaries and use it to protect their own vested interests. In doing so they not only managed to create a rift in Luyia society around an issue on which all Luyia had agreed before the advent of Quaker missionaries, but they also succeeded in drawing the Quaker missionaries' attention from the real issues at stake.

It is in this regard that Eregwa observes that: 'Even if women were allowed to eat *engoko* it did not mean that they were equal with men; the ideology still governs the

³⁵⁴ Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview 3/4/1996. Even though Amugune was forthright in dealing with the *engoko* taboo, he is remembered as a male chauvinist because he was one of the men who was opposed to women meetings. During the women's annual conferences he among others insisted he should accompany the women arguing that it was for the security of women. But when at the conference he could not let the women get on with their affairs. There is more discussion on the women's conferences and men in EAYM in chapter six of this thesis.

³⁵⁵ Niva Luvai, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

³⁵⁶ Chango group, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

relationship between men and women in our society.’³⁵⁷ Although the missionaries condemned the *engoko* tradition, they succeeded only in partially destroying it, and this was accomplished not because the Abaluyia were won over to the missionary thinking and attitudes but because the Abaluyia men saw in the destruction of the taboo a means of furthering their own goals.

Because women began eating *engoko*, the Quaker missionaries concluded that Abaluyia women were now free from a taboo that denied them a right to eat a nutritious food. Abaluyia men on the other hand had succeeded in maintaining the philosophy of the taboo and the women knew that, although they had broken the taboo, they were still not on an equal footing with the men either at home or in the church.

4.3 *UVUKWI (BRIDEWEALTH).*

The custom of *uvukwi* was taken up by missionaries and discussed at great length. This again, not unique to Quaker missionaries, as it was an issue which other mission groups attempted to deal with. In the initial stages *uvukwi* was among the customs which the Quakers tried to suppress. But through experience they realised that they needed to change their attitude toward *uvukwi* and treat it with care because it was deeply engraved in the life of the society. They came to this realisation when they discovered that Luyia people were not going to let go of a custom that was embedded in the social, economic and political fabric of their society. The ways in which the missionaries dealt with the issues of *uvukwi* is an illustration of how pressure from Abaluyia men especially determined policy-making in the church.

But first we look at the perceptions of the missionaries on *uvukwi* that appeared in the mission literature. Writing about bride wealth, Edna Chilson noted that:

In the tribe in which we are located woman is an article of barter either as wife and slave, or for a life of awful shame; one condition is not much worse than the other and nothing short of God’s great grace can ever change this custom that entails such curse and woe upon the people.³⁵⁸

These views were prevalent in most mission circles. For instance Hooper, a missionary with CMS, wrote a book entitled ‘*Property in the Highlands of East African*’ in which she examined the giving of bridewealth among the Kikuyu where

³⁵⁷ Loice Eregwa, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

she was working.³⁵⁹ In southern Africa most missionaries also interpreted the giving of bridewealth as the buying and selling of women.³⁶⁰ Quaker missionaries followed a similar line and described *uvukwi* as a form of slavery, which denied the woman a right to choose a partner, or to get married on the basis of love. Seeing this as a form of slavery the missionaries regarded themselves as emancipators of Luyia women. The way they hoped to achieve this was through the introduction of Christianity and an American type of education, which would challenge this practice and help the women reinvent their place and role in society.

From what they interpreted as a Christian perspective the missionaries argued that *uvukwi* was an evil practice which the church ought to ban. This was easier to say than to put into practice because the slavery concept was an inadequate way of interpreting *uvukwi*. In a meeting with the elders at a conference, Arthur Chilson told them the views of the missionaries about the practice of *uvukwi*, which he equated with Christianity. After expressing the missionary views to the elders he asked them to commit themselves to end the practice and twenty-five of the elders wrote their names down. From this Chilson concluded that the elders had been convinced to end the practice. Thus he reported that:

Christianity is making marked inroads upon native customs as evidenced by the fact that twenty five Christians recently signed their names to a document in which they pledged themselves not to sell their daughters but to give them away to young men they love.³⁶¹

Because of the strength and persistence of *uvukwi*, we can judge that the elders put down their names not because they were in agreement with Chilson's views but because he was in a position of authority. The language of selling which Chilson used to describe *uvukwi* is not what the elders acknowledged as the meaning of *uvukwi*. No elder could have said that he was selling his daughter when receiving *uvukwi*. It seems as though there was a misunderstanding between Chilson and the Abaluyia male elders on the choice of words used to describe *uvukwi*.

³⁵⁸ *Missionary Advocate*, vol. XIX No 3 March 1903. 3. 36.

³⁵⁹ PUR, *From Rabai*, 68. Even though Hooper thought that women in East Africa were degraded through marriage and initiation customs, she also admitted that men in CMS were no better in the way they treated women colleagues as the women were not included in discussions about mission work and were not shown the minutes, thus were not aware of what was happening.

³⁶⁰ Hastings 'Were women a special Case' in Bowie et al *Women and Missions*, 117.

³⁶¹ KNA: Arthur Chilson, personal report, 1924.

The test for Chilson's views came to light when Amugune, one of the elders and a staunch believer in missionary teaching, tried to give away his daughter without receiving *uvukwi*. He failed because no one was willing to marry her. It seems that out of desperation he was ready to encourage endogamy but the move was vehemently opposed.

When Amugune offered one of his daughters in marriage without requiring a bride wealth no one would accept it. It was worse when he encouraged a marriage within one clan, a practice, which was illegal in customary Law. The clan met together to curse him.³⁶²

Amugune was an imperious man; when it came to Luyia traditions like *uvukwi* he seemed to have agreed with the missionary interpretation and he wanted to make it a reality by using his own family. This was unwise and an insensitive move, which was not accepted by Luyia people.

Most Quaker missionaries interpreted *uvukwi* predominantly as nothing more than a vile economic exchange. They also recognised that it was a form of domination and control over women and this is why they decided to do away with it. This was not the case with Abaluyia. *Uvukwi* for them was a complex rite of fundamental religious and social significance in which the actual transfer of material things such as cattle was only a part. The transfer of material things in *uvukwi* symbolised the place of origin for a woman even though she did not belong there.³⁶³ *Uvukwi* also served as a compensation for the loss of the woman's production power both as a mother and as a labour force. The animals that were given at the time of exchange served as the security for the woman and her family.

Even though the missionary views on *uvukwi* were fair, their endeavour to ban it failed because those who practised it defended it. To do away with *uvukwi* could have created other difficulties for the women in a patriarchal system. It would mean doing away with what traditionally, though in a limited way, affirmed the woman's protection, value and status. Quaker endeavours to do away with *uvukwi* were seen as an attempt to undermine both the structures of the clans and gender relations. These endeavours also could vitiate the means through which women obtained influence in a patriarchal society.

³⁶² Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview, 13/2/1996; Solomon Adagala, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

³⁶³ Agneta Igonga, Oral Interview, 10/2/1996.

When the missionaries failed to ban the practice, they decided to use a more pragmatic approach to try and limit it. This change of approach on the part of the missionaries was as a result of coming to terms with the fact that there was much more to *uvukwi* than their perception of it being a mere economic venture. Luyia men supported *uvukwi* because they argued that it created stability in marriage by checking ill treatment of a wife. The Quaker missionaries accepted that *uvukwi* was a certain surety that the man would treat the woman fairly. But this was all based on the male perspective because women were never asked what they thought about *uvukwi* and the stability of marriages. They were not asked what they thought about ill treatment in marriage, but they were socialised into believing that *uvukwi* guarded against ill treatment. In reality, the stability of marriage depended on women's perseverance and *uvukwi* contributed to it.

The persistence of *uvukwi* among Abaluyia made the Quaker missionaries regulate it and make it part of the marriage policy of the church.

It is not the aim of the Friends to stop the customs of marriage. But because a number of Christians are asking too much bride wealth it is good to have a rule. We therefore request that among the people who do not have many cows payment should be of three cows one bull and sixty shillings. If the people have more cows they should give seven cows one bull and sixty shillings. We plead with Christians to stick to this regulation until such a time when the custom is stopped.³⁶⁴

It was not only the Quakers who tried to regulate bridewealth through a fixed amount; other missions did so too.³⁶⁵ But regulating *uvukwi* in terms of animals and money for Luyia people had negative implications for women. It seemed to place a commercial value on the woman rather than it being a system through which a woman gained status, protection and respect in a patriarchal society. It was no longer a *giving* of *uvukwi* but *paying*, which affected the position of woman because she was being valued in monetary market terms. *Uvukwi* became the means of determining the market rather than human value of women; and the marriage certificate became the receipt which guaranteed that the market transaction had taken

³⁶⁴ *Kitabu Kye Litanga Lya Megidzo Nemiima Gyelivugana lya Vafriends*, Richmond Indiana: Friends Africa Mission Press, 194.1 44.

³⁶⁵ Tabitha Kanogo, 'Mission Impact on Women in Colonial Kenya' in Bowie, et al. *Women and Missions*: 177. 'The Seventh Day Adventist in Kisii was accused of 'encouraging mission girls not to be sold into slavery' This was in reference to the inflated bride wealth that a father might ask a prospective son in law to pay. This particular mission had gone a step further than the others had by defining the number of livestock that should be given as 'dowry' for the girls'.

place. For all its faults, *uvukwi* had certain positive aspects in giving some protection and status to women. By interfering with its practice, missionaries actually reduced these positive aspects and made it more oppressive for women – the very opposite of what they were trying to do.

The decision to regulate *uvukwi* and include it in the policies of marriage ran into other problems. Firstly, as the saying goes, lawmakers are the lawbreakers. Fathers decided on how to obey the regulation, depending on the parties involved, Christian fathers made sure that the prescribed right amount of *uvukwi* by missionaries was recorded in the marriage banns, to give the impression that the regulation was being obeyed, even if (as was the case) they received more.

Secondly, more *uvukwi* was demanded for educated women than what was prescribed in the marriage policy. Education added to the economic worth of the women and this made some parents decide to educate their daughters before marrying them off. Education for a woman was an investment for the families or the clans.³⁶⁶ Thirdly the increasing number of men leaving home to find paid work, to join the army raised *uvukwi* even more, as Lukalo has observed.

In 1940 the bride price was four cows and 60 shillings. But with so many young people joining the army and earning a salary at that time, this rose to four cows and 100 shillings, two years later, then four cows, one bull and 100 shillings with the price continuing to rise.³⁶⁷

It was of paramount importance that while a young man was away from home he had a wife at home. It was even more important if he was in the army in case he died without a wife. So when some of these young men had leave to come home they were in a hurry to get married and they would not let *uvukwi* be a hindrance if they had chosen to marry from a certain family. The church had even made provisions of marriage for the army men so that their marriage bans could be read three times on a Sunday to represent three weeks prior to the marriage. Since the church had made provision for their marriages they also condoned the way they went about giving *uvukwi*

³⁶⁶ Lena Mwenesi, Oral Interview, 9/1/1996; Loice Aviria, Oral Interview, 28/12/1995.

³⁶⁷ Sarah Lukalo 'Traditional Contraceptive Practices' in Angela Molnos, *Beliefs and Practices: Institute of African studies University of Nairobi Cultural Source Materials for Population/Planning in East Africa*, Nairobi: EAPH, 1973. 147.

Regulating *uvukwi* and making it into a policy of church-marriage defeated the aim of dealing with it. This is because the policy was used to lay emphasis on the economic worth of a woman rather than dealing with the legality, security and stability of a marriage. This is what the Quaker missionaries failed to address even when they introduced and advocated church-marriages with the issuing of marriage certificates. When the security of a marriage was threatened, no one referred to the marriage certificate but rather to *uvukwi*, which was a complex issue as was observed in the annual report of Kakamega District.

The fact that the purchase price of the bride is assessed in cattle, which cattle are returnable under such a variety of conditions that innumerable native marriages may be upset owing to a single contingency in one particular family. The majority of the civil cases tried in the baraza are cases relating to cattle and women and some are so complicated even the elders are unable to give a judgement.³⁶⁸

Even though a marriage certificate was significant, it was seen as a seal of *uvukwi* and not of the marriage, and it is in this connection that Abaluyia defended *uvukwi*. By giving *uvukwi*, decisions concerning the custody of children, the inheritance and burial rights of each family member were determined. In this manner *uvukwi* did not work in isolation but was embedded in the structure of the society.

The Quaker missionaries challenged *uvukwi* on the basis that it contributed to the low status of women in the family and society at large. But by modifying and adopting it they failed to improve the status of women. Instead they reinforced the low position of women by bowing to the pressure from the men who defended *uvukwi* because it justified their right over the women and the children. While it is true that *uvukwi* had, in a limited way, positive aspects for the woman, it was the men who designed it and defended it because of what it provided them with. The value tag on women gave men even more control over them than before, especially when they worked to earn a wage for *uvukwi*. The economic value of *uvukwi* encouraged the parents of the girls to educate their daughters; it became an investment because they could claim more for an educated girl.

Because marriage was not between individuals but kinship groups it would be these groups in concert and not single individuals who would have the power to do away with *uvukwi* and design a different way of determining a legal marriage. Individual

converts from the system could not enforce such a regulation on the rest of the community. In this issue, like others, the missionary was operating on one level while the converts were on another level. It is not *uvukwi* as the missionaries saw it that determined the position of women in society but the *engoko* ideology, which has been discussed in chapter one and in the preceding section of this chapter. *Uvukwi* was just but a function of the ideology in a structure that was already laid down. The new policy on *uvukwi* became an instrument of more subordination of women, reinforcing the Luyia system.

While in modern times the Quaker regulation of the fixed amount of animals and cash is not followed, the freedom to choose how much should be given as *uvukwi* is left to either the individual families or the couple. Despite that freedom it is expected that education and status of the woman or the family of the man is taken into consideration.³⁶⁹ There is a general feeling that the custom of *uvukwi* is misused and it does more harm to women than good, but there is little or no move from either the men or women to ban it. While the men support it because it gives them control over the women and children, the women do so because it gives them identity in a patriarchal system.

4.4 *IMBALIKA (POLYGYNY).*

The question of polygyny and the church in Africa is a widely discussed topic, as the quantity of literature attests. It was by no means a uniquely Quaker concern.³⁷⁰ Hastings has observed that monogamy was the greatest gift the missionary church had brought to African womanhood.³⁷¹ However the persistence of polygyny in Africa raises issue with the missionary introduction of monogamy.³⁷²

³⁶⁸ KNA: DC/NN/1/8. 1927.

³⁶⁹ Priscilla Misaki, Oral Interview, 1/2/1996.

³⁷⁰ Eugene Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered: Africa Plural Marriage and the Christian Churches*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975; Makanzu Mavumilusa. *Can the Church Accept Polygamy?* Accra: Asempe Publishers, 1983. Benezet Bujo 'Polygamy in Africa: A Pastoral Approach,' *ANA Newsletter* 106, 1986. Adrian Hastings *Christian Marriage in Africa*, Nairobi: Uzima, 1976; Henry Okullu, *Church and Marriage in East Africa*, Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1976, Chapter six; David Gitari, 'The church and Polygamy' in *Transformation*, 1. No 1 January-March, 1984. 3-10.

³⁷¹ Hastings 'Were Women a Special Case' in Bowie et al. *Women and Missions*, 119.

³⁷² Some writers on polygamy have observed that the majority of missionaries were as arrogant in their enforcement of monogamy as they were blind to the benefits offered by institutionalised polygamy. For example E.K.Ekech., 'African Polygamy and Western Christian Ethnocentrism' in *Journal of African Studies*. 3. 1970. 330.

Quaker missionaries were not different in the way they dealt with polygamy. They discussed it largely in regard to the position of the men in the Christian faith as noted by Edna Chilson.

Some of the old men, who had become Christians, wanted advice about their problems. They had taken unto themselves, when still pagans, more than one wife; now that they were Christians, what were they to do? Should they send the second, third or fourth away, which one should they keep; how should they provide for those sent away.³⁷³

In dealing with *imbalika*, the missionaries treated it as a moral issue in regard to conversion on the part of men and the status of Abaluyia marriage in relation to the church. This was despite the fact that their involvement with marriage issues was in order to liberate the African woman whom they regarded as a victim of the system. The missionaries worked from the assumption that *imbalika* was practised in every home by every man.

With polygamy common and each wife entitled to her own hut, there are frequently several huts clustered together and often surrounded by a wall of mud, a hedge, or a palisade of stakes.³⁷⁴

Although this could have been the case, it was not always true that many huts meant *imbalika*. In a Luyia homestead the various huts could have belonged to different members of that home and not necessarily wives. Because the missionaries perceived *imbalika* as a problem of conversion for men, Quaker missionaries devised a scheme that was inauspicious for women, because they insisted that a Christian man could have only one wife. They therefore made it a condition that if a man wished to become a Christian and a member of the church he must 'put away' his secondary wives. The following cases illustrate the situation.

When they had finished praying Shitemi an influential Liranda headman arose and asked to speak. He is elderly, he has been a drinker, has had plural wives and previously entered into all the heathen customs. 'I want you all to pray for me he said in a broken voice, I want to leave all the heathen customs and be a Christian. I have stopped drinking and have put away all wives. One wife only the Bible says, Mr. Chilson interrupted, 'do you love Jesus more than your second wife' he answered in the affirmative and we had prayer especially for him.³⁷⁵

In another report this story is given

³⁷³ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 165.

³⁷⁴ *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa*, Richmond Indiana: AFBM, 1927. 8.

³⁷⁵ KNA: Kitosh station report, October. 1924.

Paulo was among the early Christians in the Vihiga monthly meeting. When his heart was reached by the gospel message he had three wives and was living in three poorly made mud walled thatched roof huts. When Paulo was converted he sent the two wives to their parents and kept the original wife whom even in heathendom was recognised as the real wife. It was no financial or moral hardship on the putting away a wife. She was free from her share of the support of her husband. Her father could find another husband for her.³⁷⁶

The above actions lead us to see how the Quaker missionaries regarded Luyia marriages and their attitude towards women. These actions show that the Quakers considered the other women were not married so it was right for them to be sent away. This attitude was moulded by the missionaries' own cultural context and it served their purpose.

But among Abaluyia the missionaries' attitude was nothing but a heartless way of dealing with women in a culture where their identity was defined in relation to marriage and childbirth. These women did not perceive themselves as victims but they became victims through the missionaries' treatment. By doing away with the other wives in *imbalika*, the missionaries introduced and justified divorce in a context where in fact *imbalika* was deterrence for the same. Thus *imbalika* was judged and condemned as a sin and whoever contracted such a marriage was a sinner or caused the other party to sin.

The Quaker missionaries viewed *imbalika* from the standpoint of their own religion and culture which itself was patriarchal but monogamous.³⁷⁷ They neither understood how *imbalika* worked (and how it gave a certain protection and status to women) nor did their own patriarchal sentiments encourage them to consult women when devising their policy. The actions of the missionaries show clearly that the conversion of the men to Christianity was made at the expense of the women. The irony of this missionary behaviour is the fact that the emancipation of Luyia women was central to mission work, but in seeking to emancipate women by destroying what they saw as the bonds of *imbalika*, the missionaries in fact destroyed the status and identity which *imbalika* had given women and so their latter condition was even less free and estimable than their former.

³⁷⁶ Helen Ford, 'Paul Agoi', in *Missionary Advocate*, Vol. LVI. No. 4. 1940. 12-13.

³⁷⁷ In the preface of his book, Cairncross has notes that Orthodoxy in Western Europe, or for that matter in the Christian world as a whole, has been fiercely opposed to polygamy in any shape or form since at least AD 600, and has shown itself particularly ruthless in suppressing the hated monster

The missionary attitude to *imbalika* had negative implications on women. First it failed to address the issue of inequality between men and women in the Luyia society. Second and more important, it created untold misery for the women who were evicted from *imbalika*, as no one would support them. These women became single mothers in a society where *imbalika* was designed to cater for them as wives but not as single mothers. They were denied what gave them an identity, thus pushing them even more into a marginal position because no one would marry them. For some the option was to work as prostitutes which brought upon them the condemnation of both society and of the church which had reduced them to this condition.³⁷⁸

It is not every man who adhered to the missionary policy on *imbalika*. There were men who decided to keep their wives even if they were regarded as not yet converted. This meant that neither they nor their wives could come to church. The Quaker missionaries adhered to the policy that treated *imbalika* as a moral issue during the early years of their mission work to the beginning of the 1930's. But in the late 1930's the policy of treating *imbalika* as a moral issue and other Abaluyia customs as beneath Christian civilisation began to wane because of the general trend of most missions was one of becoming more tolerant with African customs. This trend was partly as a result of the presence of missionaries who were prone to liberal views in the mission field as opposed to most of the veteran fundamentalist ones. As well as this, the Africans themselves began questioning and challenging the missionary policies over African culture. Some had begun to use African culture to react against both missionary and colonial paternalism. The 1928 Jerusalem conference had a great impact on the AFBFM in the way they advised their missionaries on African culture. The conference dealt with issues such as the relationship between the home church and the new churches, the problem of race and class distinctions.³⁷⁹

whenever it raises its head in their own ranks. John Cairncross, *After Polygamy was Made Sin. The Social History of Christian Polygamy*, London: Routledge and Kegan, 1974. I

³⁷⁸ KNA: DC/KMG/2/1/133, *Suppression of Prostitution and Brothels*. 'There was a particular focus of Abaluyia women as Abaluyia men complained about these women in cities such as Nairobi and Mombasa. In fact one woman named Nyangweso had to be repatriated back to her home district.'

³⁷⁹ IMC, *The Relationship Between Younger Churches and Older churches Report of the Jerusalem Conference Meeting of International Missionary Council March 24th to April 18th 1928*. Vol. 3.

The issues raised in this conference on mission challenged the AFBFM to produce circulars urging the missionaries on the field to respect Abaluyia and their customs even if it did not mean allowing men to marry more than one wife, but to allow these men join the church.³⁸⁰ While customs like *uvukwi* were adapted, *imbalika* was not an easy one. But instead of treating it as a moral issue of conversion it was now dealt with on the basis of church leadership. That is to say a polygynist could be accorded half membership in the church, meaning he could not participate fully in the activities of the church. For example he could not become a leader and when he died he was not given a full Quaker funeral, as he was not a full member. However nothing was said about the second or third wives.

The silence over the second and third wives made EAYM review the situation in 1950 and ruled out that,

The first wife in *imbalika* is free to become a member of the church so long as she meets the requirements of membership. But the second or third wives in *imbalika* can only attend worship services but they cannot be made members of the church.³⁸¹

Apart from reviewing *imbalika* because of the position of second and third wives, EAYM reviewed it partly because it still persisted in its traditional form and partly because new forms of *imbalika* had arisen especially in urban areas. Just as *imbalika* served the social, economic and political aspirations of men in traditional society, so now it continued and still continues to do so (in a different form) in modern society. Most men who had moved away from rural homes to seek employment practised both official monogamy and a new form of *imbalika*. This form is where the wives do not stay in the same compound in different houses but one wife lives in the village while the other wife lives with the man in the town. The woman in the town caters for the man just like his wife even though she is not recognised legally but she has standing as far as customary law is concerned.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ John Allen Rowe, *Kaimosi: An Essay in Mission History*, unpublished MA thesis. University of Wisconsin. 1958. 196. The missionaries in the field were being urged to be friends to the local people but not impostors. Although mistakes had been made in the past, the missionaries were expected to be friends with the local people and take the place of a guest. Appendix II is a full text of the recommendations that were sent out to the missionaries in the field.

³⁸¹ Kaimosi Office: *Minitisi Tsia* Board Min 26/50. *Busangi Bwa Vakali va Imbalika*, (Church membership for women in polygynous marriages).

³⁸² KNA: *Andere, Abaluyia Customary Law*, 12.

The circumstances forcing men to be parted for long periods from their wives would appear to justify this type of *imbalika*, but other men entered into *imbalika* because of their social status. Some of the educated men who married early find themselves at the peak of their career while their wives have little or no education and they live in a rural home. Some of these men are inclined to enter into *imbalika* with educated women who are able to meet their social status.

In a society where women are perceived as potential wives, *imbalika* was used to cater for that perception. Women were socialised to perceive themselves in the same manner because that is what gives them identity. It is in this connection that Bahemuka has rightly observed that:

One of the strongest urges in human beings is the urge to love and to be loved. Women aspire to be loved and to love, to establish a family and bring up children and to live a happy life. At the same time, women expect the society to respect them, give them equal opportunities, and establish a community in which they can actualise their potential.³⁸³

In the prevailing circumstances therefore it is not the type of marriage that counts but marriage. Even though women might loathe *imbalika* they at the same time are forced to perpetuate it because polygamy is a fruit of the patriarchal structure.³⁸⁴ This is why so far it is the men's perspective on polygamy that has been heard. While some male writers present polygamy as a source of great African virtues such as solidarity, unity, harmony and hospitality, others argue for the opposite.³⁸⁵ The women's views have not been heard because in a patriarchal society they have been socialised to live with the practice and instead of uniting to challenge it, they turn against each other; hence the bitter rivalries and jealousies that characterise polygamous homes.

The missionary ban on *imbalika* and the EAYM's accommodating spirit towards members of *imbalika* were both male-centred because men were portrayed as the

³⁸³ Judith Bahemuka 'Social Changes and Attitude Toward Marriage.' in Mercy Amba Oduyoye & Musimbi Kanyoro (Eds). *The Will to Arise, Women Tradition and the Church in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992. 132.

³⁸⁴ Anne Nasmiyu-Wasike, 'Polygamy: A Feminist Critique' in Oduyoye and Kanyoro (Eds). *The Will to Arise. 111*.

³⁸⁵ Hillman, *Polygamy Reconsidered*, and Mavumilusa *Can the Church Accept Polygamy?* Lamin Sanneh has observed that 'There was much abuse in the system [polygamy] and its benefits were not always the unmitigated boon claimed. Its modern proponents, who are mostly men, risk alienating a whole community of women from the social and education pressures which may tend towards a more just world.' Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, London: C. Hurst & Company. 1983.

victims. Single women who are pushed by circumstance into *imbalika* are blamed for taking away other women's husbands, especially if they are living in the city.³⁸⁶ At the same time wives of men who decide to practice *imbalika* are blamed for the men's actions. It is they who have failed to take care of their men and thus causing them to seek solace in *imbalika*.³⁸⁷ Such ideas continue to give men an excuse for *imbalika* because they are treated as victims while women are treated as the perpetrators of the practice. *Imbalika* was and still is a practice rooted in patriarchy and even if EAYM placed a ban on it, there was still need to challenge the roots of patriarchy rather than just pick on its fruits like *imbalika*.³⁸⁸ According to Misaki, not until the issues of how women are perceived in our society and their identity as mothers is redefined, that *imbalika* can be dealt with.³⁸⁹

4.5 LEVIRATE MARRIAGE.

The third marriage custom that the missionaries were faced with was levirate marriage popularly known as the inheritance of widows. To the Quaker missionaries the position of Abaluyia widows was a subject of great discussion because of the former's concern about marriage and the customs that surrounded it. The presence of leviracy among Abaluyia was an added proof to the missionary that women were treated as pieces of property, as noted by Chilson in her report:

The appeal of the African woman to the sympathy of Christendom is not on the ground of drudgery. It is because she is bought and sold married off without

³⁸⁶ Judith Abwunza, 'Mulugulu Avakali' (City Women)', in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 14. 1. 1996. 113.

³⁸⁷ Walter Trobisch *My Wife Made me a Polygamist*, 7th edition Kohl /Rein, Editions (Trobisch), 1979. The Introduction. Sarah Masingu *Ovulindi bwe Zinyumba* (How to take care of a Home) topic taught at the Women's Yearly Meeting from 13th to 17th December 1996 at Kisumu. In most women's conferences the subject on taking care of a home, family, etc is taught by women stressing their role as mothers and wives. In some of the ideas it is implied that if a home had difficulties with the children or the man it is the woman's fault. This makes women see themselves as failures especially when husbands get into polygynous relationships. It is a case of women inflicting pain on women to meet the needs of a patriarchal structure.

³⁸⁸ Bowie has observed that 'the association of polygyny with social, economic and moral values has lent it a strength which 150 years of missionary activity in countries such as Cameroon has failed to eradicate. The missionaries have, of necessity, moved from a hard-line authoritarian approach to polygyny to a more pragmatic 'softly softly' stance, reasoning that fundamental structural changes in society will not happen overnight, and that time and economic forces may well be on their side. Fiona Bowie, 'The Elusive Christian Family: Missionary Attempts to Define Women's Roles Case Studies From Cameroon' in Bowie et al. *Women and Missions*, 146.

³⁸⁹ Priscilla Misaki, Oral Interview, 28/2/1996.

regard to her preference and when left a widow is inherited like other property by some of her husband's family.³⁹⁰

The missionaries interpreted the practice of levirate marriage as one that devalued widows and created *imbalika*. In dealing with levirate marriage, the Quaker missionaries insisted that widows either stayed single or remarried single men, thus preventing *imbalika*. In this case the widow would be a second or third wife. The Quakers who were trying to ban *imbalika* consequently refused to recognise levirate marriage.

The Quaker policy on levirate marriage had consequences for widows because they were faced with the choice of either to remain single and be a member of the church or leave the church and remarry. This choice was terrible for a widow in a society that perceived all women as wives or potential wives. If a widow chose to remain single she had no status in her clan and if she remarried she remained on the periphery of the church. There were widows who chose to remain single even if they had offers of remarriage from single men; they declined because some of the single men were social misfits in the community, who needed protection themselves. To marry them, therefore would be contrary to the purpose of levirate marriage.³⁹¹ This group of widows chose to remain in the church because it was a lesser evil in terms of their position in the society. By choosing to remain single these widows were determined to redefine their identity as women, not as married women.

This did not end the social stigma placed on widows, even in the church as Nwachuku has noted in her essay on 'The Christian widow in African culture'

The widow is perceived as taboo to living husbands and males. She is subject to hopelessness, punishment, neglect, contempt, suspicion about her treachery, or lack of good care. She is perceived as threatening to other couples relationships and suspected of adulterous living.³⁹²

Among the Quakers this is mainly portrayed in relation to leadership roles. It is in this relation that Kadenge points to the fact that in Luyia culture a widow was perceived as one who needed care and protection and this culture influenced the church on the position of widows.³⁹³ Kirwen in the same vein observes that the

³⁹⁰ KNA: Edna Chilson, personal report, 1907.

³⁹¹ Keran Nyamusi Alfayo, Oral Interview, 25/1/1996; Enisi Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996.

³⁹² Daisy N. Nwachuku, 'The Christian Widow in Christian Culture' in Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro (Eds). *The Will to Arise*, 1992. 61.

³⁹³ Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview, 13/2/1996.

position of African widows in the society and the church is determined by traditional African culture more than anything else.³⁹⁴ The point that is being stressed here is that even with the intervention of Quakerism and western civilisation, without leviracy the position of a widow is not easy.

The custom of levirate marriage therefore could not be dealt with in isolation because it was an integral part of the whole community system and to challenge only a part of the whole system created more uncertainties for those who were involved. We have shown that the missionaries' constraint on leviracy in no way improved the position of widows. The real issue at stake was the position of single women in a society which perceived them merely as potential wives; in other words a single woman, be she widow or spinster or discarded second wife had no status, whereas a married woman had.

4.6 QUAKER MARRIAGE MADE IN LUYIA SOCIETY.

While attempting to tackle the issues raised by traditional Luyia forms of marriage, the missionaries also endeavoured to teach what they understood as Christian marriage. Here it is important to note that the Christian marriage which they taught was in fact not the original Quaker form of marriage at all, but one derived from American culture influenced by other Protestant churches.

By 1880 the marriage regulations were gone. Not only were Friends free to marry whomever they chose, but also they were free to choose the form, and they flocked to more conventional ceremonies. By the 1880's the old way of marriage had all but disappeared in most of the Gurneyite meetings, and Quaker ministers were performing weddings like those performed by other ministers.³⁹⁵

The missionaries reinforced the existing traditional Abaluyia marriage by superimposing a Christian marriage on married couples. The convert couples were told to have a church marriage ceremony to 'christianise' and 'legalise' their marriage.³⁹⁶ The couple would appear before the superintendent and take vows of marriage before a congregation. They would then be issued with a certificate to prove that they were legally married because the certificate was issued by the state.

³⁹⁴ Michael Kirwen, *African Widows; An Empirical Study of the Problems of Adopting Western Teaching on Marriage to the Leviratic Custom for the Care of Widows in Four Rural African Societies*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979.

³⁹⁵ Hamm, *The Transformation*, 91.

³⁹⁶ *African Record*, October – December 1912, 5.

The certificate was issued because neither the government nor the missionaries recognised *uvukwi* as a certificate, but in the eyes of the Abaluyia people however *uvukwi* was far more important than the certificate. It was a guarantee of the validity of the marriage.

The legalisation of marriage had another implication for the church, because it became a requirement for all those who were seeking church posts to be legally married. It meant that if people had been married in accordance with Abaluyia custom but had not had a church ceremony they would not qualify for a position of leadership in the church.³⁹⁷ Apart from dealing with monogamous marriages, the Quakers missionaries decided to educate young people in Christian marriage. This they did by establishing sleeping places for boys and girls separate from the traditional huts to train them for marriage.

Traditionally, girls slept in their grand mothers houses, who taught them about the ideals of society, but missionaries changed this arrangement to dormitories. The first dormitories for women were built in the mission compounds to cater for those girls who the missionaries said were running away from forced marriages. In fact one of the houses was given the name ‘ a city of refuge’ as reported by Helen Ford.

“The city of Refuge”, a girls’ house on the station has afforded a retreat for three girls unfortunate enough to be sold by their parents to old heathen men who have the cattle and the girls refuse to go. My desire is to help them become soul winners, to learn the care of their bodies, to be helpful in their homes, how to be homemakers and develop a Christian social life among them.³⁹⁸

It became a tradition to have in every mission station a house for girls.

A small house for girls who want to sleep at the station instead of their heathen homes was put up. This is a protection for them and gives hope on them that we trust may prove helpful service for women and girls being used to win the people for Christ.³⁹⁹

These dormitories were provided on the assumption that a Christian girl or one who was interested in being a Christian was a hunted person. She had a difficult life as she tried to avoid being forced into marriage, especially *imbalika*.⁴⁰⁰ While it is true

³⁹⁷ Josiah Embego, Oral Interview, 29/1/1996.

³⁹⁸ KNA: Helen Ford, personal report, 1925.

³⁹⁹ KNA: Edna Chilson, personal report, 1926.

⁴⁰⁰ For example the story of Khawingisi told by Alta Hoyt, in, *We Were 26*. ‘Khawingisi has been going to school for a year and had really become a Christian. She was about sixteen years old. Her father is not living but her mother brother and younger sisters live adjacent to the mission. One evening when she got home from the school, her mother commanded her to go to the stream and bathe

that such incidents occurred, the missionaries did not care to find out why some of these girls were subjected to such harassment. They gave the impression to their readers that every Abaluyia marriage was forced and that missionary presence spelt emancipation for these girls. But the girls who were rescued were prepared and forced to marry 'Christian boys'.

The missionaries would have us believe that their form of marriage was marriage based on love; but hearing some of the stories and comments, one is bound to conclude that Christian girls were manipulated and coerced into 'Christian marriages' just as they would have been in the traditional society. For example, Dinah Musidikhu was married to a widower because a missionary told her that if she refused to marry this man she would be under a 'curse.'⁴⁰¹ Musidikhu married this man because she was afraid that the curse would mean not getting another man, or that she would not have any children. Musidikhu was manipulated by the missionary in charge of the station into doing what she did not want to. She was not listened to, but she was coerced, just as she would have been in the traditional society. Other reports show similar cases where girls did not have much choice. In Tiriki, for example, the elders even contemplated making it a rule that if a girl refused some requests for marriage she should be banned from the church register.⁴⁰² Women had little or no choice because it was the men who effected marriage contracts.

The dormitories served the mission community in various ways, but two of them were significant. Firstly they were used as places to introduce the Christian faith to the girls as Hoyt notes:

The young girls, who want to be Christians are asking the mission to provide a house where they can come each evening before dark to sleep, then go home to help their parents in the early morning. About twice a week I take a lantern and join them for half an hour, visiting with them. They tell me some of their folklore tales, and I tell them some Bible story. We sing together and have prayer. As time goes on, first one then expresses her heart's desire to become

with some girl friends, then to come back and they would prepare her for her wedding. Her body was greased with simsim seeds but because she did not want to marry this old man, her brother had a rope round her waist and he was dragging her along. Her mother following with a switch was whipping her to make her go. The brother was forcing her because he wanted the cows that would be paid for her so he could buy himself a wife. We could not do anything about this type of marriage but we prayed for her. Khawingisi managed to run away from this man every night and he was fed up of chasing after her. He came to her brother and husband demanded his cows back. He got his cows and she was free to return to school again'

⁴⁰¹ Dinah Musidiki, Oral Interview, 19/4/ 1996.

⁴⁰² *Missionary Advocate*, Vol. XLV. July – August 1927, No. 7. 3.

Christian; then later really say a prayer that their hearts may be clean. It may be months before they are really born again Christians as it takes time for them to understand the Gospel story. But ultimately they do accept Christ.⁴⁰³

Secondly, the dormitories acted as schools for preparing young women for 'Christian marriage', which the missionaries stressed. The establishment of the dormitories was done on the assumption that traditional Abaluyia society was lax in regard to sexual morality. This was a misjudgement on the part of the missionaries because the traditional huts provided the right atmosphere for sex education, which encompassed most family issues. The role and place of a grandmother in a traditional hut made it easier for young women because a grandmother was regarded as a social equal, as Cattell has rightly observed.⁴⁰⁴

As Quakerism spread from the main mission stations to smaller Christian villages most of the women's dormitories were built in the compound of a church elder who served as its guardian. The elder was supported by one of the young women who acted as a prefect for the dormitory. She was in charge of opening and closing the door every night and making sure that the elder was informed of any misconduct in the dormitory.⁴⁰⁵ The dormitory system supplanted the traditional system. In doing away with the experienced role of the grandmother and in replacing her by a male elder and a young unmarried girl prefect, the whole area of preparation for marriage was left in the dark. In the dormitory the young women met for prayer and song, they also learnt bible stories rather than Abaluyia folk tales which the missionaries and the early converts thought had no value for Christian faith.

While in the traditional hut, the presence of a grandmother made it easier for the young women to raise issues regarding sex without fear. The dormitory by contrast did not have experienced people who could create such an atmosphere. This led to a definition of a strict code of conduct for young women who professed to be Christians.⁴⁰⁶ The strict code of conduct had other implications too for young women for they were taught to regard young men as their enemies who were out to

⁴⁰³ Hoyt, *We Were*, 5

⁴⁰⁴ Maria G. Cattell, 'Nowadays it isn't Easy to Advise the Young' Grandmothers and Granddaughters Among Abaluyia of Kenya' in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* Vol. 9 PT. 2. 165.

⁴⁰⁵ Roselida Mwendu, Oral Interview, 16/2/1996.

⁴⁰⁶ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview, 16/1/1996.

make them pregnant. The dormitory teaching stressed obedience, chastity, and hard work, as these were the supposed marks of Christian women.⁴⁰⁷

Christian marriage was a topic that occupied most of the missionary teaching in order to do away with Luyia forms of marriage. Lumwagi remembers what the missionaries taught about Christian marriage by saying:

They taught that we should not marry by means of eloping. They taught that whoever wanted to marry, he had to find the girl he was to marry, and then after that he could come to church and inform them that he wants to marry so and so's daughter. After that the church would have the responsibility of seeing that the man was married to the lady he was engaged to. They taught them to marry by means of a church wedding.⁴⁰⁸

The ideas about courtship and marriage, which Quaker missionaries introduced had little to do with Christianity; rather they were simply their own cultural norms which they regarded as superior to Abaluyia norms. The missionaries presumed that Luyia did not have any form of courtship, hence the existence of forced marriages. The church took over the responsibility of organising marriages for young men and women, thus curtailing the freedom of courtship which had existed before.

As young people we were not supposed to know or talk to boys who wanted to marry us. It was the duty of *omwerema* (a go between) who would look for a girl, then report to the parents of the boy. They would then inform the church leaders who would then take up the matter with your church and arrange for *uvukwi* and the wedding.⁴⁰⁹

The church arranged the marriages through its elders who negotiated *uvukwi* before the wedding was arranged. In these arranged marriages, the couple had little say, especially the girls as observed by Eregwa.

A letter was sent from a young man's church to a young woman's church, after doing some investigations to know what type of family the young woman comes from and what her character is. In a morning service at a young woman's local church this letter was read in the hearing of everybody. In the afternoon service the young woman was expected to say yes to the proposal. After this the church elders made arrangements for the young man and the young woman to meet in the presence of their friends. On the appointed date the young man with his friends chaperoned by an elder from his church and the young woman with her friends chaperoned by an elder from her church met at the woman's church. The young men sat in front of the church and the young women sat at the back. The young man was then asked to stand up to be seen by the young women. He would face them turn round so that they had a proper view of him. The young

⁴⁰⁷ Niva Luvai, Oral Interview, 7/1/1996.

⁴⁰⁸ SPUTC, Yohana Lumwagi, Oral Interview, 28/12/1960, Zakayo Chumba Oral Interview, 29/12/1966, 4/1/197.

⁴⁰⁹ Chango group, Oral Interview, 7/4/ 1996.

women would then be asked if they approve of the young man they would respond in the affirmative. The young woman would also stand to be seen and the young men were asked if they approved of her, they would also respond in the affirmative. This meeting was followed by a meal at one of the church elder's house after which the plans of the wedding were made.⁴¹⁰

The wedding for the Christian young man and woman was conducted in a church on an appointed date by the superintendent. The bride was brought to church by her father who gave her away and promised never to take her back because he had been given *uvukwi*. The ceremony symbolises the fact that the responsibility of the young woman had been passed on from her father to her husband. This is then followed by the vows, which are the same for the bride and the bridegroom.⁴¹¹ Even though the vows taken at the wedding service are the same for the bride and bridegroom, it is understood that a woman is subordinate to a man; this is clearly shown by the sermon and the instructions given to the couple. As for the bride, obedience and respect for the husband and his parents are stressed.

In teaching about the family the missionaries laid emphasis on a middle class type family where parents and children sat round a table for meals. This is why the young couples were given advice on family life, similar to the missionary's life. There was an endeavour in the church to teach this type of family life, as in this monthly meeting where it was noted,

At the last monthly meeting it was suggested that men and wives should eat together at a table instead of the husband eating alone at a table and the wife and the children on the floor out of sight. This caused discussion as some people asked where they would get tables. One boy agreed to go to the forest to get wood for tables at a reasonable price. In order to buy the tables some suggested that they might go without hats, socks shoes etc., and use the money to buy tables.⁴¹²

Writing about this meeting to friends, Chilson said:

This is a step forward that we are happy to see an effort to lift women from their downtrodden conditions. Some have even suggested that they will walk with their wives instead of leaving them behind. It means a change in the mental attitude of both men and women for the women must be willing to sit at a table with their husbands, sit on chairs when they are offered or walk with their husbands when on the road. They have been for so long kept down that it will not be easy to take the new place offered for them.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Loice Eregwa, Oral Interview, 26/2/ 1996.

⁴¹¹ Kaimosi Office: Quaker Marriage Service. Ms. 1975.

⁴¹² KNA: Edna Chilson, personal report, 1925.

⁴¹³ *American Friend*, Letter from Arthur Chilson to friends, dated 29th April. 1925.

Chilson interpreted the whole episode as an opportunity for women to be liberated but it was a misguided judgement. Sitting on chairs or walking besides a man did not signify equality between men and women among Abaluyia as the concept of *engoko* placed the women in a subordinate role and ensured that men and women did things separately, be it walking or eating.⁴¹⁴ The Quaker teaching on Christian family failed to challenge the ideology on which separateness was based. They assumed that if men walked with their wives and sat together at table for meal it would lead to joint decision-making and shared responsibilities. But this was not the case as most men were keen to maintain the traditional position of separateness but enjoy the advantages which a modern Christian wife could bring them. In 1932 it was noted that the number of men wanting an educated woman was on the increase. In the GBS report Michener observed that:

Many men had began to realise that they have a much happier home if they can secure a good wife who has learnt some hygiene, child care sewing and cooking. There was a stream of letters to the girls' school from men asking for wives.⁴¹⁵

Even though these men wanted educated women, many of them still operated from the perspective of *engoko* ideology as far as the relationship between them and women was concerned. To the men the domestic education given to the women supported the concept of *engoko*, because it prepared them to be good mothers. Although the Quaker missionaries made attempts to deal with Luyia separateness between men and women they were themselves products of an ideology of separate spheres.⁴¹⁶

4.7 CONCLUSION

The Quaker missionary attempts to emancipate Abaluyia women reveal how missionaries, like Luyia themselves, were products of their own culture. As a result, their perceived mission of emancipating Luyia women from the shackles of Luyia prohibitions of diet and marriage customs became a mission of reinforcing Luyia forms of exploiting women with those North American Christian forms. It also introduced, in the name of Christianity, additional forms to those that already existed.

⁴¹⁴ Niva Luvai Oral Interview, 7/4/1996; Rachel Sabwa, Oral Interview, 30/1/1996; Lena Mwenesi, Oral Interview, 9/1/1996.

⁴¹⁵ KNA: GBS report, 1932.

In dealing with the status of Abaluyia women, Quaker missionaries failed to understand the totality and complexities of *engoko* thinking which was transmitted through the customs of *uvukwi and imbalika*. Instead of dealing with the ideology, the Quaker missionaries tried to do away with the customs because they saw them as unchristian. They then introduced what they regarded as Christian customs of marriage which in the long run limited the chances of liberation for Abaluyia women.

This failed endeavour on behalf of women by men reminds one of the saying 'man's best servant is himself' or 'woman's best servant is herself.' This truth may have served Abaluyia women's course better if Quaker missionaries had paid heed to it in their endeavour to help the former. Men, American or Abaluyia – regardless of how best they have been enlightened by their Christian faith, cannot really address issues related to the status of women without the involvement of women. Unfortunately, however, even though women were central to the Luyia customs that missionaries were trying to combat, women were rarely consulted when rules were being made. Instead, it was Luyia men and missionaries who decided on the new rules and regulations governing the customs. Consequently, it was Luyia men's and missionaries' interests that the rules best served rather than the interests of Luyia women.

Thus with the advent of Quaker missionaries, Luyia concept of *engoko* was reinforced, giving Luyia men better reasons for exploiting women for their own ends rather than helping to emancipate them. Luyia women were led into a triple bondage; that is the bondage of Luyia traditional customs plus North American Christian patriarchy, plus the sum total of these two bondages. The third bondage is best defined by the word 'synergism-the combined effect of the two things that exceeds the sum of their individual effects'. It simply meant that the whole of Luyia women's bondage became greater than the sum of its two parts.

This chapter therefore concludes by saying that even though the concept of *engoko* included elements which were oppressive to women, the coming of Quaker Christianity did not free them from those elements. The position of women in EAYM shows that Abaluyia men for instance managed to integrate the *engoko* concept into

⁴¹⁶ This ideology is discussed in chapter five in relation to mission work among women and its effects.

the new culture rather than discard it. It is the Abaluyia men who influenced the missionaries in dealing with the concept of *engoko* and not vice versa. The missionary culture therefore was compromised, and the concept was reinforced.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 MISSION WORK AMONG ABALUYIA WOMEN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having families at the station is important because it enables the women missionaries to conduct a most blessed work with the native women, teaching them how to care for their children and the homes and to be real wives and mothers.⁴¹⁷

The native woman on the station clothed and being taught morals of becoming behaviour and the gospel as well as to wash, iron, sew etc. contrasts very favourably with the unclothed untutored ones outside.⁴¹⁸

These two quotations by Chilson and Hole respectively reveal how women were perceived and what was considered to be the nature of mission work with them. The role of women as mothers is what made these missionaries pay attention to women's work. In the discussions about the missionaries and Abaluyia marriage, the last chapter showed how Christian marriage was defined as monogamous. This type of marriage was the basis on which a Christian community would be established. Although the missionaries formulated policies that defined Christian marriage as monogamous, they did not go further to make policies on the relationship between husbands and wives or parents and children. They left these issues to be dealt with through their own teaching and example.

The Quaker missionaries like other mission groups of the same period adopted an evangelical theology of mission which was consonant with the ideology of domesticity. This ideology defined woman as complementary to man, physically inferior but morally superior.⁴¹⁹ Woman therefore was supposed to be more affectionate, selfless, dependent and devout by nature. The woman's sphere was the home which was a refuge from the public realm in which men competed for money and power.

Since most evangelical Quakers had adopted this ideology they saw women as very significant in the creation of Christian families. Mission work among and for women

⁴¹⁷ *American Friend*, Vol. 18. No. 33. 1905. 527.

⁴¹⁸ *African Record*, Vol. 5. January- March, 1910. 6.

⁴¹⁹ Mary De Jong, 'Protestantism and Its Discontents in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' In *Women Studies*, Vol.19, 1991. 260.

was therefore influenced by the ideology of separate spheres and it defined the notions of 'space, work, gender and power'.⁴²⁰ Missionary wives through home visitations, sewing lessons, childcare, cookery and prayer meetings disseminated the ideology of separate spheres. As well as home visits, ideas of domesticity were carried out into the formal education of girls. Although missionary wives taught cooking and cleaning to Abaluyia women they themselves did not perform these tasks in their homes. They relied on Abaluyia men whom they had employed as servants.⁴²¹ These women taught one thing but they conformed to a different view of domesticity.

This chapter examines how domesticity was used to train Abaluyia women on how to be mothers. It also analyses how this influenced and affected the women's role in the church and the wider society. The first part will deal with ideal mother-hood, followed by the establishment of Christian homes and then the division of labour. The second part will deal with the education of girls and the contributions of women like Salome Nolega the educator. The last part will look at the effects of mission work on Abaluyia women.

5.2 CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

The role of a mother in mission work was very significant because not only did she bear children and bring them up but she also taught them the ideals of society. The Quaker missionaries therefore aimed at teaching Abaluyia women through example proper motherhood. Although the Abaluyia women and the North American missionary women shared a common womanhood, the missionaries believed that without Christianity no woman could be a good mother. They made no attempts to find out or to draw upon or even acknowledge African ideas of motherhood. It is with this kind of view that Quaker missionaries approached Abaluyia women, even

⁴²⁰ Henrietta L. Moore, *Space, Text and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya*, Cambridge: CUP, 1996. 147–152.

⁴²¹ Ezekiel M. Kasiera, *The Development of Pentecostal Christianity In Western Kenya: With Particular Reference to Maragoli, Nyang'ori And Tiriki 1909-1942*,. Unpublished PhD, Aberdeen University. 1981.101. In a letter from Deborah Rees to Ellis dated June 24 1906. Deborah Rees wrote about their kitchen and Amugune their servant saying, 'if the wind is in the wrong direction or the wood is green the cookhouse is more like a smokehouse as there is no chimney. So a native can stand better than I can. Amugini [sic] [Amugune] makes all the bread and bakes it also vegetables and pancakes. He is very careful and good natured. I hope he will stay with us.

though they noticed how significant women were in society in relation to their role as producers.

Almost the whole tribal organisation is built about the women of the tribe. They are a chief source of wealth, but their influence in maintaining the tribal custom is very great. Women carry the heavy load, for she is the burden bearer for the tribe.⁴²²

Even though women were significant in the Abaluyia society, the Quaker missionaries failed to perceive the existence of family life among Abaluyia.

In Africa [meaning among Abaluyia] there is not such a thing as the custom of parents and children gathering round the dinner table or earth stone, that belongs to Christians. If there is a family at all or if it gathers anywhere, it is in single file on the road, coming together for safety from a distance plantation or fetching building material from the forest or removing from the old collection of huts to build in new location.⁴²³

This was a description of a family doing communal work, but because the writer was looking for aspects of family life that were similar to her situation she concluded that there was no family life among Abaluyia. In reality it was the woman in her role of mother who held the family together. Nevertheless the Quaker missionaries perceived Abaluyia women to be helpless, thus not being able to bring up what they understood as a Christian family. For example, Alta Hoyt noted that 'these mothers are bound as with chains of iron by beliefs and fears of evil spirits and nothing but the power of God can free them.'⁴²⁴ Hotchkiss had echoed similar remarks when he said 'womanhood in Africa, is womanhood without God.'⁴²⁵ With this kind of attitude towards Abaluyia women, it was the aim of the Quaker missionaries first to convert the women and then teach them how to bring up a Christian family.

Teaching on Christian motherhood involved child-care and hygiene. In child-care Abaluyia women were given instruction on nutrition and different feeding methods because Quaker missionaries argued that Abaluyia feeding habits were poor and they led to the suffocation of children.⁴²⁶ This view was based on watching Abaluyia women feed their children but there was no evidence of actual suffocation of

⁴²² *Fifteen Years in East Africa*, 3.

⁴²³ *Missionary Advocate*, Vol. 22. No .2 1906. 5.

⁴²⁴ Alta Hoyt, 'Livugana Lya Vasheri.'(sic) (The Meeting of Old Women) in *American Friend*, March 1922. 234.

⁴²⁵ Hotchkiss, *Sketches*, 80.

⁴²⁶ Rasoah Mutua, Oral Interview, 27/2/1996.

children. After all, if the Abaluyia methods suffocated children there would not have been any children to be fed.

In addition to teaching feeding habits, the Quaker missionaries introduced their methods of maternal care and personal hygiene, which were linked to medical work.⁴²⁷ Missionaries gave medical advice to women, especially in labour and birth, for they considered that Abaluyia birth attendants used unhealthy and risky practices. Apart from childcare and hygiene, mission work among women included bringing up children in a Christian discipline. In the traditional Abaluyia society, the education and discipline of children was a community affair so that parents, peer groups and grandparents, took part in both the social and moral development of children. The elders and grandmothers taught about the facts of life, without feeling inhibited because they related to them as peers. This kind of education took place in the separate sleeping places for the young men and women.

When the Quaker missionaries came they did not understand the significance of Abaluyia sleeping places for the young. Because they did not understand the structure, they detested them and argued that the young people were taught heathen practices in these places. To them being taught the facts of life was 'heathen'. They identified the elders and grandmothers with the role of teaching the 'heathen practices' and removed from them the moral responsibilities over the young people. In order to teach what they saw as Christian discipline, they introduced the dormitory and shifted the responsibility of teaching the young to the prefects and church elders. These people found the task hard because they were not qualified for it.⁴²⁸

Instead of offering guidance, as did the elders and the grandmothers, those who were entrusted with instructing the young instead restricted meetings between boys and girls in order to prevent them from socialising.⁴²⁹ This practice meant that members of either sex were strangers to each other. At the same time, a heavier responsibility was being placed on parents especially mothers for parenting, as the traditional social structure disintegrated and modern society took its place. It became common for the

⁴²⁷ Painter, *The Hill*, 76.

⁴²⁸ Nathan Luvai, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

⁴²⁹ Loice Eregwa, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

church to teach women how to take care of the home, meaning -'husband and children'.⁴³⁰

The lessons on parenthood were given mostly to women giving the impression that parenthood was the sole responsibility of the woman and that she was also responsible for caring for her husband.⁴³¹ The husbands were put into this special class perhaps because of the view that as breadwinners they would be working away from home, a fact that was realised through forced migrant labour. The absence of fathers from home reinforced the gender roles in the society. The Quaker missionaries worked on the cultural assumption that a woman's knowledge was significant for the family, even if the knowledge was limited.

Let the women of a country be made virtuous and intelligent, and the men will certainly be the same. The proper education decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured. If this be so, as none will deny, then to American women, more than to any others on earth, is committed the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences that are to renovate degraded man.⁴³²

With these kinds of views, the role of women was confined to the home, even though there were social economic issues which worked against their role even within the home. With the introduction of jobs outside the home, economic strength was no longer valued in terms of land and animals but in monetary terms. It was those who had money who were seen to hold power and since women did not have access to jobs and money, they were economically dependent upon men. The missionaries held the view that men were the breadwinners for the family and it was they who needed the money rather than the women.

5.2.1 CHRISTIAN HOMES

As well as teaching Christian mother-hood, the goal of mission work among women was to create Christian homes because they were important places for moral and spiritual training. Macdannel has observed that

⁴³⁰ Jotham. Keya, Mbohia, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

⁴³¹ Sarah Masingu, *Omukali Mfrenzi* (a Quaker woman). Talk Presented at Kisumu during the Women's Yearly Meeting Conference 13/12/1996 at which the researcher was present.

⁴³² Hill, *The World*, 41.

a home symbolised fundamental values of the Victorians- Christianity, civilisation, morality, aesthetics, stability, sentiment-one was not building a shelter, but a sanctuary.⁴³³

But Christian homes, according to the Quaker missionaries, could not be created out of the Abaluyia homes and houses, because they saw them as 'dark, dirty and unhygienic'.⁴³⁴ Chilson's failure to appreciate Abaluyia homes, their environment, and their ability to integrate various aspects of community life caused him to say:

A native Christian accustomed to living in a miserable hut, destitute of furniture or anything that would raise him above the animal is at a tremendous disadvantage in meeting the awful desperate downfall of paganism all about him. But with a heart touched and cleansed by power divine and with hands trained to make brick and build with them a comfortable home suitably furnished and with a knowledge of agriculture which enables him to raise crops from which he can realise means to buy clothing and other necessities, occupies a position of great advantage.⁴³⁵

According to the Quaker missionaries of this period, the link between the home and the morality of a people was very strong.⁴³⁶ It is in this connection that they preferred and introduced square houses, with partitioning and western furniture which were equated with Christianity. The industrial department became instrumental for making square houses and all that went with them.

Natives are taught in brick-making and working with lumber and shown how it is possible to have better homes for themselves. Some are already profiting by the example of the missionaries instead of beehive grass huts with one low opening for a door they have built larger and better ones with doors and windows for themselves and a separate one for the cattle.⁴³⁷

From the 1920s a new culture of Quakers began to emerge when Emory Rees at Vihiga introduced modern construction techniques including baking bricks, the use of nails, putting white-wash on walls, erecting four-cornered houses and installing wooden doors. Apart from the square house, each home had to construct a toilet, a separate kitchen, and a separate cow-house. The furniture of the Christian house included tables, chairs, cupboards and wooden chests for clothes. It has been

⁴³³ Mcdannell, *The Christian Home*. 50. Similar views on the significance of the home have been expressed by Cott, *The Bonds*, 64.

⁴³⁴ Hoskins, *Religious Life*, 25.

⁴³⁵ *African Record*, Vol.3. May-July. 1907.7.

⁴³⁶ Colleen Mcdannel has noted that housing designs performed two duties: they expressed the character of the family, and they shaped that character. Mcdannel, *The Christian Home* 22.

⁴³⁷ *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa*, Richmond Ind: AFBFM. 1925. 13-14.

observed from other mission circles that 'a family living in a square cottage was an article of faith because African huts 'utterly' prevented the growth of refinement without which you can never have an educated woman.'⁴³⁸

The implementation of this new culture among Quakers was reinforced by the separation between Christian and non-Christian villages. In each Christian village there was a committee of people who looked after the cleanliness of the homes and village at large, Vihiga for example. Although women did most of the cleaning jobs it is noted that four of the inspectors were men. Ezina Lozenje was the only woman inspector.⁴³⁹ Even after the demise of separate Christian villages, the new culture was adopted by the society, not because it was equated with Christianity but because it was identified with modernity.

The introduction of 'Christian homes' had implications for women and society at large. For women in particular their work was enormously increased because now not only did they have to do their traditional chores, and these moreover in a reformed manner, but also they had to do the new chores imposed by the complexity of maintaining Christian homes. As well as this the introduction of Christian homes determined the nature of education for girls and women. For the Abaluyia communities, Christian homes introduced materialism, social classes and the individuality of the home.

It became a requirement for women to meet once a week to receive instruction about taking care of the home, and Saturday morning was set aside for housework, which in the earlier days was followed by an inspection. This was to make sure that the right standards were met, and each home had the basic items of latrines and stands for washing utensils.⁴⁴⁰ If a home was found to be untidy, the women's church committee would send a delegation of women to that particular woman to instruct her. Even though inspection of the homes ended with the demise of the Christian communities, the philosophy of cleaning the homes on a Saturday has persisted.

⁴³⁸ Deborah Gaitskell, 'At Home with Hegemony' Coercion and Consent in the Education of African Girls for Domesticity in South Africa before 1910' in Dagmar Engels and Shula Marks (Eds). *Contesting Colonial Hegemony State and Society in Africa and India*. London: British Academic Press 1994.120.

⁴³⁹ Vihiga: Joseph Kisia, *Livugana lia Avafrenzi* (The Friends Meeting). Ms. N.D.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.; Sara Masingu 'Omukari Mfrenzi' (A Quaker Woman).

Courses on housewifery and home-making skills became a major item in women's groups because it was the aim of women missionaries to instil a particular philosophy of womanhood in their converts - that is,

To help them [women] to become soul-winners, to learn the care of the oldies, to be helpful in their homes, how to be homemakers and develop a Christian social life among them.⁴⁴¹

The courses on housewifery, nutrition, home nursing, sewing and farming became a part of the curriculum for the girls' education in order to prepare them to be wives and mothers.

Girls' education must constantly be stressed in order to get girls in sufficient numbers trained to become leaders and efficient homemakers in their communities if they are to make Christian communities. The Christian church must be composed of Christian homes if it is to live and grow normally. The Christian home is only completely possible if the mother is trained to make our future leaders home Christian trained.⁴⁴²

The link between square houses and Christian homes and its impact on Abaluyia society was something that the Quaker missionaries envisaged and worked for. However by changing the living quarters from round huts to square houses and introducing the American interior furnishing did not necessarily have an impact on Abaluyia gender relations. The way in which the home was perceived and lived in was still mediated through the Abaluyia notions of 'space, work, gender and power'.⁴⁴³ The women's space and work remained the same and the space and the power of the men was unchanged.

5.3 CHRISTIANITY, CLOTHES AND SEWING.

Low and Smith have observed that

The most important material change in the colonial period was probably the substitution of washable cloth for garments of skin or bark, and that had been substantially completed well before the Second World War.⁴⁴⁴

Although this observation which was made in the context of people's improved health is largely true, clothing in mission circles had other implications. Lack of

⁴⁴¹ KNA: Helen Ford, *Women's Work*. 1937.

⁴⁴² KNA: Elizabeth Haviland, *GBS Report*. 1938. 1.

⁴⁴³ Moore, *Space, Text and Gender*, 148.

⁴⁴⁴ D. A. Low and A. Smith, *The History of East Africa* Vol. III. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1976. 521.

clothing was equated with immorality, thus making Christianity vital for the people.⁴⁴⁵ For girls and women clothes and sewing was one channel through which they would experience mission Christianity. Missionaries used clothes as an inducement for girls to come to the mission station in order to be taught the word of God. In her report Rees notes that 'the sewing school has grown to about forty or more. They are learning to sew and at the same time are receiving some gospel truth.'⁴⁴⁶ Since Christianity was linked with clothes, wearing western clothes was used by Quaker missionaries to show the difference between those who were converted and those who were not.⁴⁴⁷

Clothing was also used as a means to solicit material support for mission work among women and to keep the link between the field and the home church.

We had 43 girls at school this morning. They are not anxious about school, though some are interested. But they are keen to get needles and thread and some scraps of cloth to make a dress. Each time many more turn up for material we are not able to supply it all.⁴⁴⁸

Persons interested in sending cotton goods of any description to the FAIM will smile when they read the report from the Maragoli station and think of the patchwork dresses some of the little girls in this picture are making. The Kavirondo for multitudes of years have lived and died without clothing and to see a group of these girls learning to sew is indeed a cheering sight.⁴⁴⁹

Edna Chilson expressed similar views when writing from her station

The class of eighteen women and girls meet every Saturday afternoon. When I started the class 'twas an undertaking for me. For I knew little of the language and most people had never had a needle in their fingers. But with patience and prayer we have gotten along nicely and the work is a real pleasure to the women as well as myself. Our problem is material. Can you help?⁴⁵⁰

Teaching women to sew had two other important aspects to it: firstly it was a way of teaching the woman how to be a tool for civilisation in the home, and secondly it was a way of communicating gender roles to Abaluyia women. Even though the knowledge of making clothes was important for both women and men, since they

⁴⁴⁵ Edna Chilson, *Ambassador*. 142. She wrote that 'every thought of Africa's heart is evil. There is usually the most degrading and filthy talk among both men and women. They wear nothing.'

⁴⁴⁶ *American Friend*, Vol. 23. No. 8. February. 1905. 132-133.

⁴⁴⁷ *African Record*, Vol. 5. January- March. 1910. 6.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-6

⁴⁴⁹ Deborah Rees 'Sewing school' *Africa Record* Vol. 2. No. 4. October. 1908. 1-2.

⁴⁵⁰ Edna Chilson 'Destitute of Clothing'. *Africa Record* Vol. 4. No.3. July - September 1909. 4.

were both perceived to be 'naked', sewing for women was a mark of femininity. Men on the other hand learnt tailoring as a skill to give them a job. Writing about American women and the Dutch Reformed Mission movement Robert has noted that although sewing was part of the training for marriage, it was also an economic necessity.⁴⁵¹

Sewing for women had another aspect of communicating the nature of dress for women. Quaker women adopted a white dress for worship services. The dress reflected Quaker simplicity and at the same time it was seen as a reflection of walking in the light.⁴⁵² The way to dress was one of the topics discussed in the women's Meetings creating tensions in places where some women wanted freedom to dress differently.⁴⁵³ The way of dress became one other form of bondage for some women because they had to do it in order to remain within the structures of the women's Meeting, not because they desired to do so.

5.3.1 DIVISION OF LABOUR.

Among the things that distressed Quaker missionaries about women was the division of labour. To the missionaries Abaluyia women appeared as 'beasts of burden', labouring away while the men were idle, with an early start to their long day which ended late at night.

It is the duty of the woman to provide the food and drink for the household. Wood getting, water carrying, digging; weeding harvesting, grinding, cooking and caring for numerous children are her share of business.⁴⁵⁴

The Quaker missionaries were keen to promote a new moral order based on their perception of a civilised society. The woman would be trained to be a housewife for a well maintained home and she would not be idle. The man on the other hand would be trained,

⁴⁵¹ Tailoring was one of the subjects offered at the Normal Training School for boys at Kaimosi, although it did not have the same implications on the boys as the girls. Most of the boys used the tailoring skills to start tailoring businesses or to be employed as tailors. It was an economic necessity for boys but not for the women in the Quaker missions which is different from the Mission that Robert is writing about. Dana L. Robert. 'American Women and the Dutch Reformed Missionary Movement, 1874-1904'. In William Saayman and Klippies Kritzing, (Eds), *Mission in Bold Humility: David Bosch's work Considered*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books. 1996. 95.

⁴⁵² Abigail Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁴⁵³ Keran Alfayo, Oral Interview, 25/1/1996.

⁴⁵⁴ AFBFM, *Twenty-Five Years in East Africa*, 7.

...In habits of industry,[in order to] create in him a stability of character, otherwise impossible, and without which he will ever be vacillating and unreliable, a wave driven by wind and tossed; a prey to every evil passion.⁴⁵⁵

Chilson echoed similar views when he said,

If there is anything that the African needs to know more than another in practical Christian living it is the dignity of labour; that becoming a Christian does not mean merely to learn to read and write and become a school teacher, but it does mean to be a steady, industrious man or woman, living out everyday life, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴⁵⁶

The missionary's views expressed the need to bring a change in the division of labour among the Abaluyia, thus liberating the women. The ways in which the Quaker missionaries set about doing this was to introduce new farming methods, such as the use of the plough. This was meant to make men take part in agriculture, which it did. Nevertheless it gave the impression that men would take part in agriculture only when they used agricultural implements such as ploughs and harrows.⁴⁵⁷ While the male missionaries introduced new farming methods to the men, their wives stressed the significance of women having a garden in which to plant vegetables. The stress on planting vegetables earned some women missionaries Abaluyia names. For example Deborah Rees was named *Avugutsa* (Seeds) because of the stress she lay on planting vegetables, fruits and flowers.⁴⁵⁸

The significance of a vegetable garden for every woman cannot be underestimated. A vegetable garden had both positive and negative implications for the woman. A vegetable garden was important, because it meant that each woman had food available for her family. But at the same time, the vegetable garden was used by the church to reduce the social interactions among women except when it was for Meetings or doing church work.⁴⁵⁹ It was a symbol of indiscipline and laziness if a woman went to other women's houses to ask for vegetables now and again. Since lack of a vegetable garden was seen a symbol of laziness, women spent most of their

⁴⁵⁵ Hotchkiss, *Sketches*, 150.

⁴⁵⁶ Arthur Chilson, 'Manual Training and Missions' in *African Record*, Vol. III. May-July, No. 2. 1907. 6.

⁴⁵⁷ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 76; Hoyt, *We Were*, 46.

⁴⁵⁸ Jeremiah Mugofu, *Silent Look*. Privately Published. 1993. 8. Lena Mwenesi, Oral Interview, 9/1/1996.

⁴⁵⁹ Sarah Masingu, 'Omukali Mfrenzi' (A Quaker Woman).

time making sure that their vegetable gardens were up to standard. Thus the vegetable garden was used to reinforce the work ethic among women.

Even though the missionaries had perceived the women as 'beasts of burden' and they were keen to liberate them, their stress on housework and especially the vegetable gardens contradicted their original intention. The stress on a vegetable garden meant that the women had to work twice as hard to be identified as Quaker woman. Being a Quaker woman therefore meant hard work, discipline and lack of a social life.

As well as introducing the plough the Quaker missionaries became instrumental in introducing maize grinding mills, which replaced the millet grinding stones. The grinding mills relieved the women from the arduous work of grinding millet-using stones. They also brought a change in the diet of Abaluyia. Even though a lot of work went into preparing millet as food, it was nutritious compared to maize. But since it was easy to grind maize with the grinding mills, more people began to use maize as a staple food.⁴⁶⁰ Women were partly relieved from using the grinding stones everyday even if they had to do so on special occasions because millet flour was used during ceremonies.

Some of the first converts acquired a grinding mill as an economic asset to generate income. The men owned and operated the mills, while women used the mills for grinding maize for food because they lacked the technical knowledge of running the mills and the economic power to acquire them.⁴⁶¹ Even though the introduction of ploughs, grinding mills and other labour skills for men were supposedly meant to help women, the men were not at home to help the women with the work. The skills that men acquired were needed and used by the wider community in migrant labour, leaving the women to take on extra work. The aim of missionaries to teach men industrial skills in order to liberate women from what they saw as servitude actually reinforced their servitude.

⁴⁶⁰ Marvin P. Miracle, *Maize in Tropical Africa*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. 1966. 27.

⁴⁶¹ KNA: letters from Rees to the D.C. of Kakamega, 12th February 1923, and 8th March 1923.

With the establishment of white highlands by the colonial office most men went into forced labour, thus disrupting Christian home and family life.⁴⁶² The situation of migrant labour was made worse by the two world wars. During the Second World War it was noted that

55% of the able-bodied men in North Nyanza were working outside the district in addition to those conscripted for military service and women were left to fulfil the government demand for increased food production.⁴⁶³

This situation did not make for an equal division of labour between men and women, but rather put more pressure on women as farmers and wives. Women did not have the option of leaving home to seek employment or of going with their husbands, but they were forced to stay on the farm. It was important for women to stay behind in order to 'protect male rights to particular parcels of land, which could theoretically be re-allocated if not used.'⁴⁶⁴ Loss of land could mean loss of social security for the family in case of unemployment or retirement. Alongside this, women remained in the farms to subsidise poor migrant wages. Women had to produce enough food to feed the family in the rural home as well as to send regular supplies of grain and chickens to the urban workers.⁴⁶⁵ It is in this regard that Elspeth Huxley on her visit to Maragoli derogatorily wrote:

Maragoli has become a sort of dormitory area for places as distant as Mombasa, and its commuters return for a month or two every year after harvest to drink millet-beer and procreate a new crop of babies.⁴⁶⁶

Migrant labour had implications for mission work in regard to the division of labour and teaching on the Christian family. While Quakers seem to have accepted that women had to work on the family farm and maintain the families while the husbands were away, they continued to lay emphasis on a nuclear family, which they equated

⁴⁶² John Middletown: 'Kenya: Administration and Changes in African Life 1912 – 1945, in Vincent Harlow and E.M Chilver, (Eds). *History of East Africa*, vol. II. Oxford: OUP. 1965. 336 ff.

⁴⁶³ KNA: DC/NN1/25, North Kavirondo District annual Report, 1943.

⁴⁶⁴ Betty, Potash, 'Some Aspects of Marital Stability in a Rural Luo Community', in *Africa*, 48, 4 1978. 387.

⁴⁶⁵ Carl Rosberg and John Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*. Nairobi: East Africa publishing house 1966. 207. They note that 'low wages forced Africans to remain dependent on the relatively security and sustenance of impoverished land holdings in the reserve'.

⁴⁶⁶ Elspeth Huxley, *A New Earth*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1960. 122 –123.

with a Christian family. The church was good at teaching women the virtues of hard work, humility, faithfulness and obedience. This disregarded the social and economic pressures on the female-headed households and those of the men in migrant labour. Strobel has noted that 'efforts to replicate European gender roles at times collided with the realities of exploitation in the colonial context where a man's wage could not support a family.'⁴⁶⁷

5.4 EDUCATION FOR WOMEN.

In their attempt to raise the standards of Abaluyia women, Quaker missionaries introduced formal education which they offered first single handedly and then later in collaboration with the colonial government. This education however did not go beyond preparing women for the Christian homes and families, nor did it differ significantly from the traditional education for women. The methods and philosophy of missionary education were influenced by the ideologies of separate spheres for men and women which were prevalent in the USA and Europe at the turn of the 19th century.⁴⁶⁸

As it was noted in chapter one, the education of boys and girls in Luyia society differed notably, especially after the initiation of boys. The girls were socialised into being mothers while the boys were prepared for their future roles as leaders in the society. The difference between the missionary and the Luyia types of education was the fact that the missionary education was taught by foreigners or those who had been in contact with foreigners, with foreign tools of instruction, including the art of writing and in a classroom environment.

The aim of education for women was to make them good 'Christian mothers', and enable them to enter professions such as teaching if circumstances allowed. When

⁴⁶⁷ Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. 56. Deborah Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903- 1939,' *In Journal of African History*, 24. No 2. 1983. 241-256.

⁴⁶⁸ Barbara Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity, Women Evangelism, and Temperance in the Nineteenth- Century*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1981. Barbara Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860 In *American Quarterly*, 18 (Summer 1966) 151-174; Char Miller *Mission and Missions in the Pacific*, New York: Edwin mellen Press. 1985; Hall. C. 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology' in Burman, S. (Ed), *Fit Work for Women*. London: Oxford Women Studies. 15-31; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1982*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Quaker missionaries thought about education for women they started from a fixed image of the degraded Abaluyia women. Given this presumed idea of female degradation, it is not surprising that the reasons given by missionaries for taking women into their care and giving them simple literacy skills were couched in the language of moral rescue.

But this did not start as soon as the missionaries arrived partly because Luyia people did not allow their girls to go to school and partly because the missionaries were too busy establishing themselves. During the initial years the wives of missionaries made contacts with Luyia women but they did not embark on serious education work for them. In 1911 Deborah and Emory Rees realised that in order for girls and women to be educated there was need for extra staff especially single women.

In many ways the work is promising, but a large loss was inevitable and we see evidence of it on every side but especially in the girls' work. In order to carry on a work for girls and women there must be women among the missionaries.⁴⁶⁹

However, not all missionaries agreed to have single women missionaries in the field. For example, Arthur Chilson protested against the idea and asked the secretary of the board to think of the implications this would have for mission work.

You can imagine one living in the eyes of the natives as a concubine to a married man can have little influence in teaching against polygamy and immorality. The native can only see things from his viewpoint and because it is impossible for him to live a moral life, if associated with the opposite sex, he naturally feels sure that it is just as impossible for the white people.⁴⁷⁰

Chilson's views show clearly the biases against single women, which were prevalent in the Euro-American society during the Victorian era, of which Chilson was a product. And so he looked at the issue of single women from this perspective. Unfortunately Chilson's position together with Abaluyia notions of single women influenced EAYM on the position of women in the church.

The fears of Chilson about the thinking of the natives were proved unfounded by his fellow missionaries. Rees, for example, downplayed the moral fervour of Chilson by pointing to the fact that there was already an interaction between missionary men and Abaluyia women and no objection had been raised. For Rees the issue of great

⁴⁶⁹ *African Record*, Vol. 8. April – June. No.2. 1912. 7.

⁴⁷⁰ Earlham School Of Religion (ESR): Letter from Chilson to Tebbets. Dated 13th January 1912: copy this letter was sent to me by the Librarian of Earlham School of Religion. He also made available other material for me through the post.

concern was the health of the missionaries rather than the perceptions of Abaluyia. Rees was of the opinion that FAIM should adopt a policy which other boards in Africa had found universally acceptable. If there were health hazards at the workstation for a single woman missionary then this would be taken into account before a missionary was sent out.⁴⁷¹ As it appears Chilson had a different opinion about morality from those of Rees but Rees had a more practical approach to the question of single women missionaries. Rees understood better the people among whom he was working and his attitudes towards women and Abaluyia were also different from Chilson's.

In 1913 Roxie Reeve came to Vihiga to give a hand to Deborah Rees with the work of girls and women. In 1915 Roxie Reeve started a class for women in Vihiga, and among her students was Maria Atiamuga whom the thesis discusses at a greater length in chapter seven. In the same year and up to 1917 Reeve attempted to teach English to the pupils at Vihiga but the other missionaries stopped her.⁴⁷² According to Asava who would be representative of Abaluyia the missionaries did not want English to be taught because they feared that if Abaluyia knew English it would undermine Christian faith.⁴⁷³ Painter exonerates the missionaries by saying that it was the government circular that stopped the missionaries by not allowing the use of English in the Schools at the time.⁴⁷⁴

But leaving the government aside, and looking at the internal situation among the missionaries, Reeve did not get on well with the other missionaries especially Chilson. He found it hard to work with single women missionaries and wanted them

⁴⁷¹ ESR: Letter from J Rees to Tebbetts dated 6th May 1912. 'In regard to sending out single women to the field I think I have already expressed my opinion, but as the subject is an important one I feel that I may venture to say something more.... I am very certain that the Chilsons at least will oppose it. And I know that some of the others will support sending out single women... so far as I know the sole objection to their presence on the station is that the natives will misunderstand. Upon the same ground we would be obliged to refuse the privilege (sic) of visiting our homes all women unaccompanied by their husbands for the native just as certainly misunderstand and judges us by his own standards in this case as he does in the other. We are not refusing such women the hospitality of our homes and we can not if we would. Altogether the objection seems to me wholly inadequate as a reason for robbing the mission of the services of single women'

⁴⁷² This is the view held by those who remember Roxie Reeve, whom they know as Musuruve. And there are elderly women who are known by this name because they were born when Miss Reeve arrive. Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview, 13/2/1996, Dinah Musidiku, Oral Interview, 19/4/1996.

⁴⁷³ Asava, *Liguula*, 5.

⁴⁷⁴ Painter, *The Hill*, 50.

to be given as little work as possible. Teaching boys would mean getting involved with them and Chilson was of the opinion that Reeve should stick with the girls and leave the boys alone. Chilson however said that it was 'Mr and Mrs. Rees who did not want Reeve to have much work with the boys.'⁴⁷⁵ We do not know whether Emory and Deborah Rees actually confided this to Chilson, or whether he was reading and interpreting their mind in order to support his claims against single women missionaries.

It is unlikely that Emory and Deborah Rees would have had this kind of idea considering the fact that they are the ones who persuaded the mission board to bring out single missionaries. Their request was for single women missionaries to work with girls in order to relieve the wives of the missionaries who supposedly were free to work with both boys as well as girls. But because Chilson continued to protest against Reeve being given any responsibilities even when Emory and Deborah Rees were on leave it could have been just him using any information to support his claims.⁴⁷⁶ Perhaps this is why in 1924 there was a letter from Beed regarding the place of women in the church in the mission field.⁴⁷⁷

Although Reeve appears to have been a woman keen to work with and for Abaluyia boys and girls, she was confined to dealing with girls alone. Education for girls however, was influenced by gender as a result of the opportunities envisaged for boys and girls after school. The boys were being prepared for economic activities outside the home while women's education laid emphasis on domesticity as girls were prepared more for being in the home. Thus the famous question among Maragoli people *abakari nabazie kokarana hai* (who will employ women as clerks?).⁴⁷⁸ With education one could become a clerk, but no one would employ

⁴⁷⁵ ESR: Arthur Chilson to Rev. Rose Hadley, Richmond Indiana USA.28.10.1917.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ KNA: Willis. Beede sent a letter from the Office of the Mission board in Richmond Indiana on the 'Position of Women in the Mission Field'. I tried to look for a copy of this letter but I was not able to locate it. It was recorded as having been received but it was not available. But from the title of the letter and the time it came, I concluded that it was trying to deal with the situation in the mission field by providing guidelines on the place of women.

⁴⁷⁸ Who will employ women as clerks? Therefore their education is a waste of resources. Others on the same note would argue that all the education of a woman would be smoked away while she is cooking in the kitchen.

women as clerks. This attitude led to a different type of education for women, which was primarily for conversion and then for Christian motherhood. The women's education included cleanliness, proper housekeeping, and general proficiency in sewing, cooking and child rearing. This education was not uniquely Quaker, it was also undertaken by other mission groups of the same period like CMS.⁴⁷⁹ Parallels can also be drawn from other parts of Africa in regard to mission education for girls.⁴⁸⁰

Although Roxie Reeve appears not to have been getting on well with some of her fellow missionaries, she was very involved with starting education work for girls in Maragoli. In 1915 two years after she arrived she had started eight outstations for girls schools. In four of these stations she had married women helping her to teach the girls and at Vihiga, the main station, she taught the girls while Deborah Rees taught the women. As well as the outstation classes for girls, Reeve began a home for orphaned girls especially after the outbreak of Small Pox in Maragoli in 1916-1917.

Maragoli Orphanage beginning with 2 or 3 little ones whose mothers were dead and who probably would have died had she not taken them in Roxie Reeve's family has grown irresistibly to 15. So now it is a bona fide orphanage and as such has been recognised as one of the mission activities.⁴⁸¹

It is this orphanage that was moved to Liranda in 1917 to be a girl's school because it could not be started at Vihiga where there was already a boy's school. But because the girls were being prepared to be mothers their form of education included literacy and practical work.

In the morning the children have reading writing, Bible stories and memory work. In the afternoon the older girls have the same with addition of Swahili

⁴⁷⁹ KNA: CMS 1/382. 'The present need is for home makers and for this we need to train young girls of character who as Christian wives and mothers, and even teachers before marriage will by their Christianity and knowledge of home craft be able to make a virtual difference in the standard of Kikuyu life'

⁴⁸⁰ For example studies done on mission work among women in South Africa. Deborah Gaitskell 'Women and Education in South Africa: How Helpful are the Mission Archives?' In R. A Bickers and R. Seton. (Eds). *Missionary Encounters Sources and Issues*, London: Curzon Press, 1996, 114-127; 'Race Gender, and Imperialism - A century of Black Girls' Education in South Africa' in J.A. Mangan (Ed.), *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press 1988; 'At Home with Hegemony? Coercion and Consent in the Education of African Girls for Domesticity in South Africa Before 1910' in D. Engles and S. Marks (Eds). *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India*, London: 1994. 110-128.

⁴⁸¹ *Friends Missionary Advocate* 1917 -1918.

and industrial work. A small beginning has been made in beadwork, basket and mat weaving. As it is customary for the girls' to help tilling the gardens the mission ruled that all boarding school girl's who are old enough to work must care for their own gardens.⁴⁸²

The orphanage was given the status of a boarding school in September 1921, but the curriculum did not change and it was still the case when the school was moved from Liranda to Kaimosi in 1926 to become the Girls Boarding School (GBS). The rules for this school were: -

1. Girls not to be admitted under the age of seven.
2. Babies are not to be cared for in connection with the boarding school.
3. Girls' should not be compelled to stay in school against their will but every reasonable inducement be held out to them to encourage them to stay. If a girl runs away she may be re admitted if she seems penitent.
4. It is desirable for the girls to raise all their own food if possible. Perhaps the heavy digging e.g. breaking up of ground may be done by hired labour or with plough.
5. The school should have a definite curriculum and programme. This should include handcraft of a nature that will be useful to the girls in their home life and sanitary hygiene conditions must be maintained.
6. Recognised uniform is to be approved
7. The number of girls admitted must not exceed the facilities of the school.⁴⁸³

Since these girls were being prepared to be wives, domesticity was used to create the learning environment. In 1927 Elizabeth Haviland⁴⁸⁴ arrived to take over the administration of the school, but as Painter has noted, the school suffered from 'lack of eligible students.'⁴⁸⁵ Even though it has been observed that Abaluyia were reluctant to send their daughters to school, GBS at this early stage did not have adequate facilities to accommodate the girls. Apart from the view that education for women was not significant, the parents could have been reluctant because they were concerned about the health and security of their daughters.

⁴⁸² KNA: Education report, 1921.

⁴⁸³ KNA: Educational report, 1926.

⁴⁸⁴ Kay, *The Southern*. 160. Kay notes that 'before Elizabeth Haviland arrived in Kaimosi she had spent two years teaching at Calhoun coloured school in Alabama and a summer in a rural training course at Cornell University. As director of Girls, Miss Haviland deliberately sought to infuse Friends Schools with home making, agriculture, sewing and an attitude of rural service.

⁴⁸⁵ Painter, *The Hill*, 57.

In 1924 the Phelps- Stokes Commission visited Kenya.⁴⁸⁶ The Phelps-Stokes fund was set up through the will of Caroline Stoke.⁴⁸⁷ The Phelps-Stokes commission urged the government to support mission education and to adopt the principles of Tuskegee education of purely limited outlook. While visiting Kenya the commission noted that 'the educational ideals and methods of the CMS and the Friends Mission are the main basis of hope for the future of education in this populous district.'⁴⁸⁸ The commission was impressed with the Friends Mission at Liranda because 'it was devoted to the training of girls, who board at the school and learn not only in the classroom, but by practice in the home activities of the institution.'⁴⁸⁹ The Phelps-Stokes commission gave several recommendations about education in Kenya including an increase grants-in aid to schools. The commission urged that education for native women be made paramount because it was essential both for the improvement of health and the morals of the people.⁴⁹⁰

The commission also recommend that rudimentary professional training be given to women especially in teaching and nursing because women would be needed in schools for girls and for infants of both sexes. As nurses women would be needed for maternity work and the care of sick children.⁴⁹¹ The work of this commission is often cited as having made a progressive contribution to African education in British colonies although not every writer is in agreement with this view.⁴⁹² With regard to women's education, however it reinforced the ideology of domesticity, an aspect that has been observed in studies on the education of women.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁶ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa*, London Edinburgh House. 1925. For a detailed discussion of the Phelps-Stokes commission and its impact on education in East Africa (Kenya) see Kenneth King, *Pan-Africanism and Education*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

⁴⁸⁷ Thomas Jesse Jones, *Educational Adaptations: Report of Ten Years Work of the Phelps-Stokes Education in America: its Adequacy, Problems, and Needs 1910-1920*, New York: 1920. 7-22.

⁴⁸⁸ Jones, *Education*. 115,

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.* , 130.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.* , 139.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.* , 342.

⁴⁹² For example Roland Allen, *Le Zoute: A Critical Review of "The Christian Mission in Africa,"* London: World Dominion Press, 1927. 18-22.

⁴⁹³ Nakanyike B. Musisi, 'Colonial Missionary Education: Women and Domesticity in Uganda. In Hansen, *Africa Encounters*. 180

Nevertheless, the colonial office took into consideration the recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes commission and set up an Advisory Committee on Native Education in 1925. This committee established guidelines for the overall development in the British dependencies. On the education of women the Advisory Committee urged that more work should be done on the education of women especially in personal hygiene and domestic science. The aim of this type of education was three fold: 'So that the educated boys would get married to educated girls; to reduce the high rate of infant mortality rate; to raise the standards of African women'.⁴⁹⁴

The recommendations of the Phelps-Stokes commission, together with those of the Advisory committee on Native Education, were effected in the education of girls especially at GBS. In 1934 GBS qualified for a government grant because it met the government requirements for girls' education, which were:

- a) There shall be provision for literacy education up to the 4th standard of primary school course or beyond.
- b) There shall be provision for training in housewifery
- c) There shall be provision for training in hygiene.⁴⁹⁵

Other than the grant, which improved the school, girls began coming to the school because of the presence of some women in the education board.

There are some African women in the Committee Dinah Belimu from Munzani, Rebecca Mwanyi from Vihiga and Miriam from Ekombe Kitosh. The women chosen to meet on this committee have taken part in the discussions relating to the girls' school. This is a big step for them in that they sit on a committee with men.⁴⁹⁶

According to some of the graduates of the school of this period, it was not easy to be a student of GBS. The living conditions were harsh, with little to wear in such a cold place and the need to work to produce your own food.⁴⁹⁷ There was a great fear of the girls coming into contact with the boys whose school was across the road from GBS. At one stage when the girls' school did not have water, the girls were forced to

⁴⁹⁴ David G. Scanlon, (Ed), *Traditions of African Education*. New York: Bureau of Publications. 1964. 90, 100.

⁴⁹⁵ KNA: Grant Aid of Africa Educational rules: Girls Education. 1934.

⁴⁹⁶ KNA: Everret Kellum: Education report, 1935.

⁴⁹⁷ Dinah Ngoya was at GBS from 1933 to 1936; Leah Ganira from 1936-1938. Both Ngoya and Ganira said during my interview with them that they used to dig their own plots of land at Ludodo which was adjacent to the Girls Boarding School.

use dirty water rather than crossing the road to get water from a well, which was in the boys' school. This resulted in a number of girls being sick because of contaminated water.⁴⁹⁸ Not only did the girls have the handicap of their difficult environment for learning, but also the emphasis of their education lay on domestic roles especially in the production of food.

It is desirable for the girls to raise all their own food if possible. Perhaps the heavy digging e.g. breaking up of ground may be done by hired labour or with plough. The school should have a definite curriculum and programme. This should include handcraft of a nature that will be useful to the girls in their home life, sanitary hygiene conditions must be maintained.⁴⁹⁹

The curriculum of Kaimosi Girls Boarding school was not unique for this period because other mission groups had similar curriculum. Musisi for instance notes that in Gayaza Boarding School, 'the girls woke up every morning to dig in the plantation for almost two and a half hours as was the custom of women in Uganda.'⁵⁰⁰

Before 1940 there was no attempt to give women career education, which would put them on an equal footing with men. This was despite the fact that Quaker missionaries acknowledged that, 'Friends believe in the equality of men and women in the church. If this is achieved in Africa we will have to put more effort in girls' work.'⁵⁰¹ Because Quakers said one thing but acted to the contrary, there was slow development of women into careers. Some of the first graduates of GBS like Alice Kasande and Marguarita Kavaga were employed at the school.⁵⁰² The rest went back to their homes and taught as untrained teachers while they waited to become housewives.⁵⁰³

The fact that the education of women was not similar to that of boys made equality for men and women in EAYM hard to achieve. Women did not enter into the labour

⁴⁹⁸ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview, 16/1/1996.

⁴⁹⁹ KNA: Education report, 1938.

⁵⁰⁰ Musisi 'Colonial and Missionary Education' in Hansen, *African Encounters*, 174.

⁵⁰¹ KNA: Edith Michner, GBS report, 1936.

⁵⁰² KNA: Edith Michner, GBS report, 1938.

⁵⁰³ For example, Dinah Ngoya, Leah Ganira, Rachel Sabwa, they were graduates of GBS but they did not train for a career until after they got married and did advanced courses on domestic science in order to help the women in the villages where their husbands were working as teachers.

market even as domestic servants, as in the case of South Africa where education for women prepared them for being servants.⁵⁰⁴

It was not until the 1940's that women began training as teachers in Kenya.⁵⁰⁵ This gave some of the graduates of GBS an opportunity to train as teachers. In 1948 a teacher training college was opened at Vihiga and some of the first students were Quaker women such as Dinah Agoi, and Norah Musundi.⁵⁰⁶ Abigail Indire a graduate of GBS and the African Girls School became a teacher at the college too.⁵⁰⁷ Even though the development of women's education was slow, Quakers were ahead of other missions which were working in the same area.⁵⁰⁸

The Quakers began to train women as teachers in 1953 at GBS; training for men as teachers had been going on since 1931. Even when training for women was started the emphasis was on domestic work. The aim of training women in domestic work was to contribute to the development of Christian homes and families. Despite this attitude to women's education, some of the pioneer girls rose amidst difficulties to become prominent women in various professions in society.

In 1957 the teacher training course for women was merged with the men's training at Kaimosi Teacher's college. The women continued to live in GBS until 1965 when they were moved to live in the same compound as the male student teachers. The merging of training for teachers meant that women trained as teachers in their equal right, even though the gender bias still remained so that women were seen as being prepared to teach children and not older pupils.

The 1950's saw more women being trained as teachers, even though they could not hold responsibilities in schools over men as heads. In 1955 a woman was appointed

⁵⁰⁴ Deborah Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids, or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1909-1939'. In *Journal of African History*, 24 (1983). 241-256.

⁵⁰⁵ D.N. Sifuna, *Short Essays on Education in Kenya*, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980. 71-72.

⁵⁰⁶ KNA: FAM report, 1948; Norah Musundi, Oral Interview, 20/3/1996.

⁵⁰⁷ Abigail Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁵⁰⁸ Elizabeth Richardson, *Fifty Years in Nyanza 1906-1956*, Nairobi: Acme Press. 1950. 22. Gilbert Ogutu, *An Outline History of the Catholic Church*, 39. Ogutu notes that when the catholic missionaries started work in Western Kenya the education of women was neglected. It was only in order to raise Christian wives for the male converts that girls were invited to the catechumens. In the course of their catechists, the girls learnt to read and write. Nonetheless, effective education for girls did not start until the arrival of the missionary sisters in 1928.

as a headmistress of a primary school, which was a big step for Quakers in mission work among women.

Opportunities are opening for women, as they become better qualified. Just this year [1955] for the first time in the history of the Friends, a woman has been appointed as a head of a primary school. She is a former student of the girls' school and was a member of its staff for two years. She is meeting a lot of opposition but that seems to be the lot of pioneers.⁵⁰⁹

Even though this was a big step in the history of Friends the woman is not named in a major report. There is no sufficient reason why her name is left out in such an important report, even though from the report we can infer that there was local opposition to women pioneers. This opposition could have been due to the gender bias shown by the missionaries themselves or the issues surrounding this woman.

Salome Nolega was the first Abaluyia woman to become a headmistress of GBS' school and the first woman to become a principal of a teacher training college in Kenya. Born in Kigama, Nolega was the daughter of David Mbarani and Damari Kadagaye. She studied in Kigama primary school and then was admitted to Kaimosi in 1946. She was in GBS until 1949 when she sat for her primary certificate examination. In 1950 Nolega was among the first African girls to be admitted to Alliance High school where she did her two years of secondary school and then trained and qualified as a P2. teacher in 1953.

For seven years after Alliance Nolega taught at and administered at GBS and in 1961 she applied for and was given a gift from a Swedish women's organisation. The gift enabled her to go to the United States and with extra support from USFW she studied at Berea College in the state of Kentucky USA, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Domestic Science in 1963. After returning to Kenya Nolega was appointed in 1965 the Principal of Kaimosi Teachers' college, the first woman to serve in that capacity in the Quaker church.

Nolega seems to have been everything that a missionary and Abaluyia men both admired and disliked. As one of my interviewees remarked in a derogatory manner 'She had one foot in the church and one foot outside the church', implying she was not fully committed as a Christian according to this person's definition of a Christian woman. But harsh remarks about Nolega came because she was a courageous woman

⁵⁰⁹ Kaimosi Office: EAYM Report, Education for Girls, 1955. 18-19.

in her time. Nolega demonstrated that women had equal ability in learning, in teaching, in scholarship and in administration. Nolega contributed to the education of girls and women of her time, in both formal and informal, private and public, rural and urban, primary, secondary, college, and university levels.

During her teaching career, her incredible energy was used in all sorts of ways, and she is remembered as a woman who encouraged women and men to study. She read papers in international meetings on various topics. Addressing a UN meeting on disarmament, she pointed to the fact that while national security which was used to justify the arms race was important, and secure national boundaries and structures should be adhered to, it should not play down the security of persons. This she said was threatened by,

hunger, population, disease, and pollution, desertification, lack of pure water, lack of energy. To address these problems requires equitable sharing of the world's resources and opportunities. The global economy should not be designed primarily to promote economic growth for the already affluent. Growth should be the goal and the reality for the poor.⁵¹⁰

Her identity with the poor in society made her concern herself with *Maendeleo ya wanawake* (Women's development), a national movement for women of all walks of life in Kenya. As a chairperson of this movement in Western Kenya, Nolega mingled with women of all walks of life giving them encouragement and contributing to their development in a society that marginalised them.

She was a strong advocate of the proper position of women in the church and society at large. In a speech entitled 'with a bias to the women' Nolega pays tribute to the first girls to join the Quaker mission,

I must point out that although men have always been seen first in any activities that take place in the world, we had a few curious girls in our community who came to learn about the work of the Quakers. These women joined in with the men, some of them, later married the men I mentioned before, and so we had from the start, women involved in our missionary work.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ Salome Nolega, 'Disarmament: U.N. Calls for Universal Endeavour.' In *Quaker Life*, October 1978. 18–19.

⁵¹¹ Salome Nolega, 'With a Bias to the Role of Women: Friends in East Africa'. In *Quaker Life*, October 1980.

Her involvement with the women's meeting especially in EAYM South is immense and her contribution to the growth of the meeting is remembered with gratitude.⁵¹² Although Nolega was an able leader and administrator she was never elected to any office of EAYM. She served on various boards and committees and is remembered as a fearless and versatile leader. She was also elected as the vice chair to FWCC where she served for six years, a post that made her travel widely representing EAYM in international meetings.

The story of Nolega shows that women in the 1950's were getting more involved in the issues of society in contrast to their mothers in the previous years. Nolega managed to excel in her career as an educator, and was actively involved in the church from the margins. She rose to the position of leadership in the para-church organisation like FWCC but not in the mainstream church even though she was qualified for the leadership and administration of EAYM. She was never used in that capacity because of the social stigma placed upon women of her calibre, and the people, especially men, reacted to her with ambivalence. However as one of the pioneers she left behind a legacy to be emulated.

Apart from teaching, pioneer Quaker women have excelled in health work, administration, politics and social work to name but a few areas. But most of these women however have not been treated well in the documentation of the Quaker story. For example, Priscilla Abwao⁵¹³ whom Eliot does not name but refers to her as a 'woman Friend' on the legislative council of Kenya.⁵¹⁴ Abwao is given her proper place in Likimani and Oduol, when they wrote about various aspects of women in Kenya.⁵¹⁵ Abwao played an equal part with men, when they went to Lancaster House

⁵¹² Keran Alfayo, Oral Interview, 25/1/1996, Rachel Sabwa; Oral Interview, 30/1/1996, Abigail Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁵¹³ Priscilla Abwao a mother, and social worker. She is a graduate of GBS who taught for two years before she entered social work. In 1951 she stopped teaching and began to work in community development in North Nyanza. After three years she won a scholarship to study community development in Britain. After one year of study in Britain she graduated with a Diploma in domestic science. When she returned to Kenya she served in the legislative council after which she served as the provincial Director of social services.

⁵¹⁴ Errol, T. Elliot, *Quakers on the American Frontier*, Richmond Indiana: Friends United Press, 1969. 298.

⁵¹⁵ Likimani Muthoni, *Women in Development in Kenya*, Nairobi: Noni 1985 172; Wilhemina A. Oduol, 'Women in Politics.' In *TransAfrica Journal of History* Vol. 22. 1993. 172.

conference to negotiate for independence. In addition to this, Abwao was an advocate of women's issues such as education for girls and women. She argued that if the country was going to be developed, there was need to educate women especially those who lived in rural villages. Even though pioneer Quaker women contributed a great deal to the development of society, EAYM never integrated them in the organisational structure of the church and reasons for this will be analysed in chapter seven of the thesis.

5.5 EVALUATION OF MISSION WORK AMONG WOMEN

The aim of mission work among Abaluyia women was to prepare them to be 'good Christian mothers.' Mission work was also meant to free women from the arduous work which was prescribed to them through *engoko* ideology. But instead of achieving this, mission work among Abaluyia women created new roles and modified the old ones. Quaker missionaries were a product of a society with an ideology of separate spheres, which dichotomised space and was contrary to the traditional Quaker ideas of space.

The concept of public space as male and private domestic space as passive female, and masculinity as active and femininity as passive, were not only contrary to original Quaker experience, but they were insufficient to capture the wholeness of their lives.⁵¹⁶

In Abaluyia traditional society, the division of space was more political than economic. Although Abaluyia men were generally responsible for public governance and lineage and community matters and women had primary responsibility of food preparation and bringing up children, both women and men were actively involved in productive activities outside the household which were crucial for its survival. The introduction of separate spheres of space, which implied that men were breadwinners and women were not, was not only foreign but it increased the economic disparity between men and women, especially with men going to work.

The feminisation of the home meant that it was the responsibility of the woman to manage it. But the home was not significant in generating any income. Even though the woman in the home was responsible for the farm, producing the food and

⁵¹⁶ Carol & John Stoneburner, (Eds). *The Influence of Quaker Women on American History Biographical studies*, Lewinston/Queenstone the Edwin Mellen Press. 1986. Xix.

bringing up children, she was not considered as doing work, because work is what brought in an income. Although a woman was in charge of the home she had no power to make decisions because she had no authority to do that.⁵¹⁷ The feminisation of the home rendered the women economically powerless as Gilpin observed,

In the pre - independence decade the colonial government adopted an economic development policy which explicitly fostered the emergence of an African middle class. The Friends mission seemed to interpret its role largely as one of supporting the new development policies of the colonial government and the aspirations of its middle class church leaders. The mass of rural peasants, particularly the women, did not share in the new development. They remained concerned primarily with the problems of their own villages and resented the increasing centralisation of authority. They also constituted the majority of the church membership of the churches.⁵¹⁸

Economic inadequacy for women was due to the failure of the church to tackle social and economic issues when they taught women about Christian family. Their teaching instead was based on the assumption that a man will be the breadwinner for the family, which largely excluded women from economic involvement. The reaction against this kind of teaching was the emergence of economic women's groups to support each other in the day-to-day concerns. These groups became involved in income generating projects such as farming; trade in farm produce; knitting; poultry-keeping; zero grazing; pig -keeping; sheep rearing; petty trade; merry-go-round contribution; posho mills and bakery. Through these activities the groups improved their members' welfare, in particular, and that of the wider society in general. Were has noted that through these groups stepped into major roles previously reserved for men as the breadwinners.⁵¹⁹

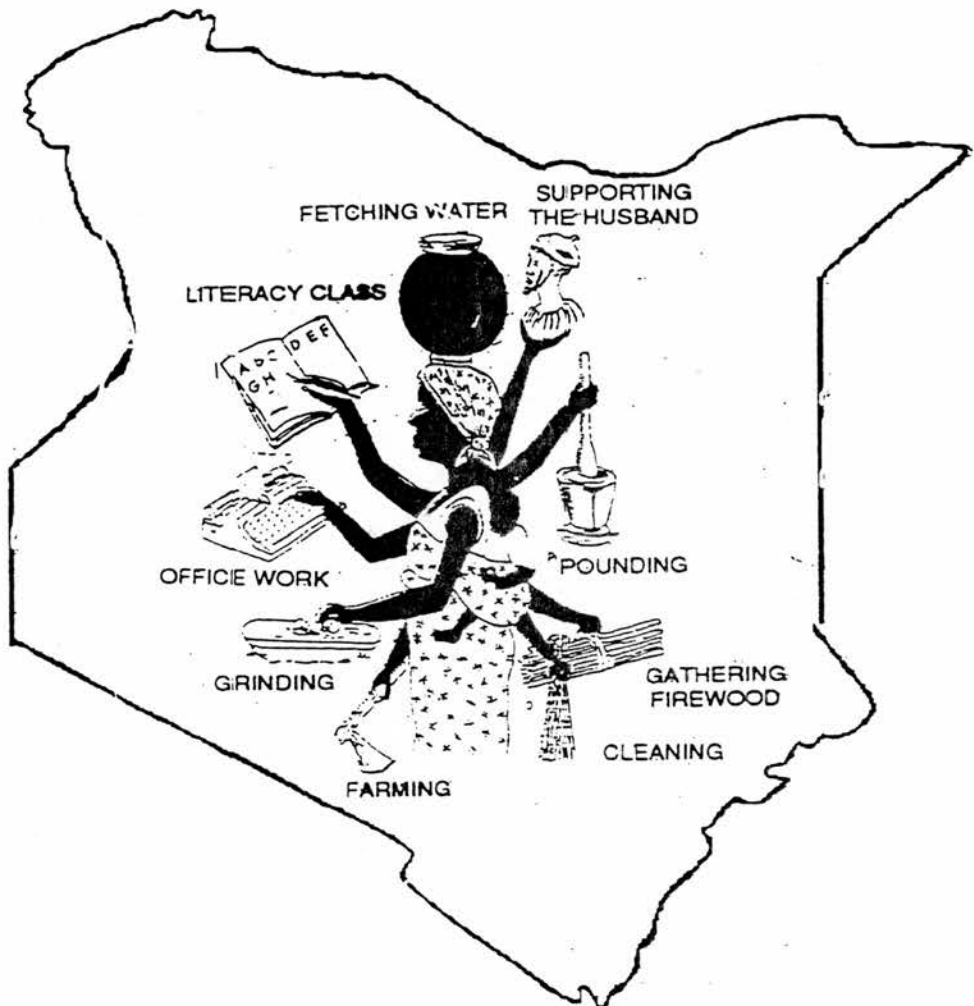
Even though the Quaker missionaries had decried the powerlessness of an Abaluyia woman in a patriarchal society and described her as a 'beast of burden', this chapter has shown that, they reinforced the system rather than dealing with it. Mission work with and for women was designed in such a way that women should become wives, mothers and guardians of the family and the home. All this was based on the notion that maternal influence was of social value to the society at large and the kingdom of

⁵¹⁷ Abbot S. 'Full Time Farmers and Weekend Wives: An Analysis of Altering Conjugal Roles' In *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 38. (1) February 1976. 166.

⁵¹⁸ Gilpin, *The Church*, 283.

⁵¹⁹ Gideon S. Were, *Women and Development in Kenya Kakamega District*, Nairobi: IAS, 1990. 5.

God. Mission work among women functioned in a complex and contradictory manner; it liberated women from the particular subordination inherent in their roles in traditional Abaluyia society and it introduced some to new careers and earning power, yet it limited them to subordinate roles in the newly emerged social structure. Despite the constraints the first women educated in this system developed a consciousness of themselves that went beyond the expectations of the education they were offered. But for most women the burden of the home and society lay heavy on their shoulders as illustrated in the figure below.



This figure (number 1) is adopted from Karuti Kanyinga and Susie Ibutu: *Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAPS) in Kenya. Implications on the Lives of Women.* (1994). Although it shows that it is the Saps that have made the women bear with so

much, from the analysis in this chapter, it is clear that women have been doing both traditional and modern roles since the mission days.

CHAPTER SIX

6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF *OMUGANDA GWA AVAKALI*⁵²⁰ IN EAYM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The last two chapters have looked at the ways in which women were addressed by mission Christianity, especially how they were seen as wives and mothers. This chapter looks at the impact of mission Christianity on Abaluyia women and analyses how they responded to it; and how they perceived themselves as women and Christians. Some of the women's responses to Quaker Christianity can be delineated from the women's separate Meetings. The responses of women to Christianity give us a glimpse into how women interpreted and reformed the message of Christianity and integrated it into their lives. The response also sheds some light on how Abaluyia women related to the church structure.

This chapter is also concerned with looking at the development of the women's separate meetings which led to the formation of a Women's Yearly Meeting. By analysing the separate meetings, this chapter raises the contradictions that these meetings point to as far as women and patriarchy are concerned. On the one hand separate meetings were an attempt by the women to deal with the marginal positions in which they found themselves in the structures of the church, but by doing so they failed to challenge and remedy the factors which caused their marginalisation.

6.2 PIONEER WOMEN.

When the Quakers established a church among Abaluyia in 1902, their perception of the local people was coloured by 19th century racial arrogance, which was pessimistic about African capabilities, and the Quaker missionaries were not exceptional. In describing the Abaluyia people they used intolerant and patronising language.

⁵²⁰ *Omuganda Gwa Avakali*, simply is a Women's Organisation, In this chapter it is used to denote the women's groups, Meetings and the Women's Yearly Meeting.

The poor, childlike, simple-minded native is so helpless-the constant prey to every manner of superstition and device of Satan to keep him bound in his service- and we know there is complete deliverance in Christ and His Gospel.⁵²¹

As well as being simple minded, Abaluyia were perceived as immoral people

Dancing and beer drinking play an important part in the lives of the people. In the mild light of the moon, the weird songs, the rhythmic motions, the nude bodies of the men, women and children and the vile gestures of these degraded people, tell of a people strangers to righteousness, but all too familiar with sin⁵²²

Because they perceived Abaluyia as an immoral people, they worked on the assumption that men and women should be separated in order to avoid temptations to sin, and the spiritual needs of men and women were different. This influenced the way Christianity was presented and it also affected its physical structures. In the construction of churches the inside arrangements were influenced by the principle of the separation of the sexes. The church was divided into two sections with a space in the middle, the right side of the church had chairs and the left did not. The front part was raised and it was furnished with chairs, a table and a lectern.

Men and women usually sat separately in the church, a practice which apparently the Abaluyia initiated and which the missionaries approved because it was a justification of what they thought about the people. The men sat on the right side of the church which was furnished while the women sat on the floor. This segregation of men and women is still adhered to in most congregations even today, though both men and women sit on chairs. The Quaker missionaries also segregated men and women for religious instructions and membership classes.

The missionaries also made a clear distinction between the role of women and that of men within the church structure. While it was impressed upon men to be leaders of the church, women were prepared for conversion and to evangelize fellow women, and as Christian mothers they had to create an atmosphere within the home, which would nurture the family into Christian growth. The story of Maraga from Kaimosi is helpful in illustrating this fact and it is representative of many women of her time.

Maria Maraga, the daughter of Magumba, came from Bumbo, a village adjacent to Kaimosi, the first Quaker mission which was established in August 1902. She came to Kaimosi mission station in November 1902 three months after it was started. In a

⁵²¹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 113.

⁵²² *Fifteen Years in East Africa*, Richmond, Ind: AFBFM, 1917. 9.

biography of her husband it is recorded that she came to the mission station because she was running away from a forced marriage.⁵²³ But according to her testimony she came to the mission because she wanted to learn.

When I was a girl, I used to long to go to the school too. I could hear the boys singing and reciting but my parents forbid me to go. Finally after weeks, I determined I could just go anyway. So I rushed down and sat there on the earthen floor and tried to sing with them. Other girls joined me after that and even though our parents beat us we continued to go.⁵²⁴

Her testimony as to why and how she came to the mission station is borne out by 'her-story' read at her funeral on the 19th of November 1956 and some of the speeches which were given.⁵²⁵ Both in her testimony and in 'her-story' nothing is said about her running away from a forced marriage, but the mission stories of this period treated all women who came to the mission as running away from a forced marriage. This justified their move to marry the girls off to the early converts rather than giving them education as they did to the men.

Maraga was the first girl to come to the station and she was followed by Khahombi the daughter of Namudeya, Jindia daughter of Mahajikha and Murini daughter of Magumba.⁵²⁶ When Maraga came to the mission station she worked as a house girl to Edgar Hole and was married in 1903 to Daudi Lung'aho. In 1905 Maraga and Lung'aho were accepted into membership of the Quaker church. Maraga became the first convert from Tiriki and first woman convert to Quakerism in East Africa Quaker church.⁵²⁷ As a pioneer, Maraga served her community as a Christian mother and an evangelist

As a mother Maraga brought up a family of nine children as well as caring for those who were orphaned. Her home became a home for girls who wanted to become Christians. She trained them both in Christian faith and Christian motherhood. It has been noted that most pioneer Quaker men met their wives in the house of Maraga

⁵²³ Ganira, *Daudi Lunga 'ho*, 9.

⁵²⁴ Hoyt, *We were*, 36.

⁵²⁵ Kaimosi Office: '*History Yu Mushere Musaanji FAM Yearly Meeting. Maria Maraga Lung'aho Mukhaana wu Khuranga Wa Magumba*' Nov. 19.1956.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ KNA: FAIM report, 1905.

and most couples received good counsel from Maraga and her husband Lung'aho.⁵²⁸ For instance Maraga's sisters Mariamu Inyanje got married to chief Paul Amiani and Labeka Amigidzi got married to Yohana Amugune. Both these couples were prominent in the spread of Quaker Christianity in the pioneer years.

During her life Maraga was not only an exemplary mother, and not only had she the gift of evangelism but her whole life was a testimony of her faith to the people around her.⁵²⁹ She understood her community well and she was able to demonstrate what it meant to be a Christian during her time. She led the women in Kaimosi to eat *engoko*, as we have already seen, breaking the taboo which supported and enforced their subordination. Her close relationship with the wives of the missionaries introduced her to western ideals of marriage that were being put across as Christian. She became instrumental in teaching the women how to be Christian mothers as the missionaries taught her. But she did not rely on the missionary teaching alone. She also used her Tiriki knowledge to establish her home and help others to do the same. Maraga's role as a pioneer Quaker woman is evidence of the nature of life for women of her time.

Women like Maraga, under the supervision of the wives of the missionaries, did the bulk of mission work for women. But information about these women and their contribution is inadequate because their stories are either not told or when they are told do not give a full picture. Maraga's story is an exception because she was married to a man whom the mission used a great deal and perceived as a pioneer. But other women, like Kadenge and Mugonja, we know little about because of the way their stories are told. For instance we are not told where Kadenge and Mugonja came from, or who their parents were. They are not mentioned in official records, and the only information we have of them is from a private letter.⁵³⁰ This is another example of how the work of individual women was not considered as worthy of mention as that of men.

Kadenge was among the first girls to come to the mission station at Vihiga after the arrival of Deborah and Emory Rees. Deborah Rees provided her with a dress but

⁵²⁸ Ganira, *Daudi Lung'aho*, 26.

⁵²⁹ KNA: Alta Hoyt, personal report, 1911.

⁵³⁰ KNA: Deborah Rees, letter to Friends, 12th March. 1907.

before long there was an outbreak of smallpox in the area and Kadenge was among those who were affected and she could not come to the station while she was ill. She stayed away until she recovered from the disease and then returned to the mission station. She wanted to stay and work at the mission station on condition that she was allowed to bring a friend with her. She was allowed to bring a friend whose name is not mentioned. These two girls became Christians and initiated cottage prayers in Maragoli with the young men who had also become Christians

Mugonja was significant in Malava as an adviser to Edna Chilson with regard to evangelism among women and girls. When Mugonja had become a Christian, a man who was not a Christian wanted to marry her but she did not agree. Her father insisted that she should get married to this man but Mugonja ran to the mission station for help. At first the Chilsons were reluctant to help her in case the issue became a hindrance to their work of evangelism. Their mission station at Malava had been set up at the invitation of Chief Standa and they did not wish to do anything which might incur his disapproval and so make their work impossible. Chief Standa was keen that his people become readers. Since he wished to support Chilson, he decided to help Mugonja so the way was opened for the Chilsons to provide shelter for her.⁵³¹ After this Mugonja learnt to read and she became an evangelist to women and girls.

When the women missionaries worked with Abaluyia women, they used activities that they were familiar with such as women's meetings, sewing sessions and visiting the sick in the community. As early as 1907, three years after the arrival of the first women missionaries, there were already in three stations Kaimosi, Vihiga and Liranda separate women's prayer groups. The women missionaries used these opportunities to learn about Abaluyia women, to test their language skills by having conversation with Luyia women. Most of the women missionaries were teachers or nurses. Their form of evangelism was not public and they rarely worked among Abaluyia men outside the institutions, such as schools or hospitals. Women's work was marginalised from mission work, and was seen as complementary but not equal.

⁵³¹ KNA: Arthur Chilson, Letter to friends, 29th April 1919.

6.3 SEPARATE MEETINGS: SUNDAY, HALHAMISI and IJUMAA

Separate meeting for women and men began with Sunday afternoon services. Sunday for the early Abaluyia Quakers was a set aside for services. There were three services each Sunday and converts were expected to attend. Two of these services were in the morning and one in the afternoon. The first service was held early in the morning and it included a few songs, prayers and a homily by one of the village elders. After this service everybody went home except the young people who went to the villages to summon people to come to the church during the midmorning when the second service took place.⁵³² The second service was longer because it included worship and business. Part of the business was reading letters from congregations seeking wives for their young men and issues of church structure.⁵³³ The afternoon service dealt with the discipline of Christians, and members were expected to share their personal testimonies with the rest of the group. Since the service dealt with personal lives, men and boys met separately from girls and women so that sharing was easier for each group.

If during the sharing, a member was found not to be living up to the Christian life as defined by the group, he or she appeared before the church elders and a cause of action was taken against him or her. Failure to live up to the Christian faith as laid down in the regulations meant that one was put under discipline by the elders. The Sunday afternoon meetings for women were led by the wives of the missionaries but if a woman was found with fault she also appeared before the church elders who were exclusively male.

The Sunday afternoon meetings decreased as more people became Christians and a proper church structure had been set up for dealing with issues of faith. But for women the Sunday afternoon meeting was shifted to a midweek meeting because, in the words of Mwenesi, 'we wanted to meet and discuss aspects of our faith and lives without feeling inhibited by the presence of men.'⁵³⁴ While in the Sunday afternoon meetings the purpose was to help members with matters of faith, in the midweek

⁵³² Enisi Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996; Daudi Kadenge Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

⁵³³ The tradition of reading letters seeking for wives is no longer practised as young men and women have other ways of meeting and preparing for marriage and the church gets involved in reading the marriage bans.

meetings the scope was widened to include issues such as marriage, the discipline of children and problems arising from the relationship between men and women in Christian marriage.

Midweek meetings were named after the day of the week they took place. In most places they were known as *Halhamisi* (Thursday) or *Ijumaa* (Friday) and they exist to this day. These meetings were organised on an informal basis with women making their own rules and regulations. There was no external attempt from male elders or missionaries to impose order or structure to the meetings. The women met for prayer, devotion evangelism and to give each other support over the challenges they were facing as pioneer Christians especially on some of the policies of the church. For instance the church put a ban on brewing and drinking beer, but with no consideration given to the consequences of the ban for women.

It was a wifely duty to brew beer for her husband whenever he commanded. In the early years of mission activity a number of cases of wife- beating occurred because Christian women, following the missionaries admonitions, refused to brew bear for their husbands who saw this as a breach of her traditional duties toward him. But Chief Amiani came to the rescue of the women. When Christian women were brought to him and accused of not brewing beer for their husbands he acquitted them and instead fined those husbands who beat their Christian wives because they refused to brew beer.⁵³⁵

Through the prayer groups, women were able to find support and encouragement for each other and to face the conflicts between their domestic duties and the church. As well as giving women support, the separate meetings were very active and successful in gaining converts to the church and yet there was little or no attempt to integrate these meetings into the church structure. There seems to have been a divided opinion concerning the extent to which these meetings could be integrated even though some missionaries recognised that the groups were good for keeping the enthusiasm of converts high.

By not being integrated into the church structure, women were marginalised. Being marginal on one hand gave women the freedom to express themselves without feeling inhibited by the male presence or a set church structure. But on the other hand being marginal reinforced the patriarchal system, which denied women equal

⁵³⁴ Lenah Mwenesi, Oral Interview, 9/1/1996.

⁵³⁵ Sangree, *Age Prayer and Politics*, 135.

participation in the church as a whole. But during this period a prayer group was better than nothing since it gave women an opportunity to be in solidarity with each other and an identity in the church.

6.3.1 ESTHER FORD AND THE GROWTH OF PRAYER GROUPS.

The separate prayer groups for women which had started in the main mission centers like Kaimosi, Vihiga, Liranda, Malava and Lugulu consecutively, because of the presence of missionary wives, began to spread out to the village churches. The wives of the missionaries still co-ordinated these prayer groups but Helen Farr Ford became the key figure in these prayer groups. This was because her husband, Jefferson Ford became the superintendent of FAM in 1914. Farr and Ford were stationed at Lugulu, but as superintendent Ford had to visit all the Monthly Meetings in FAM and while he did this Farr used the opportunity to visit the women's groups.

In 1931 Helen Farr Ford died leaving the women's groups under the care of those wives of the missionaries who were already busy with either teaching or nursing in the mission stations. In 1932 Esther Ford the daughter of Helen and Jefferson Ford, returned from the United States after finishing her studies to stay with her widowed father. Like her mother she began to visit with the women's groups while her father did his work as a superintendent. It is during these visits that she discovered that although women had separate prayer groups they were not catered for in regard to bible teaching as the men were.

Early in the regular visits to the monthly meetings with my father I was impressed with the need of the women. The men, especially those, who are teachers or elders, have had opportunity for special courses of study at Kaimosi, but not the women. So it has come to my chief concern during the year to give as many women as possible an opportunity for Bible classes. The aim in this had been to give Christ's principles for some home and family life and to encourage service.⁵³⁶

Since the leadership of the churches was viewed as men's work, Bible training was given to them more than women. In order to help the women, Esther Ford devised a Bible study plan through which the needs for all the women would be met and not just a selected few. She decided to train leaders from each monthly meeting who would in turn share with the other women.

⁵³⁶ KNA: Esther Ford, Women's work, 1933.

The response to this was encouraging as the monthly meetings produced their own leaders to help with Bible study. These leaders met with Esther Ford, to go through Bible study notes, which she had prepared beforehand and she guided them through. After the meeting the leaders went away to conduct the Bible study groups in their *Halhamisi/Ijumaa* meetings. Each Bible study was composed of a text, a theme and an application. After each Bible study the group leader compiled a report which she sent to Esther Ford before the next lesson was due.

This was a form of what in modern times is known as 'Theological Education by Extension', which is designed for all members of the church. The different women's meetings were exhorted to use the Bible as a guide for their daily living, something that they would not receive from the main church teaching which had little time for Bible study and for women in any case. It not only boosted their self-esteem as women but it also gave them strength to live their day to day lives which were full of stressful situations. The Bible study groups empowered the women with leadership skills, which were not being utilised by the main church. The multiplicity of the Bible study groups and the number of women who attended them was in itself an encouragement to Esther Ford.

The record service was the first at Mbale when 400 women waited an hour while I was stuck in the mud driving over. However the response in regular classes has been greatest in the northern monthly meetings where the women are less advanced. There they seem glad of an opportunity for testimony and prayer as well as study unembarrassed by the presence of men⁵³⁷.

At the end of 1933 there were ninety-five Bible study groups for women even though there were difficulties such as illnesses, distance in travel, lack of proper supervision and a high level of illiteracy. Despite these difficulties the women were determined to continue with their meetings because they were able to share with one another in a way that they could not in the company of men. It is through the Bible study groups that women found the courage to raise issues both spiritual and material, which affected them, and they also sought for ways and means to deal with those issues. These meetings also became places to encourage women with leadership skills to participate more in public gatherings such as the NPC, which were held annually:

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

From backward Kakalelwa a leader of the class was quite prominent among the women in the African prayer conference at Vihiga. She also stood before the large crowd at the Christmas service and led her group in a Bible study.⁵³⁸

It is unfortunate that such women were not identified by name even if their presence had been felt in the conferences. They were recognised as women but the fact that their names were left out is evident of a one sided story of the development of the church during this period. The women's prayer groups were encouraged and enhanced when they were linked up with an ecumenical prayer league in Kenya.

There is a prayer bond among African women of most missions in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda. The notes for the leaflet with Bible lessons and subject for prayer for four meetings a month come to me in English and I translate them to Luragooli.⁵³⁹

Even though Esther Ford's work with women was significant and was producing results it was short lived because of protocol and male entrenchment. Some of the missionaries did not approve of her taking over from her mother without being sent out by the mission board. Because she was living and working with her father who was a veteran missionary, the other missionaries interpreted this as Ford's authoritarianism being turned into nepotism. In a second letter to the mission Board about Esther Ford's issue Dr. Bond said:

I think I did not just say what I intended to in regard to Esther Ford's relation to the mission. What I meant to say was that, as far as the present situation is concerned, it would be a more workable arrangement if she were a member of the mission than is the present arrangement. I was merely contemplating the present and not the future. She is here working in the mission. She made a report of her work at the annual meeting, which was recognised in the minutes. Her work is recognised and spoken of in committees from time to time, yet she is not a member of the mission nor is she responsible to that body. As it would appear that we should be grateful for all the help, which we can get perhaps, am the more disturbed by the situation because it appears so unethical to me. However I have now made my concern known to you and I feel sure that you understand the situation, the changing of which will be most difficult just now even if desirable.⁵⁴⁰

The facts that are raised about Esther Ford's status in FAM are genuine as far as matters of policy were concerned, but given the context, the underlying factors were the poor relationship between the old and young missionaries in the field at the time. The veteran missionaries like Ford who was Esther's father could not see anything

⁵³⁸ KNA: Jefferson Ford, Evangelistic department. 1933.

⁵³⁹ KNA: Alta Hoyt, personal report, *Lisaala lia avakali va* (Prayer League for) *FAM*, 1938.

⁵⁴⁰ KNA: Letter from Dr. Bond to the FUM Secretary dated 30th June 1934.

wrong in his daughter doing mission work. Even if there was a policy regarding who should serve and how they should serve in a mission field, most veteran missionaries took little or no notice of such. But young missionaries were concerned about issues to do with policy and attitudes which missionaries seemed to portray in the mission field. The 1930s were particularly difficult years in the Quaker mission field in terms of relationship between young and veteran missionaries.⁵⁴¹

The case of Esther Ford can be used to show the discontentment among the missionaries themselves and not the interaction between missionaries and Abaluyia. . The young missionaries were trying to avoid nepotism in the mission field, which they saw coming from the veteran missionaries. It is fair to say that missionary work could not be inherited, and Esther Ford seemed to be doing that by taking over the place of her mother.

6.3.2 FROM PRAYER GROUPS TO REGIONAL MEETING 1935-1945

Even though Esther Ford stopped working with women for the sake of peace among missionaries, the women's *Halhamisi* and *Ijumaa* prayer groups did not stop. By the middle of the 1930's women did not only have *Halhamisi* and *Ijumaa* prayer groups but in some places they had a separate Sunday morning service as well. The midweek meetings were for prayer, Bible study and teachings on various aspects of family life, but the Sunday meetings were meetings of worship led by women for women. So in a given month the Sundays were between the main meetings and the women's meetings.

In 1935 Helen Kersely Ford⁵⁴² arrived in Kenya, with the intention of working with women who by this time did not have any overall leader but they still carried on their meetings. But it was not possible for her to work with women because she was appointed to be in charge of the GBS at Kaimosi. Her interest in work with women remained and while she served at the GBS, she co-ordinated the Bible study notes

⁵⁴¹ KNA: DR. A.A. Bond personal report, 1934; Margaret Parker personal report. 1934.

⁵⁴² Helen Kersley Ford was a missionary in Jamaica and she married Jefferson Ford on 18.9.1934 after the death of his first wife, Helen Farr Ford.

and the prayer letter, which for her was the only possible way to contribute to the women's work.⁵⁴³

Kersely did not have time to meet with the women's leaders to instruct them about the study notes or be with them sometime but she longed to do this.

This week I learnt that the Scottish mission is releasing their best young woman from school, that she may give full time to the women and the girls of the whole mission, my own heart yearns to have again that same opportunity among our women and girls. The few times I have been able to meet with them out in the district I have been impressed with the need and with their responsiveness to practical suggestions. Needs, which have come from appalling numbers are - how can a Christian wife live in peace with a backslidden husband who has taken a second wife? How to care for their children so that they will choose to become Christians early.⁵⁴⁴

Her only chance to visit the women was while Jefferson Ford was examining the candidates for church membership in the Monthly Meetings. During these visits she was able to listen to the women and hear some of the issues that affected them as wives and mothers. In the 1930's and the 1940's issues regarding marriage and family life were very strong because of emigrant labour and the Second World War. The women were trying to put into practice what the missionaries had taught them about Christian families but the situation was proving difficult for women.

Despite the needs of women, there was little attention given to the women's work because of lack of staff. However this did not deter women from joining the church in large numbers, as noted in 1939 by Doctor Bond.

Even though the number of new members was about average, the number of men and boys was lower while the number of women and girls was on the increase. The unfortunate thing is that these women take a less active role in church affairs leaving the business of the meetings in the hands of elderly men.⁵⁴⁵

The period between 1939 and 1945 was a difficult one for women and with most men being away at work or in the army, they needed to be in solidarity with one another to cope with the difficult situation. It is in this connection that the administration observed that for women the church provided a relief from the 'staleness of despondency' which resulted from the increased hardships of the war.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ KNA: Helen K Ford, Personal report, 1935.

⁵⁴⁴ KNA: Helen K. Ford, Personal report, 1944.

⁵⁴⁵ Kaimosi Office: Doctor A.A. Bond, Report from the south District, 1945.

⁵⁴⁶ KNA: AGRI/1, Kakamega, 1942. District.

It was not the church institution that gave women hope but the church provided an avenue through which they would seek redress of their situation for themselves.

In 1943 Helen Ford was released to work with women on a full-time basis after the arrival of Dorothy Pitman who took over the work of GBS. While women were without a co-ordinator for their work, they had realised how marginalised they were in a church where they were in the majority. There was already a move to establish a Yearly Meeting in the area that was covered by FAM. For fear of being marginalised even more, the women began to press for their own annual gathering in order to create for themselves a space within the patriarchal system of the church. The task for Helen Ford was to prepare the women for their own annual gathering if she was going to be their co-ordinator.

The task of having all women from FAM for an annual gathering was not feasible during this time but the women were determined to see that it was realised. Rather than bringing all the women together for the annual gathering, the women agreed to have two annual gatherings one for the women from the north and the other for women from the south and have representatives from each part attending. In 1944, two years before EAYM, there were two regional gatherings for the women. One was in the south at Vihiga and the other was in the North at Chwele.

These conferences were structured as the annual Native Prayer Conferences which were attended by both men and women. The women's regional conferences took five days with Bible readings, lessons on nutrition and family life. The leadership of these gatherings was with senior women, while the younger women, some of whom were graduates of GBS, gave lessons on health and nutrition. With the beginning of the regional annual gathering the number of weekly groups increased to 212 with 45 to 60 women each. Helen Ford was encouraged by the way women were conducting these meetings,

In many meetings the older women are using younger women as secretaries or helpers as they all read and write better. It is gratifying to see a number of former GBS girls in this way and other ways. In a few of the monthly meetings the women are taking more part in the business of the meeting. I look forward to the time when they can do it with real intelligence and spiritual discernment. Leadership in their own meeting is a preparation for a larger service.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁷ Kaimosi Office: Helen Ford, Personal report, 1944.

In 1945 the two regional conferences gathered again for their annual conferences and Maria Atiamuga from Vihiga and Rasoah Mutua from the Lugulu emerged as key leaders.⁵⁴⁸ The women from Lugulu had requested Mutua to be their co-ordinator. Apart from Atiamuga and Mutua, other leaders from the monthly meetings were identified and a committee was formed to act as a reference group for the women's meeting, especially with the establishment of EAYM in 1946.⁵⁴⁹

6.4 THE WOMEN'S YEARLY MEETING

In 1946 EAYM was established so that Abaluyia Quakers could be in charge of the affairs of the church and the fears of the women were fully realised. Even though they had participated in the preparation for Yearly Meeting, they were completely left out of its major roles.⁵⁵⁰ The leadership of the yearly meeting was exclusively male, chosen on the basis of ethnicity, with a few token women appointed to two boards - the permanent board of Yearly Meeting and the Preachers' board.⁵⁵¹

The boards, such as finance and education, which were equally important, were exclusively male. Even though two boards had women representatives, they do not appear in the records of the subsequent meetings of these boards. The fact that they do not appear in the records of the subsequent meetings is an indication that either they were not regular attendants or they were written out of the records: an issue that this thesis picks up in chapter seven.

⁵⁴⁸ Both Maria Atiamuga and Rasoah Mutua will be discussed in detail in chapters seven and eight of this thesis to show the position of women in the leadership of EAYM.

⁵⁴⁹ Kaimosi Office: Maria Wakhuli, Rachel Wangwe, Rasoah Litwaji, Agnes Egesa, Elizabeth Gavale, Ziporah Ababu, Maria Lung'aho, Elizabeth Lubumbasi, Rabeka Amugune, Maria Alenga, Rhoda Gilwani. These women came from the monthly meetings, which were already in existence. Chwele, Lugulu, Malava, Chebyusi, Liranda, Musingu, Kaimosi, Vokoli, Kyavakali, Vihiga, Munzazi.

⁵⁵⁰ In preparations for the yearly meeting, women in the northern region embarked on two projects. The first task was in relation to the church and the other one was in relation to the women's meetings. For the first task the women decided to set aside their midweek offering in order to buy a reading desk for the new church as they prepared for the inauguration of the yearly meeting. The women from Lugulu presented this reading desk to the quarterly meeting just before the yearly meeting conference. During the presentation the elder who received the desk on behalf of the church is quoted to have said that 'he would not have believed that women could do a thing like this until he saw it with his own eyes'. Apart from the reading desk, the women pledged to pay for the twenty-two windows of the new building.

⁵⁵¹ Kaimosi Office: These are the names that appear in record, These women were Rasoah Mutua, Ester Olindo, Rachel Luvale, and Susan Muhambe in the yearly meeting board and Rabeka Nasibwondi, Maria Atiamuga and Debra Lumonye in the preachers' board.

Apart from the women being excluded from the main leadership, EAYM appointed a committee of women and chose its office bearers. The office bearers were Rabeka Amugune as presiding clerk, Raheli Wangwe the vice presiding clerk and Selina Kaptain the secretary.⁵⁵² As well as the office bearers the members of the women's committee were also elected and they were the leaders of the Women's Monthly Meetings.⁵⁵³ The missionary in charge of the women's organisation was Alice Barnett who was stationed at Liranda.

The establishment of the women's committee with a leadership during the formation of EAYM raises some questions, which cannot be answered easily although they shed some light on the delicate situation for women in EAYM. First, was EAYM imposing leaders on the women? Second was EAYM giving recognition to the women's meeting but at the same time controlling them? Although the subsequent reactions from the women do not give conclusive answers to these questions they shed some light on the tensions between EAYM and the Women's Meetings.

The appointment of a leadership committee for women by EAYM in 1946 gave them an impetus to press for their own yearly meeting to augment their annual regional meetings. In her last meeting with the women, Helen Ford encouraged them to continue with their meetings until such time as they should attain a Women's Yearly Meeting. This, she said, would help them to relate with other Women's Yearly Meetings in the United States through the United Society of Friends Women (USFW).⁵⁵⁴ It took time before a Women's Yearly Meeting was attained and then associated with the USFW. The women continued to meet in the regional meetings which were getting better and stronger each year as Alice Barnett observes.

A local committee is appointed to preside at the sessions. These women conducted the service in a very commendable way. Perhaps you can imagine the responsibility they have if you knew that with these large groups there are

⁵⁵² Unlike the main yearly meeting where the ethnic composition was significant for leadership, the committee for women did not have that as an aspect of consideration. The three women leaders were elected on the basis of their experience and participation in the meetings rather than the ethnic group to which they belonged. They came from the monthly meetings of Chavakali, Lugulu and Bokoli.

⁵⁵³ Kaimosi Office: Maria Alenga, Maria Lungaho, Rasoah Lidwaji, Eliz Livumbaze, Robai Masambu, Dinah Mukaye, Sabeti Kagehi, Ester Budaka, Selina Musungu, Maria Litu, Miriam Midenyu, Rasoah Lidwaji, Maria Naliaga, Enis Mugesia, Eliza Malova. The monthly meeting which were represented are Vihiga, Kaimosi, Chebaywa, Vokoli, Chwele, Munzatsi, Liranda, Musungu, Chebyusi, Mbale, Chavavo, Malava, Kabuyefwe, Kyanchere and Bware.

⁵⁵⁴ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview, 12/1/1996.

many who have never before attended such a gathering. Secondly, they are so eager to learn that when a new fact is presented they frequently have to discuss it with those sitting next to them. You must know that there is a very small number of these women who have ever been to school or can either read well or write. Sometimes the task of keeping things quiet requires the skill, of a statesman.⁵⁵⁵

It was the small number of literate women who with the support of the majority worked towards the formation of a Women's Yearly Meeting. Rachel Sabwa who was among the organisers remembers how difficult it was to attend some of the committee meetings at Shamberere to discuss and make plans for the Yearly Meetings. With poor transport, it meant spending a night beside the road to arrive home the following day. For some women it created problems in their families but on the whole most of the women were determined to see that the plans succeeded.⁵⁵⁶

Although women were keen to have a separate Yearly Meeting, most men were opposed to the idea. Some of the men opposed a separate Yearly Meeting because they feared it was going to create *ebidieri* (divisions).⁵⁵⁷ But divisions already existed because women had separate meetings both on the local and regional levels. Others argued that even though Quakers had had Separate Women's Yearly Meetings, most of them had been abolished and merged with the main meeting; thus there was no need to have such a division in EAYM.⁵⁵⁸ Most fears for a separate Women's Yearly Meeting were financial and this is what was being discussed even after the formation of the Yearly Meeting.

If they [women] were going to have their own Yearly Meeting, would that mean that their financial contribution would be divided into two so that both EAYM and their Yearly Meeting are supported equally? Or would they cease to support EAYM and instead support their Yearly Meeting? After the discussion it was agreed that women support both meetings⁵⁵⁹

Such a decision was an imposition on women because the membership of the board did not have a proportionate representation. In fact from the list of attendants there were three women among fifty-seven men. According to Nasibwondi who attended

⁵⁵⁵ KNA: Alice Barnet, reports on women's work, 1947.

⁵⁵⁶ Rachel Sabwa, Oral Interview, 30/1/1996.

⁵⁵⁷ Lena Mwenesi Oral Interview, 12/1/1996; Mwenesi uses the term '*ebidieri*' to mean groups, which are antagonistic to each other. In this case men saw women as wanting to form a group of their own, which will antagonise the main yearly meeting.

⁵⁵⁸ Hezekia Ngoya, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996.

⁵⁵⁹ Kaimosi Office: Minute 81/53, Sh 1/ -ya *Vakali*. (one shilling contribution by the women)

some of the boards of this period but not this one, little note was taken of what the women said if they were given a chance to speak, otherwise their voices were swallowed among the males voices.⁵⁶⁰

It is the fact of not being heard or being excluded that women were raising when they asked for a separate Yearly Meeting. It never occurred to the men that women were underrepresented in the bodies that made decisions for the Yearly Meeting. Instead of confronting the system so that they were given equal representation, they chose to use the politics of the weak by asking to be separated from the system. Even though this would give them the freedom of expression in their own space, it was not going to change the thinking of the men about them. In real sense the women were marginalising themselves even more.

Despite these shortcomings women were given the go ahead for a Separate Yearly meeting in 1951 and they had their first annual conference in December 1952 at Chwele, attended by women from all parts of EAYM. During this conference the women decided upon the structure of their Yearly Meeting. It was similar to the EAYM in terms of leadership with two presiding clerks, two secretaries, and two treasurers. The first leaders were Rabeka Amigitsi Amuguni⁵⁶¹, Rhoda Standa, Enisi Khaguli, Leah Ganira, Rachel Sabwa and Rachel Mukoro.⁵⁶² Looking at the leadership of the Women's Yearly Meeting it cuts across age, educational background and ethnic differences. For example the presiding clerk Amigitsi was one of the pioneer Quaker women and her assistant Standa was a graduate of GBS.

⁵⁶⁰ Rebecca Nasibwondi, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996.

⁵⁶¹ Chavakali: Historia ya Rabeka Amigidzi Amugune 1889 -1971. MS held by her son Japheth Amugune. (This story was compiled by the members of her family and it was read during her funeral).

Amigidzi was one of the earliest converts to the Quaker faith. She was the daughter of Magumba from Kaimosi the first Quaker mission station. She came to the mission station in 1903 and lived there. She was among the first women to accept the ways of the white people. She put away the traditional costumes and wore western clothes. This was something that she encouraged other women to do. Like the men who were at the mission station Rabeka was converted to the Quaker faith and registered in 1906. In 1909 Rabeka was married to Yohana Amugune in 1909 and in 1912 she was confirmed as a member of Book two which made her a full member in the Quaker church. She is known to have been the first woman to eat chicken in Maragoli something that women were forbidden to do. She also helped other women to reject traditional ways of life that were not in line with the Christianity taught at the time. In 1916 she was elected to be a counsellor in the church at Chavakali in order to help newly converted Christians to grow up in faith. In 1946 Rabeka Amugune was elected as the leaders of the women's meetings of EAYM.

⁵⁶² Enis Khaguli left the Quaker Church and joined the Pentecostal Church in 1953.

What is worthy of note here is some of these women were wives of some of the leaders in EAYM and this did raise some issues as concerns the relationship between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting.

The women's Yearly Meeting co-ordinated its activities from the mid-week meeting, to Monthly Meeting, Quarterly Meeting and Yearly Meeting. At the Yearly Meeting level, the women held a very successful annual conference at the end of every year. The annual conference was the bond with which women from all parts of EAYM met to empower each other.

6.4.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A YEARLY MEETING.

The formation of Women's Yearly Meeting was a great achievement for women in EAYM. Looking back most of the women would say 'we had come a long way, we had spent time praying and asking until such a time when it was granted to us'.⁵⁶³ The question this section raises why the women's Yearly Meeting was significant, and how did it provide or not provide autonomy for women. It is clear from listening to women that the need for autonomy was very strong among women. According to Leah Ganira.

This assembly was a great inspiration to us all because it provided us with a chance to share different views and experiences pertaining to the role of women in the church and community at large. We invited our guest speakers who would deal with topics ranging from religion to other issues affecting mankind as a whole.⁵⁶⁴

A separate Yearly Meeting for women was a silent protest movement by the women because their involvement in EAYM at the level of decision making was lacking. The women's Yearly Meeting became a space for the women to operate though within the patriarchal structures of EAYM. Although this seems as though the women were using the system to marginalise themselves more, their Yearly Meeting had positive implications for them. We will now look at those positive implications.

6.4.2 FREEDOM TO HEAR WOMEN PREACH AND TEACH.

The first and foremost aim of the Women's Yearly Meeting conference was spiritual renewal and empowerment through preaching and interpreting the Bible. The

⁵⁶³ Rachel Sabwa, Oral Interview, 30/1/1996.

⁵⁶⁴ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview, 16/1/1996.

significance of the Bible-readings in the yearly meeting conferences can not be underestimated, both in the pioneer days and even today. For most women attending an annual conference was a renewal experience for them as delegates to the conference and they will use that experience to renew those who sent them. In each of the conferences, Bible readings, prayers, and the singing of hymns played a significant role as well as teaching on issues that affect women in their daily lives.⁵⁶⁵ For some women the desire for Bible readings seemed to have been stronger than the lessons on child care, nutrition, and family life, even though these lessons were preceded and justified by Biblical texts.⁵⁶⁶

The need for a hermeneutic space for women in the yearly meeting conference was due to women's suspicion that men had interpreted the Bible to suit their own needs. The Quaker literal interpretation of the Bible was used as an instrument to preserve the status quo in EAYM. For women the Bible had been used to justify their roles in society and to deny them access to positions of power.⁵⁶⁷ It is this misuse of the Bible, which women were aware of, and which they sought to redress through their hermeneutic space. Instead of rejecting the Bible as an instrument of subordination, as has been proposed by feminist scholars like Mary Daly, women in EAYM used its prophetic tradition of the Bible for emancipation.⁵⁶⁸ The use of the Bible by women in EAYM is not unique, as even in early Quakerism, Margaret Fell and other early Quaker women had a regular litany of prophetic women and mothers of Israel. This to them was a justification that God had spoken to both men and women and not only to men as they were being taught to believe.⁵⁶⁹

The hermeneutic space that the conferences provided became an avenue for women to seek help and consolation from the burdens of family, community and church life

⁵⁶⁵ The lessons, which were taught at the conferences besides preaching, included nutrition, Christian family life, women and law, women and health.

⁵⁶⁶ Loice Abiria, Oral Interview, 22/12/1995. Abiria recalls that 'when we went to the conference we were delegates from our meetings and the women we represented expected us to come back with verses from the Bible, and new songs which we would share with them. They did not expect us to come back and teach them nutrition, which they were doing everyday.'

⁵⁶⁷ Agneta Igonga, Oral Interview, 10/2/1996.

⁵⁶⁸ Mary Daly, *Beyond God the father, Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, Boston Beacon Press, 1973. *Gyn/Ecology, The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, London: Women's Press, 1991.

⁵⁶⁹ Mary Garman, Judith Applegate, Margaret Benefiel, Dortha Meredith (Eds). *Hidden in Plain Sight: Quaker Women's Writings 1650-1700*, Wallingford, Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill, 1996. 430-440.

which they carried. They expected to hear the good news of liberation from these burdens. In listening to fellow women, they could interpret the Bible readings from a perspective that they identified with, they found the essence of their freedom because they were not condemned for the ills of society but instead the issues were treated as the daily temptations faced by women.⁵⁷⁰ The annual conferences became a source of power for women to deal with the challenges of the patriarchal society.

Apart from the preaching of the word of God, the conference's hermeneutic space provided room for women to express themselves through song and prayer, which were integral to the conference activities. Women expressed themselves well through prayer and song which corresponded to their daily needs in the community. The needs are expressed before God whose grace forgives sin which is the cause of their enslavement, but at the same time it gives them the power to live.⁵⁷¹

As well as the overwhelming grace of God, other songs encouraged women to bring the burdens of children and family to Jesus who is able to help them with those burdens. Jesus not only liberates them but also gives them the power to live day by day. The hermeneutic space at the conference gave women a stronger sense and view of liberation as an ongoing event. Liberation was not treated as a once and for all event through the death of Jesus Christ, but as a daily requirement because women live in and with oppression. The promise of this liberation is found in the prophetic tradition of the Bible and that is why it became an important tool for women in their conferences.

The hermeneutic space offered by the conference provided room for women to express themselves without feeling embarrassed. For example expression through tears was in itself liberation and it was considered part of the empowering process. The hermeneutic space provided room for women to receive counselling. There

⁵⁷⁰Kaimosi Office: The annual report of the Women's Yearly Meeting conference. 1965 held at Mbale. The theme of the conference was taken from Ephesians 5:6. Speaking at the conference, Rachel Lishindu said, 'today's women are tempted in many ways by advertisements of alcohol, tobacco and false medicines at the shops and in newspapers, by men while their husbands are working in the towns and who are home only a few days of the year. Young women are tempted in various ways when they go into the city to look for employment. Our children give us a lot of problems when they think that with education they are qualified to know the answers of all problems of life. As Quaker women we should stand firm and keep to the teachings which have been given to us. We should join hands in self-help groups, so that we support each other as a family.'

⁵⁷¹ *Tsinyimbu Tsyas Nyasaye*, Kisumu: EAYM 1966. Number 70.

would be older women present who had experience of the problems which the younger ones were living through, and could give support and counsel, and this is still the case today. The hermeneutic space is both spiritual and physical because there is room for expression. As well as counselling, the women were helped through the testimonies of others.⁵⁷²

It is in this connection that, in her study on Christology and an African woman's experience, Nasmiyu has observed that, it is Christ who affects the whole of life because his presence is felt in every corner of the village and he participates in everything and everybody's daily life. It is Christ who takes on the conditions of the African woman – the conditions of weakness, misery, injustice and oppression.⁵⁷³

6.4.3 LEADERSHIP AUTONOMY.

In EAYM, women were excluded from leadership, thus having little to do with effecting changes even on issues that affected them. But in the Women's Yearly Meeting the women were able to lead themselves and raise issues which they could not in the general Yearly Meeting. Some of the major decisions would be made during the annual conference and for this some of the men felt they should be there. But because they could not attend the conferences as delegates they justified their going in order to protect the women on their journey. But the real reason why they wanted to accompany the women to the annual conferences or sit in other meetings was to hear what the women said or because they wished to continue to have influence over the women's deliberations.

It took the courage of another man to stop the men from attending the women's conferences as delegates.

In a conference which took place at Lwanda Isukha, in December 1958, I asked the men to leave the conference after seeing that women had arrived safely something which really upset the men who had accompanied the women and wanted to stay on for the conference. The women had to be left alone to get on with the conference without having to accommodate the men in their deliberations.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² Kigama women's Annual Conference 17th to 20th December 1995, Kisumu women's Annual conference 15th to 19th December 1995. Liranda Triennial Conference 18th to 21st April 1996.

⁵⁷³ Anne Nasmiyu Wasike 'Christology and an African Woman's Experience' in J.N.K.Mugambi and Laurenti Magesa (Eds), *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology*, Nairobi: Initiatives Ltd. 1989. 131.

⁵⁷⁴ Thomas Lungaho, Oral Interview, 3/3/ 1996.

Even though the men were stopped from attending the Women's Yearly Meeting conference it did not mean that they stopped interfering with the separate meetings of women, as Herbert Kimball observed.

In every Monthly Meeting there is a women's meeting. These meetings are well attended and regular. They have the problem of sometimes being run by men who do not believe in the ability of women, but there is a consciousness in the women that they must run their own Meetings.⁵⁷⁵

Despite the interference the separate meetings developed into a structure that was coherent from the *Halhamisi/Ijumaa* meetings to Yearly Meeting. In EAYM therefore there were two Meetings running parallel with each other even if this was not the way they were supposed to be. The Women's Yearly Meeting was supposed to be inside EAYM as its daughter and thus behave like one in regard to making decisions because all their decisions had to be ratified by EAYM. While this was the case on one level it was not the way the women perceived themselves. For most of them they did not think they were to behave like daughters of EAYM. They were keen instead to develop a relationship one of equals.

Even though the structure of the Women's Meetings was similar to the structure of EAYM, the women lacked an administrative secretary and a general superintendent. In EAYM these offices were held by two men who were based at the central office in Kaimosi.⁵⁷⁶ Furthermore the Women's Yearly Meeting did not have its own constitution but it was expected to conform to the constitution of EAYM. If they had written their own constitution independent of EAYM, it could have led to a creation of a complete separate Yearly Meeting which would have challenged the structure, administration and spiritual leadership of EAYM. In the event the women decided against it.

In 1965 the Women's Yearly Meeting raised an issue with EAYM about a woman co-ordinator. This woman was to act as their administrator but they did not use that term in case it was misunderstood. After several years EAYM in conjunction with the United Society of Friends Women in the United States, managed to get the first

⁵⁷⁵ Kaimosi Office: Herbert Kimball, 'Concerns about the Church'. 1971. 2.

⁵⁷⁶ The implications of these offices for women in EAYM are analysed in chapters seven and eight of this thesis.

woman co-ordinator.⁵⁷⁷ There was no attempt to create an office for a superintendent because of the issues involved with pastoral work in EAYM which are dealt with in chapter seven of this thesis.

6.4.4 INTERACTION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

One of the reasons why Helen Ford asked the women to press for a separate yearly Meeting was the interaction with the outside world. And after the formation of the Yearly Meeting, women in EAYM were able to do that. In 1960, for example, the women chose Leah Ganira as their representative to the FYM sessions and she was able to demonstrate to other women what it meant to be a Quaker woman in Kenya.⁵⁷⁸ Such a visit was different from letters and reports, which used to be sent by missionaries about women in Kenya. Abigail Indire, who was then a student in the United States, and became a key figure in the Women's Yearly Meeting after her return, also attended the FYM sessions.⁵⁷⁹

When the two women attended the FYM sessions they came into contact with the leaders of USFW and understood the way the organisation was run. After they returned they shared with the Women's Yearly Meeting which took the initiative to ask for affiliation.

The women's groups have shown a desire to affiliate with the United Society of Quaker women in America and plans are under way. This may encourage self-support for the Lords' work in the future under this organisation⁵⁸⁰

Officially the Women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM was not affiliated to the United Society of Friends Women (USFW) of North America until 1967, but they continued to relate to them by having their representatives at international meetings. The affiliation did not cost them money because the women in North America treated it as their contribution to the development of young meetings.⁵⁸¹ The affiliation was significant for Quaker women because they became part of a larger Quaker women's organisation with which they could share information about their work.

⁵⁷⁷ The post of the women's co-ordinator is discussed later in the chapter.

⁵⁷⁸ Madioli: 'My Visit to FUM in 1960'. (Leah Ganira).

⁵⁷⁹ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview, 16/1/1996; Abigael Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁵⁸⁰ Kaimosi Office: Evangelistic and women's work report by Dorothy Pitman, 1962.

⁵⁸¹ Abigael Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

This sharing could have been difficult if it had been done through EAYM. As a Yearly Meeting, the women got involved in both national and international meetings, which were discussing the status of women.⁵⁸² The Women's Yearly Meeting also joined other women world-wide to observe the women's world day of prayer after 1962.⁵⁸³

6.4.5 FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

When the women in EAYM requested a separate Yearly Meeting one of the reasons put forward against it from the men was its financial implications. Financial issues in EAYM were a major source of conflict and they are beyond the scope of this thesis. This section will analyse the financial issues in relation to the Women's Yearly meeting but not those that involved the whole of EAYM.

Even though women did not state it when they requested a separate Yearly Meeting, financial autonomy was one of the reasons why they wished to secede from EAYM. It was known and accepted that women were good at raising funds for the EAYM and for their own Meetings. But women realised that they were not given a chance in making decisions about how these finances were to be used. In fact they were not represented on the board of finance until the 1970's when the treasurer for the Women's Yearly meeting was allowed into the board of finance to report about finances of the women's Yearly Meeting. During the annual conference of EAYM she was asked to give an annual report.

Through a separate Yearly Meeting the women were able to raise their own finances and determine how they would be used. In the initial years of the women's Yearly Meeting, the women's funds were kept together with the funds of EAYM because they did not have a separate bank account. The women assumed that their money

⁵⁸²Kaimosi Office: Melap Wekube and Lena mwenesi were sent to Addis Ababa to attend a conference on the status of the women in Africa from 12th to 23rd, December 1961. When they returned they compiled a report and deposited EAYM office at Kaimosi.

⁵⁸³ Presbyterian women started the Women's day of Prayer in the United States in 1887. Their aim was for women to set aside a day of prayer and personal reflection. Within a short time the idea spread to other denominations and other countries as well. An international committee was formed in 1967 and the aim was globalised. The day of prayer is on the first Friday in March. Countries take the preparation of the theme and prayers for this day in turns. Women meet in their various churches to share their woes and fears, joys and sadness, blessings and needs, they are encouraged to realise that they are part of a large world and therefore should share in the burdens of other people through prayer.

would be kept well and accounted for when they needed it. But the women realised that it was the biggest mistake they ever made as Sabwa recalls.

The men in the Kaimosi office decided to use the money from the Women's Yearly Meeting for EAYM's projects which were never named. When the Women's Yearly Meeting went to get their money to use for their projects [one of them being the annual conference] they were shocked to find that the money was not available. For two years the women did not have an annual gathering, instead they joined in the EAYM's annual conference and they were given one afternoon to meet together and discuss matters which affected them. After this the women decided they were going to have their money separated from the main accounts in Kaimosi.⁵⁸⁴

The financial crisis came as a shock to the women because they were not consulted about their money. EAYM assumed that money brought in by the Women's Yearly Meeting could be used even without consulting the women because they could not bring themselves to ask the women as it would mean lowering their dignity. But there was also a deeper reason for lack of consultation, and this was the secrecy and lack of accountability on the part of EAYM concerning funds altogether. The misuse of funds by EAYM gave rise to bad relations not only between the central office of EAYM and the churches which raised funds for EAYM, but also between EAYM and organisations such as FYM which gave financial support to EAYM. Later there arose conflict within EAYM over this issue.

The financial issue was an epitome of patriarchy in EAYM. Failure to consult women about their money led to a cleft between the Women's Yearly meeting and EAYM. It is in this connection that women rightly demanded financial autonomy even though they still promised to give a contribution to EAYM.

Women are willing to continue with their contributions for the church but this money should be divided between them and the main meetings. That is to say a quarter of the total contribution should be given to EAYM and the rest of the money should be used by the women on their projects and this decision should take effect from this year. The meeting should also think of appointing trustees for the women's finances.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Rachel Sabwa Oral Interview 30/1/1996, The use of the women's finances is acknowledged by some of the men but they do not see why the women raised complaints about it. It is taken for granted that the use of the women's money even without consulting them was in order because it was assumed that men had a say over the finances that women raised.

⁵⁸⁵ Kaimosi Office: *Report ye Committee ya Mavugano ga Avakhali mu East Africa Yearly Meeting 24th August 1960* (The original minutes were in Llogooli but this is the translation.) This meeting is called upon, to discuss how women can set up their own bank account. (1) To plan on how to raise funds for the work of the church but divide it between women's work and EAYM's work. (2) To

The urgency with which the women wanted to act and the fact that they even wanted to appoint trustees for their own money is an indication of their strong sense of autonomy within an institution that had marginalised them. If the women were to be given autonomy EAYM was afraid that it would thereby lose out financially. But in 1961 women gained financial autonomy.

The women have their own bank account and can decide for themselves how their money is to be used. We have tried to stress that this does not take the place of their support of EAYM but is extra, calling for much added effort.⁵⁸⁶

Financial autonomy helped the women to work out ways and means to raise their money and to make decisions on how to spend the money for their meetings. It was the responsibility of the executive committee of the women's meeting to prepare a budget, which was sent out to all women's meetings. Each women's meeting would then work out ways and means for raising the money to meet their quota and send it to the treasurer.⁵⁸⁷ Much of the money raised by the women was donated to girl's schools to develop them as good learning institutions. The women who raised this money had not had a great chance for education but wanted to support the girls' schools for their daughters.⁵⁸⁸ The rest of the money was spent during the annual conferences.

Apart from helping individual educational projects the women agreed to embark on other major projects, which would benefit EAYM as a whole. One of these projects was to put up a church in Kakamega town.⁵⁸⁹ In order to raise money for such a project, the women decided to meet biennially instead of annually to save the intervening conference expense and devote it to the project.⁵⁹⁰ The biennial meeting was welcomed because EAYM realised that the building project would be completed

appoint trustees for the women's meetings. The resolutions of this meeting should be effective from this year.

⁵⁸⁶Kaimosi Office: Dorothy Pitman, 'Evangelistic and womens' work' report to FUM 1961.

⁵⁸⁷ Vokoli Group, Oral interview, 25/2/ 1996.

⁵⁸⁸ The schools that received financial support from the women's meeting are Kaimosi, Lugulu, Liranda, Chwele, Namirama, and Kigama, all these were under the EAYM sponsorship.

⁵⁸⁹ Kakamega Friends church is discussed under the activities of the women's Yearly Meeting later in this chapter.

⁵⁹⁰ Abigaël Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

fast. At the same time a biennial meeting was less of a threat to EAYM than an annual meeting.⁵⁹¹

6.4.6 FREEDOM TO REVIEW SOME OF THE OLD ISSUES.

As well as financial autonomy, the Women's Yearly Meeting gave the women freedom and room to review issues such as bridewealth and polygyny which affected them but had been ignored by EAYM because of the policies that had been enacted about them during the days of the missionaries.⁵⁹² When the policies were being formulated women were never included in the deliberations. Their opinion was never sought even if they were the ones whom the policies affected most. Through their own Yearly Meeting they had the opportunity to voice what they thought about these issues.

In 1965, for example, the women's annual conference looked at the issues surrounding marriage especially bride wealth and polygyny. The participants refused to pretend any longer that these issues were not affecting them as Christians, as they had remained silent during the missionaries period. 1965 was two years after Kenya had become independent both politically and spiritually. The sense of freedom made men react against the paternalism of colonial and missionary policies by doing what was formerly denied to them through a missionary policy. Freedom of movement for both men and women created conditions for polygyny especially in urban areas but no one seemed to question the practice of polygyny. The amount being given, as bridewealth, was also on the increase as more women attained education, which made them expensive for marriage. Both polygyny and bridewealth were issues that affected brides directly and all the womenfolk indirectly.

The silence of the church, however, over bridewealth and polygyny gave the impression that these were no longer issues, not least because there had been regulations governing them. And if they were, the position of the church was clear: polygyny was outlawed for Christians, and bridewealth had to be discussed and negotiated by the families involved. But the reality was different because these regulations had been superseded by events and they were no longer being followed.

⁵⁹¹ Thomas Lungaho, Oral Interview, 12/3/1996.

⁵⁹² *Kitabu kye litanga lya Megidzo Nemiima gyelivugana lya Vafriends*. Friends African Press. 1941.

Moreover, when these policies were passed, women were not consulted. Now the Women's Yearly Meeting brought to the attention of the church elders what was at stake. After their discussion on bridewealth they stressed that:

Church elders should take the initiative to help the families of both parties involved to set a fair dowry, which will be acknowledged as a token, rather than a price. Inexpensive wedding feasts are encouraged rather than expensive ones that bankrupt families⁵⁹³

From this resolution we see that women were not against bridewealth. What they were against was its misuse. What had been laid down, as a rule for bridewealth in the old Book of Discipline was either not followed or it was being manipulated.⁵⁹⁴ It was particularly difficult for young women who were getting married, as most parents were using the freedom to demand extortionate amounts which not only exploited the bridegroom but also led to poor relationship between the families. The daughters in marriage were constantly reminded that so much bridewealth had been paid for them and they had to be perfect in all that they did.⁵⁹⁵

It was the women who were aware of the family problems which arose as a result of high bridewealth and that is why they were calling for a 'fair dowry' based on a gift system rather than on a price. The women did not ask or lobby for a total ban on bridewealth because they were aware that despite its limitations it was the customary means by which women obtained influence in a patriarchal society. According to Lena Mwenesi who chaired the sessions of these meetings, it was the giving of bride wealth, which made a marriage legal.⁵⁹⁶ Even if the women in these meetings were aware of the fact that the church and the state issued marriage certificates to couples after marriage, they did not see that those pieces of paper alone were enough to legalise marriage.

The Women's Yearly Meeting raised the issue of bridewealth in support of the young Friends who had raised it in 1959 at their first conference in Vihiga and forwarded their deliberations to the male church elders.⁵⁹⁷ The church elders however did not

⁵⁹³ Kaimosi Office: The report of the Women's Yearly Meeting held at Mbale December 1965. Resolution 1.

⁵⁹⁴ *Kitabu kye Litanga* 44

⁵⁹⁵ Norah Musundi, Oral Interview, 20/3/1996.

⁵⁹⁶ Lena Mwenesi, Oral Interview, 23/5/199.

⁵⁹⁷ Kaimosi Office: Annual report of EAYM, 1959.

want to change the status quo and as a result shelved it. In this action we can see that they did not want to see either their authority or their control over the relationships between men and women and between young and old challenged for they regarded themselves as the guardians of the morality of society. The role of church elders in this matter was crucial, because they were the ones who had made the regulations and it is they who would make any changes.

In addition to bridewealth, the 1965 conference also passed a resolution on polygyny.

The Christian council of Kenya should be asked to study and make necessary proposals to the government to establish one marriage law, combining the best from the present customary, government, and church laws. A strong recommendation for monogamous marriage is proposed.⁵⁹⁸

The women re-examined polygyny because it was on the increase especially among men who had wealth. These men did not seem to care about the church policy on polygyny. Unlike bridewealth, which the church had regulated and allowed to continue, polygyny was banned for those who professed to be Christians. However those who became Christians while in polygynous marriages were allowed to keep their wives but not take any leadership roles in the church. The position of the woman was vague but it depended on what the man decided to do. The first wife was allowed into full church membership but the subsequent wives were kept on the fringes of the church.

Even though a man who married his first wife as a Christian in the church was barred from further marriages, the women were aware that some of these men still took secondary wives because the customary law made polygyny easy and acceptable. The customary laws defended the needs and structures of that society. Polygyny was one of the customary laws which met particular needs in some marriages. This is why in their resolution the women raised the issue of marriage laws, recommending monogamy rather than condemning polygyny.

In addition to issues regarding marriage, the 1965 women's conference also for the first time discussed initiation rites with special reference to female circumcision and requested that

⁵⁹⁸ Kaimosi Office: The report Women's Yearly Meeting held at Mbale 1965. Resolution 2

The Christian council of Kenya study the values of female circumcision and the ministry of health of the government make recommendations to the people.⁵⁹⁹

The vagueness of this resolution is an indication of two related issues. Firstly, most women in this conference came from areas where this practice did not take place. Secondly, whereas Quakerism in Kenya had started in areas where female circumcision was not widespread, it had now moved into areas where it was and no church had made any attempts to question it. One of these areas was the Kisii district where Quakerism was introduced in 1939 by Avalogoli who had migrated into the district in search of land.⁶⁰⁰ During the initial days the Quakers did not seem to bother about the practice because they saw it as a custom which was practised by another ethnic group and had nothing to do with them. But it was not long before they were faced with the issue as a result of the presence of Abagusii in the church and also intermarriage.

When there was intermarriage between the Gusii men and Luyia women, there was a concern about the girls who were born into these families. Even though the Luyia women would insist not to have their daughters circumcised they were afraid to voice their objections because in a patriarchal society, they had to adhere to the regulations of the clan to which they had been married thus the girls had to be circumcised.⁶⁰¹

This indicates that female circumcision was entrenched because on the one hand women were powerless to abolish the practice even if they wished because of the patriarchal nature of society. On the other hand, no man could prevent a mother from having her daughter circumcised if she believed in it because female circumcision was done only by women in the presence of women. In this particular area for example female circumcision had received very little attention either by the government or the mission groups that worked in the area. These were the Roman Catholic and the Seventh Day Adventist churches. Neither group perceived the practice as affecting people's faith in God but saw it rather as a tradition which would die with time and so it was left to take its course.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid. Resolution, 3.

⁶⁰⁰ Bware: *Historia ya Varogoli kuli Vang'anyira mu Wagusii (Kisii) no Mukivala cha Kanyamkago.* (The history of Avalogoli: How They Immigrated to Kisii and Kanyamkago.) Ms. n.d.

⁶⁰¹ Enisi Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1996; Maria Simidi, Oral Interview, 8/5/1996.

⁶⁰² Esther Mombo 'The Persistence of Female Circumcision Among Abagusii of Kenya' BD. dissertation, St. Paul's United theological college. 1983.

This was unlike the areas inhabited by the Kikuyu people where the practice was strongly challenged by the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) in the 1920's and by the 1960's the practice was not widespread. The persistence of female circumcision in districts such as Kisii received the attention of President Daniel Arap Moi who banned it in 1982.⁶⁰³ The presidential ban was followed by campaigns against female circumcision based on the health of the women, but the effects of the campaigns have remained on the level of the elite, and not on those who upheld the practice. In 1996 an attempt was made to use the act of parliament to ban the practice but it was defeated by a large majority.⁶⁰⁴ This was expected of a parliament which was male dominated and which does not take note of the issues that affect women.

Since female circumcision is still practised in the late 1990s, it attests to the complexities involved in the practice including the status and standing of women in the communities that practices it. It is possible therefore to understand why Quaker women in 1965 were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problem and simply asked the help of the ministry of health and the National Council of Churches. It was a brave move for women in 1965 to bring the issue to light even if it remained at conference level rather than affecting the grassroots.

Considering the prevailing culture at the time, the Women's Yearly Meeting had great courage in addressing some of these issues which the church saw as no longer problematic. Members of the Women's Yearly Meeting were in their own ways pioneer feminists in EAYM.

Writing about women's Christian organisation in South Africa, Gaitskell has observed that these organisations 'were more important to African women than to

⁶⁰³ KNA: 'Leave Girls alone' Daily Nation (Nairobi), No. 6731, Wednesday 27th July 1982. Efua Dorkedoo, *Cutting The Rose, Female Genital Mutilation the Practice and its Prevention*. London: Minority Rights Group 1994. Although Dorkedoo has tried in this book to give an overview on the persistence of Female circumcision in certain places in Africa and Kenya in particular some of her facts are wrong because of her sources which are largely propaganda to end the practice. As much as I support the ban on Female circumcision, the use of wrong facts makes the campaign for the ban even harder. Dorkedoo notes that President Arap Moi of Kenya banned female circumcision in 1982 which is true but she says that he comes from the Luo ethnic group that does not practice female circumcision. President Moi comes from one of the Kalenjin communities known to practice female circumcision and that is why his attempts to ban the practice should be given credit because it was going against what his own community adheres to.

⁶⁰⁴ KNA: 'Parliament' Daily Nation (Nairobi) Thursday November 20th 1996.

white women for three key reasons, ideological, cultural and ecclesiastical.⁶⁰⁵ This observation fits in well with the above analysis of the women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM especially in the annual conferences. During the annual conferences women were able to share with other women the pressures placed upon them in their roles as mothers, they were also able to express themselves better than they would in the main Yearly Meeting.

6.5 THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WOMEN'S YEARLY MEETING.

We have noted in the preceding paragraphs how the formation of the Women's Yearly Meeting gave women room in which to operate without feeling inhibited with the presence of men. Freedom to plan their own meetings, to raise and control their own finances led the women to widen their horizon in terms of activities. The women were keen to be involved not only from the background but in public as well. The activities they thought about were those that affected them and other women in society at large. Two of these activities stand out in EAYM and they are, the Kakamega church and the women's ministry to women prisoners. These activities were both material and physical showing that women wanted to move out of the confines of the church and participate fully.

6.5.1 KAKAMEGA CHURCH PROJECT

Among Abaluyia, issues of property and women were and still are very sensitive, because property implies ownership and ownership is masculine. For any woman to think of building a house or planting a tree indicates her willing to challenge the authority of a man thus asserting her autonomy. When the Women's Yearly Meeting decided to put up a church in Kakamega town that is what in fact they were doing.

⁶⁰⁵ Deborah Gaitskell, 'Power in Prayer and Service: Women's Christian Organizations' In Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa A Political & Cultural History* London: James Currey. 1997. 266. 'First for African women much more overtly than for white women Christianity gave a new primacy to motherhood, while posing new challenges to Christian mothers. Second, a culture that had been primarily oral could take more eagerly to the vocal emphasis of revivalist Christianity while weeping and confession and repentance were acceptable among African women, who anyhow had been sidelined in traditional religious practice. Third, in the African churches planted by missions, the frustration of women forbidden to preach in mixed church gatherings coincided, at the turn of the century, with the emergence of a generation of educated ministers' wives who were eager and able to assume leadership of all women's organisations.'

The choice of Kakamega for a church by the Women's Yearly Meeting was because it was a central place which would be a better meeting point for the Quakers from the north and south to meet rather than Shamberere which was not easily accessible. Even though women tried to go to the meetings at Shamberere, at times they were forced to spend some nights on the way before reaching their homes, creating problems for them and their spouses. Such considerations did not bother the men who went to meetings at the same venue because they were not under anyone's control.

Apart from its centrality and good communication system, Kakamega was also the headquarters of the Western Province. But Quakers who had the highest number of adherents lacked a church in this town. Each time the women wanted to hold a meeting in Kakamega they had to hire a hall from the Kakamega Town council or from another denomination.⁶⁰⁶ This is what prompted the women to build a multi-purpose church in Kakamega.

Talk about putting up a church in Kakamega town had taken place in the EAYM's executive in 1962, but nothing had been done so far.⁶⁰⁷ The Women's Yearly Meeting did not ask EAYM why this matter had been shelved but they went ahead and planned for the project. In 1967 the women begun raising money for the project and one way of doing this was to switch from meeting annually for their conferences to biennially. They also asked each quarterly meeting to find ways and means of raising money for the project. The money that each women's Meeting raised was sent to the women's treasurer, and designated for the Kakamega project.

Between 1967 and 1971 the Women's Yearly Meeting had done all the preliminary arrangements such as getting the approval of the men, the building contractors as well as acquiring a piece of land to build the church. The process of putting up the church was slow and by 1978 women had to seek help to supplement their building funds. Using the Kenya system of *Harambee* (to pull together) the women organised a fundraising event which took place on the 6th June 1978 during which they received donations from EAYM members, government officials and Christians from other

⁶⁰⁶ Leah Ganira, Oral Interview ,16/1/1996

⁶⁰⁷ KNA: The minutes of the executive meeting of EAYM. MIN 29/62

denominations.⁶⁰⁸ As well as giving the women a boost financially, which helped them to complete the project, the fundraising was also significant also because it showed that the project was for the good of EAYM.

Both the preparation and the building of the church took over ten years, a long period for one project, but the women's Yearly Meeting did not concentrate on the Kakamega project alone, for it was one among many. The Kakamega project was in the limelight because it needed more funds and time put into it. This was not easy for the women, even though they were determined to achieve their goal. As well as raising funds, the Kakamega project took a long time because it was undertaken during a period of growth and conflicts in EAYM.

In 1973, two years after the project had started, the first division in EAYM took place.⁶⁰⁹ From then on the structure and leadership of EAYM was constantly challenged. The women's Meeting felt the effect of these reactions, making combined efforts hard to achieve. Internally the Women's Yearly Meeting suffered some setback too, their leader Lena Mwenesi fell ill while the project was going on but she was not replaced and her assistants continued to support her and still work at the project. When the project was finally completed four other divisions had taken place in EAYM. The women did not however despair. They instead pulled together and organised an official opening, which took place in 1980.⁶¹⁰ Despite all the difficulty women were able to realise their dream which was started 1966. And, even with the recent conflicts in EAYM and the numerous divisions, Kakamega is used as a meeting point for all the groups.

6.5.2 THE PRISON MINISTRY.

The other activity that the Women's Yearly Meeting undertook was visiting women prisoners and sharing the word of God with them. Quaker involvement in prison reform can historically be traced as far back as its founder, George Fox. Scores of Quakers died in English prisons for their religious beliefs. Others were imprisoned,

⁶⁰⁸ KNA: Women's report, 1978.

⁶⁰⁹ Rasmussen, *A History*, 114-126.

⁶¹⁰ Kaimosi Office: *Omuganda gwa Avakali*, Min 15/1981.

George Fox himself being one of them.⁶¹¹ He wrote to judges to protest about jail conditions and the execution of minor offenders. During the time of the early Quakers, the prisoner was expected to provide for himself or herself with food and bedding, often being dependent on friends. Quakers arranged for overseers of prisons in their area, to care for imprisoned Friends, especially the poor. In the late 17th and 18th centuries, William Penn introduced radical reforms to the prison system in Philadelphia: provision for work, bail, free food and free shelter.⁶¹²

The prison work of Quaker women cannot go unnoticed especially the work of Elizabeth Fry (reformer from 1813–1845).⁶¹³ With insight based on personal experience, Fry took a firm stand against some forms of imprisonment such as solitary confinement. Fry argued that making the prisoners hate the system was not making them hate their sins. As well as this Fry went further to lobby with the British Home Secretary for separate cells for women at night, women prisoner's education and their children. Fry set up a unique programme among women prisoners, which they accepted and adopted. Since women were in charge of choosing their own leaders to look after work and cleanliness, they made a resolution that they would not drink or beg from visitors. In the morning at nine and the evening at six they would gather for Bible reading. In exchange for this structure the women were given instruction in sewing and knitting. They made patchwork quilts and knitted stockings. Involving other Quaker women Fry opened a school for the Newgate children and reading classes for the women because she realised that reading the Bible was indispensable to any woman seeking to live a better life.⁶¹⁴

While the early Quakers were concerned with the reforms of the prison system, the Quakers in Kenya were concerned with the reform of prisoners. In 1937 Jefferson Ford was asked by the colonial office to start visiting prisoners on humanitarian grounds, but he interpreted it as an opportunity for evangelism:

In July this year the prison at Kakamega became recognised as a second class prison. According to regulations visiting justices are appointed for this class of institution and the District Commissioner has appointed me to that position. (It

⁶¹¹ Ingle, *First Among*, 98.

⁶¹² Barbour, *The Quakers*, 52.

⁶¹³ June Rose, *Elizabeth Fry*, London: Quaker Home Service, 1994.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.* Chapter four, 63-78.

is honorary with no salary attached). Meetings have been held on Sundays for the prisoners and personal conversations are held with them. This gives another door for prisons because Kakamega area was occupied by the Quaker mission.⁶¹⁵

Evangelism among prisoners was a practice in EAYM, and the need to help the prisoners after prison was a taken up by the executive meetings as shown in this report.

The importance of prison visiting and the need to follow up with help to prisoners when they return to their homes. Special reference was made to the need for voluntary visitors and for a co-operative effort in prison visiting among the churches. It was decided to refer the need for women visitors to the clerk of women's committee and for men visitors to the EAYM executive committee - church programme.⁶¹⁶

When the women's yearly meeting met for their annual conference at Budaywa in 1962, Rasoah Mutua gave them a talk about prisoners and prison ministry. The conference delegates agreed to take prison ministry as one of their activities. The executive committee was given the mandate to go ahead and find those women who would be willing to visit the prisoners. These women would then be given government letters to allow them to enter prisons. According to Lena Mwenesi, it was important that the women visited prisoners for religious reasons.

Our role was specifically religious with the hope that through the word of God prisoners would change their ways. We women were saddened to hear the kind of crimes women in prison had committed. We were appalled to hear that women would murder husbands and children. This is what made us to decide to go in and share with them the good news of Jesus Christ. This was one way we would contribute to the lives of our fellow women.⁶¹⁷

Thus the aim of going into the prisons for the Quaker women was evangelism and moral preaching rather than concern about the conditions of prisoners. Unlike the early Quakers, women in the Quaker church in Kenya were guided by their theological assumptions, which stressed personal salvation through the confession of sin and a belief in Jesus Christ rather than prison reform. The women's Yearly Meeting worked on changing prisoners rather than the prison system. If by sharing the word of God with prisoners, their lives were changed then there would be no need for prisons.

⁶¹⁵ KNA. J. Ford, personal report. 1937.

⁶¹⁶ Kaimosi Office: Executive meeting, Min 15/64, Aid to Prisoners.

⁶¹⁷ Lena Mwenesi, Oral Interview, /1/1996.

Even though the members of the women's Yearly Meeting were partially aware of the work of Elizabeth Fry in prison reforms they did not involve themselves in a similar manner. To take on board the issues that Elizabeth Fry addressed would require time and resources and social political involvement, which these women were not able to do. Instead of sitting back and doing nothing, they decided to share the word of God with prisoners.

With these views, women were asked to visit the prisons of Kitale, Kakamega, Eldoret, Kisumu and Kisii. The researcher spoke to three of the women who visited the prisons.⁶¹⁸ From the stories about these women we can conclude that they had

⁶¹⁸ While this research was being carried out three women who had served as prison preachers were seen and these notes give insight into their lives.

Dinah Musidiku

Dinah Musidiku was born in 1908 in Bukhaywa in Isukha location. Her parents were Elisha Mugeshu and Robai Mwoigizi. Musidiku says her mother died when she was a child but she was cared for in the family until she was eleven when she was taken to Liranda Orphanage which was opened by the Quaker missionaries and Miss Reeve was in charge of it. She went to school at the orphanage and learnt to read and write. But when the school was moved to Kaimosi in 1926 she did not go, instead she returned to her home and began to help other girls to become readers. She was recorded as an associate member of the church in 1923 and confirmed as a full member in 1926. In 1935 she was married to a widower Festo Lute, something she did not like, but Jefferson Ford told her that if she refused to marry this man she would not receive God's blessing. Because Ford was an elder of the mission she was afraid to challenge him and she gave into the marriage. Lute had two children from his first wife, and Musidiku gave birth to twelve children a total of fourteen children. Lute died in 1976 leaving her with ten children as four had died as infants. She heard about Prison ministry while she was attending a conference at Budaywa in 1962 and she sympathised with the women prisoners who had no chance of hearing the Word of God. Since there was an opportunity to visit and preach to them she decided to be one of the people to go and visit the prisoners. She expressed her need to go to the prisons and when the letters of permission were given out she was given one. She began visiting the prison in Kakamega and sometimes she also visited the prison in Kisumu.

ENISI MUGESIA.

She was born in 1912 at Chandumba the daughter of Elazia Vunuli and Ziporah Mbai. She had four brothers and sisters. She went to **A** school in Chandumba in 1924 and it is the same year she was accepted as an associate member of the Friends church. In 1926 she went to **B** school at Chavakali and was made a full member of the church by Jefferson Ford. In 1927 she went to GBS at Kaimosi which was under the leadership of Miss Haviland. After one month at GBS her brother came and asked her to leave and take care of her widowed mother because her brothers had all left home for employment. She began teaching and preaching to girls and women in the local church. In 1929 she was married to Ezekiel Mudagu, a tailor at Kegondi market and a clerk to Kegondi Friends Church. Since she had become a preacher in her home Meeting she continued to preach at Kegondi Meeting after she got married. She had five children in this marriage, three of whom died as infants. In 1940 her husband died after a short illness, leaving her with two small children. She lived as a widow for one year, and after a consultation between her family, the church and her husband's clan, it was agreed that she be allowed to return to the clan from which she came because her husband's clan could not care for her. After returning home Mugesia lived with her brothers for one year and in 1943 got married to a widower Jeremiah Mkutu in a church ceremony conducted by Jefferson Ford. Mugesia and Mkutu immigrated to Kisii where she became a key leader and preacher to the Women's Meeting. She was actively involved with the formation of the Women's yearly Meeting and attended most of its annual

difficult lives as wives and mothers. Musidiku was forced into marriage with a widower, a man who was older than she was and had children that she had to take care of. Mugesia had been widowed early in marriage, and was then remarried to a widower with young children whom she had to look after plus her own. Mutua was widowed and not remarried and had to bring up a family as a single mother in a culture where this was frowned upon. It is in this regard that these women were able to identify with the lives of women prisoners most of whom were separated from their families and had left young children.

The women who visited prisoners also came from humble backgrounds with little education but with a gift and courage to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ as they saw it. Apart from Rasoah Mutua who had been trained at Friends Bible Institute, Mugesia and Musidiku did not have any theological training but was endowed with a gift of preaching. These women were willing to share their knowledge of the Bible with those whom society had condemned. They were convinced that even if the laws of society had condemned these women to imprisonment, God would forgive them if they repented.

These women visited prisons voluntarily. They were not employed by the Women's Yearly Meeting, but they were acknowledged and given spiritual support. At the end of each year the women presented a joint report to the delegates of the yearly meeting conference, exhorting them to give spiritual support to women prisoners.⁶¹⁹ As a token of appreciation for their work, the Yearly Meeting gave them a small

conferences. She heard about prison ministry when she was attending the annual conference at Budaywa in 1962. She was moved with the talk about prisoners and prison ministry. After the conference she continued to think about the spiritual needs of the women ministry. She prayed about it and felt that God was calling her to take up this ministry. She put her name forward and the women's committee selected her and appointed her to the Kisii prison.

RASOAH MUTUA

Rasoah Mutua's story is told in chapter seven of this thesis. She became a Quaker after running away to the mission to escape a forced marriage. While she was at the mission she learnt to read and write and became a teacher of women and girls. She got married and after having four children her husband died. She refused to be re-married according to custom and lived to serve the church. She was the first woman to be trained as pastor in EAYM and she is the one who gave the talk about prison ministry to the women at Budaywa conference. She was appointed to visit in Kitale prison and she visited Eldoret Prison as well.

⁶¹⁹ Kaimosi Office: Reports of *Omuganda gwa Avakali* for the years 1965, 1966, 1968, 1970, and 1972.

amount of money depending on what the savings for the year were.⁶²⁰ The women visited the prisons on Sundays, where they conducted a church service for the prisoners and they were the sole preachers. The themes of their sermons were God's love, grace and forgiveness. The work of these women was acknowledged by EAYM as part of church extension work.⁶²¹

6.6 A WOMAN'S CO-ORDINATOR:

As much as the women wanted to be involved fully in the life of EAYM, they lacked co-ordination. The women's leaders worked from their homes making it difficult to communicate with members in different churches. Before 1964, the women missionaries acted as co-ordinators to the Women's Yearly Meeting. But after 1964, the women missionaries who were in EAYM concentrated more on education or nursing rather than women's work. Women's work remained in the hands of the leaders of the Women's Yearly Meeting who were involved in other activities as well. Unlike the Young Friends who had an employed secretary based in the central office, the women had none. The women not only lacked personnel they also lacked space in the office, which handled most of the information in EAYM. Women had to rely on this office to disseminate information for them. This was not easy because each department in EAYM had its personnel in charge of the department and to do women's work was to take on extra duties.

Against this background the women decided to seek for both a person and space within the main office. They discussed this matter in their executive meeting, which was endorsed by the delegates at an annual conference. Lena Mwenesi the presiding clerk of the women's yearly meeting wrote a letter to Harold Smuck, then the Associate Secretary requesting for a woman's worker.⁶²²

⁶²⁰ Rachel Sabwa, Oral Interview, 30/1/1996.

⁶²¹ Kaimosi Office: Report submitted by Charles Wakhisi to the 6th Consultative Committee of Quakers in East Africa on 10th of October 1968 at the Quaker church Centre Nairobi.

⁶²² Kaimosi Office: Lena Mwenesi Letter to Harold Smuck the Associate Secretary of EAYM dated 1st December 1964. The letter read, 'I hope to send a delegation to you about women's work immediately after the conference. Will you please make some correspondence with America to see if we can get someone to start the work in January 1965? Our women meet once a week to pray and study the Bible. I thought they could do something more if they are encouraged to do so. I visited church of God women who sew clothes and take lessons in hygiene and I thought they are doing in

Despite it being a time when most missionaries were relinquishing their powers to the national people, the women still asked for an overseas person. They did this for a variety of reasons including the system through which the person would work, the financial implications and the nature of the job itself. The women were aware that they had to work within the patriarchal structures which existed despite their autonomy. It was easier for them to continue using the expatriates until such a time when they felt ready to tackle the system. The women felt that Abaluyia men would give an expatriate more attention than they would to an Abaluyia woman. An expatriate would have the technical knowledge to create space for women in EAYM offices as no woman had been trained for such during the missionary period.

From a financial point of view the women were aware that EAYM would not employ someone for them even if they asked and they felt inadequate to raise the money themselves. The financial implications were linked up with the nature of the job, which required extensive travelling with a proper means of transport. The local women could not provide this at the time but if they received an expatriate, the overseas church would provide her with the means of transport.

The request for a co-ordinator for women was received and endorsed by Charles Wakhisi, the head of the church extension committee on behalf of EAYM since women's work was under this department.⁶²³ The EAYM office assumed that the women were asking for someone who could help them with matters dealing with Christian homes, as this was the assumed role for women. While this was the case, the women were also looking for something more. They were looking for ways and means of moving from the periphery to the centre without upsetting those who managed the centre.

Having made their requests known, the women did not sit and wait for the central office to take action. They began to make inquiries themselves. In 1967, the women through their treasurer Sabwa approached Rachel Chilson, the daughter of Arthur Chilson, who was among the first Quaker missionaries to western Kenya. Rachel

making progress (sic) I put the matter to the women's Executive committee and we thought we had no person with means of transport to travel and reach the women'.

⁶²³ Kaimosi Office: Charles Wakhisi, Report of church extension presented to the 6th meeting of the consultative committee of Friends in East Africa 1966.

Chilson declined because of the rule within Friends United Meeting which banned the children of missionaries from working in the fields where their parents had worked.⁶²⁴ Having failed to get Chilson to come and work with them, the women decided to ask the United Society of Friends Women in America to recruit someone who would be willing to take up the job as a women's co-ordinator. The women followed the right procedures by asking the EAYM executive for approval of a co-ordinator for women's work from abroad. They indicated the type of work this worker would be doing.⁶²⁵

The EAYM Executive approved the request and passed it on to the USFW America for action. This request was accepted by the USFW in America and they agreed not only to recruit someone but also to give the person financial support, as a contribution to the Women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM. It was not until 1974, nine years after the women had set themselves this goal, that Virginia Helm.⁶²⁶ was appointed to come to Kenya and work with the Women's Yearly Meeting.

Without upsetting the system, the women had followed the right procedure to get someone to work for them from overseas. Helm's arrival coincided with the presidential declaration of the year of equality of women's rights in Kenya.⁶²⁷ It was not equality between men and women because women did not have equal rights before the law. Helm's task was to raise the awareness of women over the issues of their rights and being a Quaker she had a good grounding on which to base her teaching. She described her work under four P's, standing for Purpose, Preparation, Persistence, and Prayer.

⁶²⁴ Thomas Lunga'ho, Speech delivered at the funeral of Rachel Chilson at Kaimosi in March 1996 at which the researcher was present.

⁶²⁵ Kaimosi Office: Letter from the Women's Executive meeting to the EAYM Executive dated 2nd February: 1966. The letter clearly indicated that 'the women's worker would help in organising women's societies, leadership training, Bible Study classes, Friends faith and practice, teaching Sunday school classes, literacy, English, handicraft, home management-nutrition, child care, sewing, health, home nursing, and first aid.

⁶²⁶ Virginia Helm was a member of Reedwood Friends Meeting in Portland Oregon. She was trained in the field of education and actively involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). She served for nine years as president of Oregon's WCTU. Virginia was a mother of two and was coming out to Kenya with her husband who was going to work with a project called Partnership for Productivity in the same region.

⁶²⁷ KNA: East Africa Standard, 12th October 1973.

From her reports one can deduce that Helm saw her task as teaching about Christian homes, thereby reinforcing what the earlier missionaries had done and what the local women were moving away from. The women had had to use the language of Christian homes to get their request for a co-ordinator for women to be endorsed, but they wanted something more. The women were seeking for ways to address those issues in the church and society that denied them access to the seats of power, thus marginalising them. But Helm's ministry became a continuation of what the EAYM defined as women's work, which retained women at the periphery of the church structure. Helm was succeeded by Lou Dewitt who carried on what had been laid down as the women's work.

After Lou Dewitt, the post of the women's worker was handed over to a Kenyan woman Mary Lwaki.⁶²⁸ Because Lwaki succeeded Lou Dewitt, the USFW in America agreed that they would contribute a share of funds for her support while the other contribution would come from the Women's Yearly Meeting.⁶²⁹ When the national women's co-ordinator took over she was concerned with the image of the Women's Yearly Meeting, which she endeavoured to improve. Her aim was to continue to empower women, something that they were doing themselves. To empower women economically, the national co-ordinator embarked on giving support to income-generating activities.⁶³⁰ Economic empowerment for women was one way of giving them status. While it was important for women to learn skills about their homes and families this was not adequate because the homes were not

⁶²⁸ *Friends Missionary Advocate* July-August 1976. 8-9. Before becoming a coordinator for the women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM, Lwaki had worked in the post office, coca cola company, and in the Voice of Kenya. After these jobs Lwaki went to study at Malone College in Canton Ohio in the United States when she met with Lou Dewitt whom she succeeded as co-ordinator. When she returned to Kenya she was appointed as the Women's co-ordinator in EAYM and she worked as an apprentice to Dewitt for a year before she took over. Although I met with Mary Lwaki several times, she was not ready to share her story but she talked about her work and the reports she had given during the yearly meeting conferences.

⁶²⁹ Kaimosi Office: Report on women's works 1976. Ruth Barasa, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996; Rachel Sabwa, Oral Interview, 30/1/96; Leah Ganira, Oral interviews, 12/1/1996.

⁶³⁰ Kaimosi Office: USFW Report August 1978 'I have tried to organise women to form societies like handicraft, banana fibres, sewing, Sisal work and cookery. We did not have material to start with. Through prayer, the Friends Women in America are working hard to send us blocks to make quilt blankets. I hope I have thrown some light on issues related to USFW. We should do good not only do gooders; because that attitude would really not help the ones we would like to assist (sic)

isolated from the wider society. According to the national co-ordinator, there was a need for women to be more economically independent.⁶³¹

The other area that she was concerned about was effective communication between the Meetings. She observed that lack of effective communication meant that information was not disseminated to women for instance thus reducing their participation. But poor communication was as a result of the way the Meetings were structured so that they related to each other in a hierarchical manner rather than in an egalitarian way.⁶³² The hierarchical structure did not let information filter through to the women and the young people because they were at the bottom of the structure. For effective communication therefore there was need to change the way the structure of the meetings and the way information was passed on from one group to another so that everybody was reached with information.

Although Lwaki's work was in line with what the Women's Yearly Meeting needed, EAYM was not prepared for this, fearing that through her, women were coming too close to the centre. Rather than giving way for women to participate in EAYM from the centre, the administration blocked them by working out ways of dealing with Lwaki. EAYM's administration singled her out and questioned her credibility as well as her allegiance. This was being done in order to sideline her and treat the issues that the Women's Yearly Meeting was raising as her own rather than the women's.

The situation for Lwaki was made more complicated because of the relationships between some leaders of the Women's Yearly Meeting and those of EAYM. Some of the leaders of the Women's Yearly Meeting were wives to the leaders of EAYM. Even if the leaders of the Women's Yearly Meeting shared the views of the women's co-ordinator they would rather support their husbands than her, because to challenge EAYM was seen as challenging their spouses. The national co-ordinator was caught up in a wrangle between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting which led to her resignation in 1979 thus ending the office of a woman's co-ordinator in EAYM.⁶³³

⁶³¹ Mary Lwaki, Oral Interview, 21/3/1996.

⁶³² Kaimosi Office: Mary Lwaki, USFW reports. August 1978.

⁶³³ Although I met with Lwaki several times and she discussed with me about her work as the co-ordinator of the women's Yearly Meeting she was hesitant to talk about the events that led to her resignation. From the few things that she said it was clear that it was a painful experience which she

The end of this office for women was an indication of the position EAYM wanted them to be as far as their place was concerned.

6.7 CONCLUSION

In his book *Weapons of the weak*, Scott has noted that 'most subordinate classes are after all far less interested in changing the larger structures of the state, the law than 'working the system' to their minimum disadvantage'.⁶³⁴ The story of the Women's Yearly Meeting can be said to fit into Scott's analysis. The pioneer women came together to start prayer and Bible study groups as a way of giving each other moral and spiritual support in a system which failed to include them as members. From the margins these women contributed to the growth of the church by evangelising other women. The establishment of the women's Yearly Meeting in 1952 was a culmination of the women's endeavour to survive in a structure which marginalised them. At last the women were given a status as well as an outlet to do their own thing. The women made maximum use of this status through the development of activities at every level of the church. Through the separate Yearly Meeting women developed skills of organisation and leadership among themselves. This is one of the successes of the Women's Yearly Meeting.

Like other organisations the Women's Yearly Meeting has had a dose of problems too. One of the weaknesses of the Women's Yearly Meeting was lack of proper rules and regulations to govern them. Depending on the constitution of EAYM meant that they followed the interpretation of the constitution by the men. This was clearly seen in the election of their leaders. The men had a hand in the elections leading to a choice of leaders whom the men approved of even if they were not necessarily the women's choice. This was reflected especially when wives of the leaders in EAYM became the leaders of the Women's Yearly Meeting creating problems of relationship between the Yearly Meetings.

The Women's Yearly Meeting did well in bringing the women together to share their joys and difficulties in the church, but it never reached a point of being a voice of

was not ready to talk about. Other interviewees talked about things that happened which I was not able to prove as they impinged on the leadership of EAYM who were also not ready to discuss them.

⁶³⁴ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*: New Haven: Yale University Press 1985. xv.

women in challenging the structures of the church which sidelined them. Though Quakerism was presented to women as emancipation from aspects of traditional society that denied them access to the seats of power, it never empowered them to confront the seats of power in Quaker Christianity itself. As a result the women continued to act from the margins much more than moving to the center. The women's attempts to move to the center through the office of their coordinator were thwarted when the national coordinator was forced to resign and the office was closed. The move to close the office of the co-ordinator was an indication that the administration of EAYM did not approve of women moving to the center to participate fully in the decision making bodies of EAYM.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 ORGANISATIONAL DYNAMICS OF EAYM AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR WOMEN: THE CASES OF MARIA ATIAMUGA AND KERAN NYAMUSI ALFAYO.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

So far this thesis has shown how the Quaker church established itself in Western Kenya by questioning and challenging those things that were seen to be incompatible with their type of Christianity. In this the Quakers were not unique, for other missionary organisations of the same period acted in a similar fashion.⁶³⁵ Although the main aim of the missionaries was to preach salvation, when they encountered what they saw as the oppression of women in the Luyia society they felt bound to make attempts to free the women from that oppression. The policies that were used by missionaries to deal with Abaluyia forms of initiation rites and marriage customs depended on the missionaries' interpretation of Christianity. This was not done in a vacuum but within their cultural milieu, so that those things that seemed different to them were challenged while things that were familiar like male leadership remained unchallenged.

In dealing with Abaluyia customs, there seems to be a silence over women and leadership roles. This silence could imply that the missionaries were comfortable with the patriarchal forms of leadership among Abaluyia and that there was no need to challenge them, or that there was little difference between Abaluyia and Quaker American culture in their approach to leadership roles for women. In this chapter these issues are discussed with regard to the place of women in the organisational structure of EAYM with special reference to Maria Atiamuga and Keran Nyamusi Alfayo. The chapter analyses why women have been sidelined from leadership roles in a church which is known historically to have rejected structures which were hierarchical, dogmatic and authoritarian.

⁶³⁵ Adrian Hastings, *African Catholicism*, London: SCM, 1989. 36.

The chapter will deal with four closely interwoven issues dealing with the organisation and administration of EAYM; the case of Maria Atiamuga and Keran Alfayo and the issues that their positions in leadership raise; the reasons given concerning women and leadership in EAYM; and finally the administrative relationship between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting.

7.2 THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF EAYM.

The early Quakers based their beliefs on the principal doctrine of the 'Inner Light'. But in order to discuss issues which affected the movement, they had to formulate an organisational structure which was in line with what they believed. It is in this connection that George Fox in 1660 set up a system of Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings.⁶³⁶ This system still exists today in most Quaker communities throughout the world and it is the one factor that unites the programmed and unprogrammed Quakers. The former have a structure to their meeting of worship, which includes music and a sermon, while the latter hold silent worship.

In keeping with the basic outlook of Quakers, the organisational structure is supposed to be simple and democratic. Participation in decision making and administration is widespread, and the leadership is composed largely of lay people rather than professional theologians. The structure of EAYM is similar to the structures of those Quaker groups that are programmed. Much of the work for the society is carried out through committees of various departments and programmes.

There are four levels of organisation, the lowest of which is the Preparatory Meeting known in EAYM as a Village Meeting because of the system of villages. The Village Meeting takes place every Sunday. Several villages combine to form an area in which the Monthly Meeting takes place. The Monthly Meeting is very significant for the Quaker Meeting because it is the basic working unit. The functions of the Monthly Meetings include receiving new members, conducting weddings and funerals and dealing with the property of the church. The Monthly Meeting is also charged with the responsibility of disciplining those members who fail to live up to the ideals of the church. It is also the Monthly Meeting which is responsible for the election of leaders for the various sections of the church. In EAYM, most Monthly

⁶³⁶ Nickalls, *The Journal*, 511.

Meetings are under the leadership of male clerks. Women clerks are mainly found in the women's Monthly Meetings, which are subordinate to the main monthly meetings.

Several Monthly Meetings form a Quarterly Meeting which also covers the area of the Monthly Meetings. The Quarterly Meeting is responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Monthly Meetings. This co-ordination includes receiving reports from the Monthly Meetings and preparing them for the Yearly Meeting. The Quarterly Meetings also look into the financial development of the Meetings. The Quarterly Meeting also receives finances from the Monthly Meetings to send to the Yearly Meeting. Even more than the Monthly Meetings, the leadership of the Quarterly Meetings is exclusively male.

The Yearly Meeting is composed of a whole territory of Quarterly Meetings. Thus EAYM covered the whole of East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika) in 1946. But when 1973 the territory was divided, new Yearly Meetings emerged and EAYM's territory gradually shrank.⁶³⁷ The name East Africa is retained for this

⁶³⁷ See map 6 on page 227. The reasons for the divisions of the Yearly Meetings in Kenya were mentioned in Chapter three of the thesis. They included ethnic rivalry, divergent views among leaders, and the language of communication in EAYM. Although these reasons affected Quakers who were in Uganda and Tanzania, the Yearly Meetings in these countries were established because of the distances between these countries.

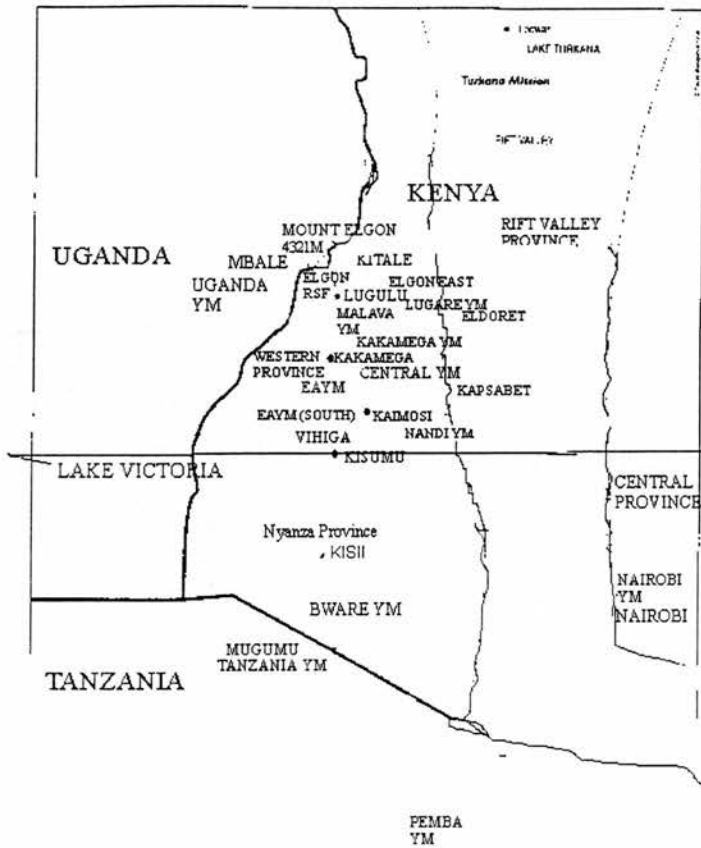
Quakers Around the World: A Handbook of the Religious Society of Friends Quakers London: 1994 23 – 24. By the time this Research was done in 1996, Kenya alone had fourteen Yearly Meetings. Tanzania had two yearly Meetings and Uganda had one. The first Tanzania Yearly Meeting is the oldest in East Africa it was established in 1916 at Pemba by the British Quakers who had began work among the Freed Slaves in 1897. But like other Christian churches in areas which are dominant in Islam the Yearly Meeting did not grow in numbers. It has stayed small and has been in contact with other Yearly Meetings in East Africa which are programmed and because of programmed Friends its leanings are more on the programmed Meetings than unprogrammed. The second Yearly Meeting in Tanzania was established in 1984 but its history goes back to the 1950's with the immigration of Luyia people from western province in Kenya to Tanzania because of the pressure of land. These people who were Quakers started to meet for worship in the villages and identified themselves with EAYM from where they had come. In 1958 EAYM established the first Monthly Meeting in Tanzania. Ten years later this Monthly Meeting was registered as a church in Tanzania even though from an ecclesiastical point of view it was within EAYM. Its members continued to attend the EAYM annual conferences. In 1979 EAYM was divided into four Yearly Meetings and the Tanzania Monthly Meeting was not allocated a proper place. In 1984 the Friends in this part of Tanzania decided to create their own Yearly Meeting. EAYM through its Friends Bible Institute has continued to help train pastors for Tanzania Yearly Meeting.

FWCC: Alfred Wasike, *The Society of Friends in Uganda*. 1985. Ms. Uganda Yearly Meeting was established in 1980 but its story is traced back to 1948 when Johnston Namufweli and a team of Quakers from EAYM brought into being a Quaker Meeting at Kampala. This Meeting was strengthened by the immigration of Quakers from the densely populated western province to Uganda between 1952 and 1957. These Luyia people most of whom were Quakers established their homes as

Yearly Meeting even though it does not have any powers over the other Yearly Meetings in the areas that it once covered. It runs its affairs independently and maintains its central office at Kaimosi, the first mission station to be established by Quaker Missionaries. Every Year EAYM like other Yearly Meetings has its annual gathering in the month of August in which it deliberates issues of major concern for the church and the society. The separate women's Meetings are also structured like the main meetings. They start with the Village Meeting and end with the Yearly meeting.

There are international organisations of Quakers where most Quaker groups meet, such as Friends World Committee of Consultation, Friends United Meeting. EAYM is a member of both.

well as Meetings. The strength of these Meetings was noticed when in 1969 a Quarterly Meeting of EAYM was formed in Uganda. When Idi Amin took over the as president of Uganda the Quakers like other Christians suffered and their Meetings were brought to an end as people flee to look for places of peace. In 1980 the Uganda Christians began to gather again as EAYM had been divided into four Yearly Meetings the Uganda Quakers decided to become a Yearly Meeting.



Map 6: Yearly Meetings in East Africa in June 1996.

KEY:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|------------------|------|
| 1. Pemba YM. | 1916. | 8. Bware YM | 1993 |
| 2. EAYM | 1946 | 9. Central YM | 1994 |
| 3. ERSF YM | 1973 | 10. EAYM (North) | 1987 |
| 4. EAYM (South) | 1979 | 11. Malava YM | 1988 |
| 5. Uganda YM | 1980 | 12. Kakamega | 1992 |
| 6. Tanzania YM | 1984 | 13. Central | 1993 |
| 7. Nairobi YM | 1987 | 14. Lugare | 1994 |

7.3 THE LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION OF EAYM.

Since 1946, the leadership and administration of EAYM has been exclusively male. There are six officers who run EAYM: two presiding clerks, two recording clerks and two treasurers. The administration of EAYM was done through committees of

the various departments and programmes as shown in figure 2.⁶³⁸ All the work was co-ordinated from the central offices situated at Kaimosi by the general secretary. In order to understand the leadership and administration of EAYM, the Book of Discipline and the constitution are significant and this section looks at these sources and how they impinged on women.

7.3.1 THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

The Book of Discipline was a translation of the Friends United Meeting Book of Discipline.⁶³⁹ This Book of Discipline was adapted to suit the needs of EAYM. It had special sections which were formulated to suit the Abaluyia context where the book was being used, dealing for example, with some aspects of Luyia marriage.⁶⁴⁰ This book was not widely circulated; it was written in one of the Luyia dialects, *Llogooli* making it difficult for other groups to read and understand it. Those who had this book interpreted it to the majority. Most of the rules and regulations in this book were passed on orally to the people and mostly this was in the form of an interpretation.

In its language and imagery the Book of Discipline implied that women were excluded from the leadership and administration of the church, especially by the terms and phrases used for leaders. While no particular clause excluded women from leadership, the description of leaders and their position implied that they were male. With little circulation of the book, information that was passed on by word of mouth had cultural assumptions read into it.

For example, the 'elders' meeting' which served as an advice group to EAYM, was composed of elderly men from 1946 to 1962. It was assumed that only men could be elected to the elders' meeting because the name *abakhulundu* (elders) used for this group meant elderly men. The elders' meeting either implied that women were not

⁶³⁸ Kaimosi Office: Figure 2, page 258, taken from The Organisation and Financing of EAYM. Departments and Programmes.

⁶³⁹ The history of the FUM Book of Discipline goes back to the Richmond Declaration of 1887 when those Yearly Meeting that had been influenced by the 1860 revivals and accepted the revival teaching met together to discuss issues of common interest. One of the outcomes of this Meeting was the Common Book of Discipline.

⁶⁴⁰ AFBM, *Kitabu kye Litanga*, 44.

sufficiently wise to be able to serve in that capacity or that to be wise one had to be an elderly man.

In 1962, women asked if they could become members of the elders' meeting. Having discussed the matter in the elders meeting and in the annual conference of 1963, it was reported that women could become members of the elders' meeting.⁶⁴¹ The elders were elected from their monthly meetings but it was not clear how women would be elected as members. The elders meeting did not remain in existence long enough to receive women elders because it was overtaken by events. With the introduction of a new constitution the elders' meeting was done away with, and instead replaced by the permanent board. The situation of women in the permanent board was not any better.

As has already been noted the exclusion of women from the administration and leadership roles was not unique to EAYM; it was a common practice in Quakerism as Punshon has pointed out.

Though women ministers had been a part of Quakerism from the beginning, they were not always fully integrated into the administrative structures of the society. Though in theory the sexes were on a footing of equality, in practice they were not.⁶⁴²

7.3.2 THE CONSTITUTION.

When EAYM was set in up 1946 the book of discipline served as the constitution. The Book of Discipline was not a legal document because EAYM did not have any legal responsibilities. The need for a constitution came in 1963 when EAYM was going to be independent from FAM and all property formerly owned by FAM would be handed over to EAYM.

The EAYM constitution was drafted by a British lawyer and adapted by an American Missionary. Even though it was finalised with all the good will possible and with step by step consultation with an African committee, it was largely western.⁶⁴³

The constitution, even more than the Book of Discipline, was a volatile document in EAYM. It remained in the hands of a few people, some of whom had contributed to

⁶⁴¹ Kaimosi Office: *Minitsi tsia* East Africa Yearly Meeting Conference Bware. *Livugana Likola* 18 - August 21: 26 no. 4. *Kamiti ya Vakulundu* 5: - (The minutes of the 18th East Africa Yearly Meeting Conference at Bware August 21- 26 1963 report. No. 4. The elders Committee).

⁶⁴² Punshon, *Portrait*, 92.

⁶⁴³ Smuck, *Friends*, 25.

its making. Each act in the administration of EAYM was justified by the constitution even though the majority of EAYM members did not know it at all. The 1963 constitution was reviewed at various intervals in the later history of EAYM, but even those reviews were a mystery to the masses because they were meant to guard the positions of the status quo. This thesis uses the constitution as it was formulated in 1963, this being the original constitution and there is no clarity in the subsequent amendments. However these amendments make no changes in the position of women, for their position was in fact never reviewed.

From the way the constitution was formulated one is left with no choice but to conclude that, like the Book of Discipline, those whose lives and actions it was going to regulate largely did not take part in composing it. The token African committee interpreted the clauses of the constitution to their own maximum advantage. Smuck noted that the completion of the constitution was received with a ceremony, which gave EAYM a new status because it was going to be in charge of over 1,000 acres of land and hundreds of buildings in Kaimosi and elsewhere. It was also going to look after extensive medical, educational industrial and agricultural services.⁶⁴⁴ Most people celebrated the demise of missionary control not knowing that they were going to be subject to the same kind of control by a few of their own people.

The contents of the constitution are different from those that are in the Book of Discipline even though some of them were just modified to suit EAYM in its new capacity. Three aspects of the constitution are of special importance in relation to women and leadership in EAYM. These are the clauses on trustees, the nominating committee and the permanent board. First, the clause on Trustees was not in the Book of Discipline because EAYM was not in charge of any properties owned by FAM. But after the property was handed over to EAYM in 1963 it was important to entrust it to the care of a group of people. Because trustees have to deal with property this clause has implications for women. The clause notes that

The yearly meeting shall, at an annual conference or through its permanent board, appoint six trustees who shall hold all land belonging to the Yearly Meeting in their names or the names of the successors from time to time

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid, 20.

appointed... Such trustees shall be appointed and shall be incorporated under the land (Perpetual Succession) ordinance, Cap. 286, of the laws of Kenya.⁶⁴⁵

The first trustees (popularly known as the guardians of EAYM's wealth) to be appointed were Joel Litu, Samuel Imbuye, Peter Wanyama, Jeremiah Segero, Timothy Bilindi and Elisha Shiverenge. These men represented some of the ethnic communities in EAYM. There was no woman trustee then and none in the development of EAYM. The trustee aspect in EAYM was as sensitive as the constitution itself because it related to power to control and administer the property of EAYM. The six men were entrusted with that power and they were given support by the laws of the country.

In a culture where wealth and property and its inheritance were male oriented, one can see how this culture influenced EAYM in interpreting the clause and those who appointed the trustees assumed that they had to be men. But being excluded from the guardianship of wealth and property in EAYM had positive implications for the Women's Yearly Meeting in the long run. Because no property was handed over to them the women were saved from the time-consuming discussions on property, which affected the men in EAYM. The exclusion gave women room to be involved with activities such as the Kakamega Church project which has been discussed in Chapter six. Although this church was registered under EAYM properties, it serves Quakers of all walks of life. But most importantly being excluded from the whole property issue saved the women from some of the sources of EAYM's conflicts, in contrast to the bitter wrangles of ethnic rivalry, personality clashes and the division of property in EAYM. Since 1979, women have continued to meet in fellowship regardless of their ethnic or Yearly Meeting affiliation. As one male interviewee noted in passing: 'women can meet and pray so long as they do not talk about issues related to the properties of EAYM.'

While for men the wealth and property held in EAYM became an explosive issue and it made it so difficult for them to meet in local forums, women have continued to meet with each other for prayer and fellowship. In 1996 they held what they called a

⁶⁴⁵ Article XI of the Constitution of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends. See Appendix III.

pre-triennial meeting at Liranda.⁶⁴⁶ In 1997 April they held the first national triennial meetings in Kenya and they will now hold such meetings after every three years. The men have been trying to meet to sort out the differences among them. At one point they moved to a stage of forming the Friends Church in Kenya to be an umbrella of all Yearly Meetings within Kenya. But because of the property issue those meetings were aborted.⁶⁴⁷ The men from the different Yearly Meetings only meet peacefully at international Quaker gatherings but not in national gatherings.⁶⁴⁸ We now come to the second and third aspects of the constitution namely *the nomination committee and the permanent board*. Because these articles are important in the election of leaders the presence or lack of women in them will show how women are treated in the leadership of EAYM. The members of the nominating committee of EAYM come from the quarterly meetings.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Each Quarterly Meeting shall forward to the designated Yearly Meeting official, prior to the Yearly Meeting, the names of not more than two persons to serve on the nominating committee. The Nominating committee shall meet prior to and during the sessions of the Yearly Meeting. It shall recommend the to the Yearly Meeting the names of Friends to serve: (a) on the permanent Board, (b) on the standing committees (c) as officers of the Yearly Meeting.⁶⁴⁹

PERMANENT BOARD

The permanent board of the Yearly Meeting shall consist of 41 members as follows (a) the presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting (b) 35 to be recommended by the Nominating Committee and appointed by the Yearly Meeting in annual conference, provided that each quarterly Meeting shall be represented by at least one of this number.(c) five other members to be chosen by those in (a) and (b) above.⁶⁵⁰

Although these clauses are very general as far as who is to be a member of either the nominating committee or permanent board, the machinery for choosing the members to these committees suited men more than women. It is the men who were key leaders in most Monthly Meetings and Quarterly Meetings, and it is the men who

⁶⁴⁶ Esther Mombo, 'Pre- triennial meeting in Kenya' in *Missionary Advocate* September 1996; The Epistle of the First Triennial Meeting in Kenya, April 1997. A copy sent to me by Elizabeth Yano who was the guest preacher at the Triennial.

⁶⁴⁷ *Friends World News* 1996/1 No. 146. 3.

⁶⁴⁸ For example, FWCC meetings July-August 1997 at which the researcher was present.

⁶⁴⁹ Article VIII: The Constitution of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends, Appendix III.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 3.

got elected to represent their meetings in EAYM boards and committees. If women were elected to any committee, it was a committee which was exclusively concerned with women and children's affairs. The more powerful committees like the nominations and finance became a club of the clan elders.

Even though women were lacking in the most exclusive committees and boards the issue was not raised until 1973. This was a difficult year for EAYM because some of the internal problems of EAYM came to the surface when members of the Elgon Religious Society of Friends (ERSF) decided to pull out and start a new and independent Yearly Meeting. As noted in chapter three, the members of ERSF pulled out because the then leadership of EAYM was out of touch with the needs of the local people. The leaders were accused of being preoccupied with defending their positions in the central office at Kaimosi rather than getting involved with the work of the church.⁶⁵¹ The women who had been silently doing their work mounted their first major project of Kakamega Church.

It is in this situation that under-representation of women in the permanent board was noted and there was a move to correct the imbalance. Since women were not able to come into the specialised boards through the normal procedures it was agreed that the board would rectify this by co-opting women members.

It was agreed that the five places be filled with youth and women who were not well represented on the board. These women were chosen into the board, Keran Alfayo, Keziah Khayadi, Rachel Wanyonyi.⁶⁵² [The names of the youths are omitted may be they were not appointed in this meeting]

Even though co-option was the right thing to do at the time, it affected the way these women operated in the boards. In the first place they were not representatives of their own Meetings and they could not speak with that authority. While the permanent board thought they were doing women a favour, they were in the long run, reinforcing the mechanisms of sidelining women even more. The issue of not having women was due to the procedures of choosing the members and if the permanent board was going to deal with this it needed a re-examination of the clause

⁶⁵¹ Rebecca Nasibwondi, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

⁶⁵² Kaimosi Office: Minutes of the Permanent Board Min 66/73 Co-option of Members to the Permanent Board.

⁶⁵³ Marilee Karl, (Ed), *Women and Empowerment Participation and Empowerment*, London: Zed, 1995. 70-72.

on nominating members. Perhaps if the board adopted a quota system where the churches were required to elect men, women and the youths to committee meetings there would have been a better representation. As well as the quota system Affirmative Action would have also served the women better.⁶⁵³ The point I'm making here is that for women to be represented and to take part, the constitution of EAYM had to include them and the youth as two distinct groups. But because the constitution was general the women were at the mercy of the elders. In a culture where leadership was defined by age and sex, women would be underrepresented. Despite these obstacles for women in the leadership and administration of EAYM two women managed to achieve the position of deputy clerk, even though their positions remained a matter of dispute to date and no other woman has been elected to a similar post. The following section deals with those women and their place in the leadership and administration of EAYM.

7.4 THE CASES OF MARIA ATIAMUGA AND KERAN NYAMUSI ALFAYO.

The leadership and administration of EAYM raises the question of power and authority which is contrary to the spirit of Quakerism, because in the spirit of Quakerism all individuals are on an equal footing. Neither power nor authority is vested in any one individual, whether that individual be a woman or man. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the practices in EAYM ran and still seem to run counter to this spirit, especially when they have to do with the position and work of women in EAYM. To illustrate the discrepancy between the spirit and the practice we shall discuss the work of Maria Atiamuga and Keran Nyamusi Alfayo, both of whom held positions of leadership in EAYM. First we will describe the lives of the two women and then discuss their work and the issues that arise from it.

7.4.1 LIFE OF MARIA ATIAMUGA BEFORE BEING ELECTED DEPUTY CLERK.

Atiamuga, also known as Maria Alenga came from Vihiga and she is remembered by many as a strong and courageous woman in her community.⁶⁵⁴ In her story, which

⁶⁵⁴ Niva Luvai, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996, Keran Alfayo, Oral Interview, 25/1/1996, Daudi Kadenge, Oral Interview 12/2/1996; Hezekia Ngoya, Oral Interviews, 7/3/1996.

was read during her funeral in 1985 several things were mentioned about her work in the church. Two of these are significant because they raise the issues that have been mentioned above. The first one is the fact that Atiamuga served as a member of the permanent board of EAYM after its inception. The second one is that she was a deputy presiding clerk of EAYM for two terms. As well as this Atiamuga was a very able preacher and counsellor.⁶⁵⁵

Maria Atiamuga was born about 1903 in Vihiga, the daughter of Ombeva and Finike Nzavaye. The name Maria was given to her by Rees, the missionary in charge of Vihiga station when she was accepted as a full member of the Quaker church in 1920. She had become an associate member of the Quaker church in 1918 through the catechism classes led by Andrea Agufwana in Vihiga. She was one of the first women readers taught by Roxie Reeve, the first Quaker single missionary to come to Kenya with FAM to Vihiga. Atiamuga went through the educational system of the Quakers, which included reading, arithmetic and Bible knowledge.

Having learnt to read she was appointed as a prefect to the girls between 1919 and 1920. This was the role that women played in education because the mission could not employ them as teachers. She was paid half the salary of a male teacher, since her title a prefect, even if she was teaching like the men teachers. Her students came from Kidinye area, which was not far from her own village in Vihiga. Atiamuga's title and pay indicate the nature of gender discrimination which the mission introduced to the local people. Women were not given equal opportunities for jobs even if they were qualified, neither were they given the same remuneration.

Apart from teaching, Atiamuga learnt how to knit and spin and she went on these courses at Kericho for three weeks.⁶⁵⁶ She was good at knitting but she combined this with farm work where she was good at growing vegetables for use at home and for income generation. In an annual gathering of women she spoke about the progress she had made through using her skills in farming.

⁶⁵⁵ Vihiga :The story of Maria Atiamuga' Ms. n.d. This story was compiled and read at Atiamuga's Funeral.

⁶⁵⁶ KNA: Maendeleo Ya Wanawake File, Deposit 9/43.The school of spinning at Kericho was founded before the second World war as a vocational training for women and girls. It was meant to give them training in making socks, pullovers, blankets and towels for their homes.

One time she had only one dress and she prayed about what to do. She was led to plant a vegetable garden and sell her vegetables, which she did and was able to buy herself a dress and also clothe her children.⁶⁵⁷

As a farmer she was among the delegation of men who went to visit farmers in Central Province among Akamba people. Priscilla Abwao who was a district social worker of North Nyanza recommended her for this delegation. This experience widened her horizons and gave her encouragement for what she said and did. As well as this Atiamuga travelled widely in Quaker meetings to preach to women or to witness the opening of new meetings in EAYM, even travelling to Uganda for such an occasion.

Atiamuga was a classic woman of her time because she combined the traditional roles of a woman among the Abaluyia and the mission expectation of a Christian woman. She was married to Erasto Alenga and her wedding, which took place on the 9th February 1923 at Kaimosi, was presided over by Emory Rees.

Before and after marriage, Atiamuga was prominent in the ministry of the church as a preacher. Preaching was one of the areas that both men and women shared, even though women preached mainly in women's meetings. Atiamuga started a ministry of preaching as a young woman in her home village. She grew to become a prominent preacher in her home area of South Maragoli and beyond. She was invited to preach in areas such as Isukha, Chebyusi, in the Quaker women's meetings.

Although Atiamuga preached in many places, her preaching at Chavakali church on 24th December 1924 a year after she was married is well remembered. Atiamuga was invited to preach in a church but before she started to preach there were strong winds blowing and it was going to make it difficult for people to hear her. When she came to preach she prayed this prayer: 'God you created and chose me to do your work, please stop the wind so that people can hear;'⁶⁵⁸ immediately the wind stopped. In response to her preaching Yohana Amugune who was in charge of the meeting used the occasion to challenge the people to believe in God. 'You have witnessed today with your own eyes and you have heard what has been preached, will you then refuse to believe in Jesus?'⁶⁵⁹ Even though no one seems to remember

⁶⁵⁷ Kaimosi Office: Helen Ford, Report on women's work .1945.

⁶⁵⁸ Vihiga: 'The story of Maria Atiamuga' Ms.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

the contents of her sermon, this incident gave her credibility as a woman preacher. In this period of mission work such incidents worked as powerful media for communicating the Christian message.

7.4.2 THE LIFE OF KERAN NYAMUSI ALFAYO⁶⁶⁰

Keran Nyamusi Alfayo is another woman who has served as the deputy clerk to EAYM. Nyamusi was born in a Quaker family on 29th December 1929. Her parents were Zephania Mundibwa and Marita Nkonyere. They were strict parents especially on matters of faith. They brought her up to know, and to follow the teachings of the Quaker church as they were presented to them. Like other young women who came from Quaker families in her village, Nyamusi slept in the dormitory and not in the grandmother's hut where young women of her age slept. She was one of those who were in charge of the dormitory.

She went to the village school from 1935 to 1940 and then to GBS at Kaimosi where she stayed from 1941 to 1944. When she completed her studies at GBS she returned to her village and taught as an untrained teacher at her village school. She did this between 1944 and 1946. She left teaching to get married to Alfayo Agufwana, the son of Agufwana who was in the army. She was married on Thursday the 16th January 1946.⁶⁶¹

Her ministry in the church started when she was made a clerk to the *Halhamisi* women's group in 1946. She used to record its activities, plan and organise the forthcoming meetings. In 1948 Nyamusi was made a deputy clerk to the women's Monthly Meeting of Vihiga to serve together with Maria Atiamuga and Marita Adai. This prepared her to become the presiding clerk of the same Monthly Meeting in 1950. Her ministry in the women's meetings contributed to her leadership qualities, as she became more aware of the way that women were perceived and treated in their homes and in society at large.

⁶⁶⁰ Keran Nyamusi Alfayo is popularly known as Keran. This thesis will use Nyamusi while writing about her but when quoting what is said or written about her it will use the name that is used.

⁶⁶¹ Men who served in the army were given very few days off to visit their homes. Those who were single used this opportunity to get married. The church gave them provision to marry as soon as they had met the woman to marry. The marriage bans for these men could be published three times on a Sunday to cover the three weeks before marriage.

Through the women's meeting she came to the conclusion that even though a number of traditional taboos against women had been challenged with the coming of Quakerism in Maragoli, most men still perceived women within the traditional framework.⁶⁶² It was then difficult for a woman to take on leadership roles in the church.

As well as being active in the women's Meetings, Nyamusi was a gifted singer and she is known throughout EAYM. Nyamusi was not only a good singer but also a good song leader because during the annual conferences she led the people in singing. 'I know Keran Alfayo because in most of the conferences that I have attended she was leading us in singing'.⁶⁶³ In 1966 Nyamusi was widowed and the responsibility of bringing up a family was not easy; she had to work hard to fend for the children and educate them. This she did through the help of her maternal family and individual Christians.

7.4.3 MARIA ATIAMUGA THE BOARD MEMBER

We have already seen that the constitution provided for the setting up of trustees to deal with property, a nominating committee to appoint office bearers and a permanent board to discuss issues of EAYM. Some evidence indicates that both Atiamuga and Nyamusi served EAYM as members of the permanent board and as office bearers. But the evidence is conflicting in detail because some of the records are incomplete, others are unavailable and oral evidence is contradictory. This section will demonstrate this by discussing first Maria Atiamuga and then Keran Alfayo.

In 1946 the first members to the EAYM permanent board was elected in which the names of these women appear, Rasoah Mutua, Ester Olindo, Rachel Luvale, and Susan Muhambe.⁶⁶⁴ But according to Joseph Kisia who was one of the people compiling Atiamuga's story which was read during her funeral, Atiamuga was a member of the permanent board from 1946.⁶⁶⁵ But other interviewees say she served

⁶⁶²Keran Nyamusi, Oral Interview, 12/1/1996.

⁶⁶³ Maria Simidi, Oral Interview, 8/5/1996.

⁶⁶⁴ KNA: Members of the Permanent Board 1946, Rasoah Mutua Oral Interview, 27/2/1996, Rachel Luvale, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996.

⁶⁶⁵ Joseph Kisia, Oral Interview, 18/3/1996.

on the board but they do not remember from when to when. It is possible that Atiamuga was among these women but her name does not appear in the records until 1953.⁶⁶⁶ From this time onwards she is recorded in the meetings of the board that took place. It is possible that her name was left out of the earlier records, but after she contributed to the debate on the case of Hesbon Mutongi 1953 she earned a name. Mutongi's case raised a challenge to the church policy on marriage.

Hesbon Mutongi's wife Esther fell ill and was admitted to a hospital at Nairobi and according to the doctor's reports her recovery was very slow. Mutongi found it extremely hard on his own with the children. He wrote a letter to the board of EAYM in 1953 requesting them to allow him to marry another wife to help him with bringing up his children, as he was not sure that Esther would recover. When the board read this letter they empathised with Mutongi's case but were aware that the mission in which they were under did not allow a man to marry another woman if his first wife was still alive. They were also aware that the regulation of the colonial office did not allow such a marriage unless a spouse had been hospitalised for over five years and the case was mental. After a lengthy discussion and in view of the issues involved in the whole matter the board asked Mutongi to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁶⁷

Maria Atiamuga's contribution is not recorded in the minutes but some of the people who attended the same board or heard about the issue and how the board handled it say that it is her contribution that led the board to refrain from allowing Mutongi to go ahead and marry another wife, and instead ask him to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Atiamuga realised that the board was leaning towards Mutongi in their deliberation and would in the end allow him to get married so that he had some help with bringing up the children. Atiamuga argued that if the board was going to allow Mutongi to marry another wife while his first wife was alive, there should be a clause to say that a woman was free to do so too if her husband was ill.⁶⁶⁸

By requesting that the board should have an inclusive clause Atiamuga was not implying that polygyny or polyandry should be justified but rather EAYM should not set a precedent for men to find a reason for practising polygyny in the event of having a sick wife. Atiamuga was aware of her cultural context where it was easier for a man to marry more than one wife while a woman had to stay in marriage even

⁶⁶⁶ Kaimosi Office: The Board meetings, which she attended between 1953 to 1960, have her name among the members in attendance.

⁶⁶⁷ Kaimosi Office *Minitsi tsia e board 1953*. Min 83/53. '*Liteva Lya Hesbon Mutongi* (The minutes of the board The question of Hesbon Mutongi)

⁶⁶⁸ Dinah Ngoya, Oral Interview, 24/2/1996; Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

after the death of her husband. The mission teaching on marriage had not affected change on the position of women either, and if any ruling was to be done on marriage it had to be inclusive or it was going to be unjust

7.4.4 ATIAMUGA THE DEPUTY PRESIDING CLERK.

As well as being a board member Atiamuga served as an officer in EAYM in the capacity of a deputy clerk between 1957 and 1960.⁶⁶⁹ Although the constitution allowed only one presiding clerk and one deputy the evidence is that Atiamuga served as a second deputy presiding clerk. This is clearly written on the list of the office bearers of EAYM and on the letter headed notepapers of the 1959 and 1960 that is Jotham Standa, Samuel Imbuye and Maria Atiamuga.⁶⁷⁰ If the constitution allowed for only one presiding clerk and one deputy, what was Atiamuga doing in EAYM as deputy presiding clerk? Why was she elected in the first place? Was she representing a particular group as some informants suggest that she was representing women?

The last question is eliminated because the women had their own presiding clerk who would have represented them, and there is no indication from the women that they had Atiamuga representing them in EAYM. They had their own presiding clerk and Atiamuga did not hold this office. The first question is more complex because there was no role for a second deputy clerk. But it is also eliminated because Jotham Standa who is recorded as the presiding clerk during the period of 1959-1960, was not the presiding clerk but Samuel Imbuye.⁶⁷¹ Jotham Standa had been appointed the administrative secretary of EAYM in 1959 and he served until 1964 when he resigned.⁶⁷² If this is the case, then Maria Atiamuga was not a second deputy clerk as she is recorded, but a deputy clerk. Thomas Lunga'ho supports this view in the evidence he gives this researcher in clarifying the situation of EAYM before it merged with FAM in 1964.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁹ Kaimosi Office: The letter headed notepapers for 1961-1962.

⁶⁷⁰ Kaimosi Office: The list of office bearers of EAYM 1959. 1960.

⁶⁷¹ Kaimosi Office: The list of presiding clerks of EAYM from 1946 to 1980. See Appendix VI.

⁶⁷² Smuck, *Friends*, 25.

⁶⁷³ Thomas Lung'aho's, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

Even though there is evidence that points to the fact that Atiamuga served as a deputy clerk, the ordinary members of EAYM hold the view that she was not a deputy clerk because no woman has ever served as an official of EAYM. Atiamuga is instead known as a courageous woman preacher in EAYM. It appears that because the leadership and administration of EAYM was very masculine, this is what people perceived and it became for them the reality. They could not therefore imagine that Atiamuga could have been a leader in EAYM. It is also possible that Atiamuga was left out of the ongoing activities so that people did not associate her with the leadership. She was a token woman sitting with men to show that women were not discriminated against even though her position was without power and it was not noticeable.

Atiamuga ceased to be in the mainstream structures of the EAYM in 1960 even though she appears in the records of some annual conferences when she was asked to do something special. For example, in 1967 she was attending an annual conference and she was asked to say a prayer for the establishment of new Meetings.⁶⁷⁴ Our interpretation of the evidence about Atiamuga as deputy clerk is that the position that she held was for her an empty title, and that neither power nor authority was accorded to her. This assessment is borne out when we examine the parallel case of Keran Nyamusi Alfayo.

It would appear that Nyamusi succeeded Atiamuga as deputy presiding clerk in 1960 and continued until 1966. The main evidence for this is her own statement.

Between 1960 to 1966 I was chosen to be a deputy presiding clerk of EAYM under Hezekiah Ngoya. I followed Maria Atiamuga who had been clerk between 1957 to 1960. I served for two terms until 1966 when my term of office came to an end. Since then we have never had a woman in the same capacity.⁶⁷⁵

Her name also appears in some of the board meetings between 1961 to 1966. In an executive meeting, which took place on the 5th May 1962, she signed the minutes as the deputy clerk.⁶⁷⁶ Nyamusi served under Hezekiah Ngoya who was the presiding clerk of EAYM from 1962 to 1979. As a presiding clerk for such a long period he

⁶⁷⁴ Kaimosi Office: EAYM Conference Minute 17/67 *Mavugano Mahya*.(New meetings):

⁶⁷⁵ keran alfayo, Oral Interview, 12/2/1996.

⁶⁷⁶ Kaimosi Office: *Minitsi tsia Kamiti ya Executive ya East Africa Yearly Meeting, Liranda 5th May 1962* (The Minutes of the Executive Board of East Africa Yearly Meeting).

had a number of deputy presiding clerks but when asked about Nyamusi he denied having her as his deputy clerk.

I do not remember women in the leadership positions in EAYM especially the six main posts of presiding clerks, recording clerks and treasurers we have always had men. If Keran served as my deputy clerk it was because she was representing the women's interests but not as my deputy.⁶⁷⁷

This statement from Ngoya raises doubts on what Nyamusi had earlier said and what she says about her work makes it even more difficult.

We worked very well with Hezekiah Ngoya. He did not look down upon me like other men did of the same period. He gave me opportunity to participate in the meetings. He allowed me to chair meetings if he was not going to be available. During the annual conferences we supported each other. In 1965 Charles Wakhisi the area superintendent and I were sent to Pemba [Quaker mission station founded by British Quakers as a result of the abolition of slave trade] for the mission of the church and it was a good experience. This would not have taken place if the presiding clerk [Ngoya] did not trust me.⁶⁷⁸

The statements from Ngoya and Nyamusi contradict each other but they are not the only contradictions, as we shall see. Ngoya's statement however is supported by Indire who served as the chairman of the permanent board for the whole period when Ngoya was the presiding clerk.

If women ever served as vice presiding clerks I do not remember. It must have been before we wrote the new constitution. We could not have had two assistant presiding clerks as this records show because it was not constitutional. Maybe in 1960 or 1962 they [*leaders*] were asked that question [*why women were not in leadership*] and decided to add in the name of Keran Alfayo to prove that they had not discriminated against women. But in a real sense they had no place for women as leaders.⁶⁷⁹

Indire's statement which we have just quoted mentions the possibility of Nyamusi's name being added to the records. This indicates that the records were tampered with, a fact which we have already noted in Atiamuga's case. It shows how records are prone to manipulation to suit the interests of those who are in charge. It appears as though on the one hand the leaders of EAYM wished to have on record that there was no discrimination against women (Quaker doctrine), but on the other hand leaders made sure that the real power remained effectively in the male hands.

⁶⁷⁷ Hezekia Ngoya, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996.

⁶⁷⁸ Keran Alfayo,, Oral Interview, 16/2/1996.

⁶⁷⁹ Philemon Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

The cases of Atiamuga and Nyamusi are very similar, both are named in the records as second deputy clerks. In the case of the former the list reads Jotham Standa presiding clerk, Samuel Imbuye deputy presiding clerk and Maria Atiamuga deputy presiding clerk. And for the later it is Hezekia Ngoya, Fred Kamidi and Keran Alfayo. While with Atiamuga the evidence of people is relied on heavily, with Nyamusi she provides evidence herself and she has no doubt that she was a deputy clerk. Her activities as deputy clerk included travel on behalf of the presiding clerk and presiding over meetings when the presiding clerk was not there. As well as her own evidence, her contemporaries provide proof of her work as a deputy clerk. One of her contemporaries working in EAYM was Fred Kamidi. Although the documents cited record him as the first deputy clerk, he himself denies this but affirms that he was a recording clerk when Nyamusi was a deputy clerk.⁶⁸⁰ His testimony is borne out by other records and interviews.

Further evidence is given by Lung'aho, a long-standing administrator of EAYM who says that Kamidi was never a deputy clerk but a very good recording clerk. Nyamusi was a deputy clerk even if most people might not have perceived or treated her in that manner.⁶⁸¹ With such evidence we can arrive at the conclusion that Nyamusi like her predecessor served as the deputy clerk of EAYM even though we still have to analyse further the situation of women and leadership in EAYM. So far we note that the position of deputy presiding clerk when held by these two women was regarded with ambivalence not only by the leaders of EAYM but by the public in general. The uneasiness of the situation can further be gauged because after Nyamusi became a widow she was dropped out of leadership and no other woman has been appointed in the leadership of EAYM. The underlying factors will now be examined including the cultural factor.

The cases of Atiamuga and Nyamusi raise the following issues with regard to women in the leadership and administration of EAYM. The first is the issue of documentation in EAYM and especially when they are dealing with women. And the second issue is about the nature of positions held by women in the leadership of EAYM. Documents are significant as a source of information and they are a

⁶⁸⁰ Fred Kamidi, Oral Interview, 20/2/1996.

⁶⁸¹ Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

powerful tool for influencing the minds of people or affecting the way they perceive things. In the case of EAYM, information in the documents has been written in such a way that they portray EAYM as a non-sexist organisation when it is the opposite. The document accord a position to the two women in the leadership of EAYM, but the way in which that position was viewed and interpreted by the male leaders in EAYM took away the reality of the position.

The picture which was spread abroad of the activities of the women conformed with the accepted gender roles of women. So Atiamuga and Nyamusi were associated with preaching and singing, rather than leadership because this was less threatening to the male structure. Even in traditional Luyia society women sang during community ceremonies whether they were weddings or funerals. While most men would openly wish to preserve male power and make no pretensions about it, a few would wish to do the same while paying lip service to no sex discrimination. The latter are the ones who would use manipulated documents to prove that women have not been discriminated against even if the positions they have held have been without power as Wakube observes:

If we believe that these documents are true, then Maria Atiamuga and Keran Alfayo did not have a place in the leadership structure of EAYM. They might have been asked to occupy those places as an emotive gesture to show the church that women were not discriminated against when in actual fact they were.⁶⁸²

The point that is being made here is a serious one especially when it is analysed in the light of the remarks of Hezekiah Ngoya who denies that any woman has ever been in the leadership of EAYM and he does not even remember that Keran Alfayo was his assistant. But when Keran Alfayo speaks warmly of Hezekiah Ngoya and her work as his deputy, the issue becomes a mystery that needs unfolding. Did Ngoya resent the fact that he was sharing clerkship with a woman and all along he has tried to imagine that it never happened? Or is he expressing the popular view of EAYM? The second point is probably the case because it is unlikely that he resented Nyamusi whom he was related to in marriage.⁶⁸³ Perhaps he never saw her as his

⁶⁸² Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 22/2/1996.

⁶⁸³ Hezekia Ngoya's wife Dinah Ngoya is a sister to Alfayo the late husband of Keran Nyamusi Alfayo.

deputy clerk but rather as a relation but Nyamusi was capable of combining the work and relation in such a way that her work was still distinct.

The different perceptions show that EAYM made women in its leadership what they wanted them to be but not what was necessarily in the constitution or what was the teaching of the Quaker church. The positions that were given to women were carefully designed so that no fault could be found with EAYM, even if these positions meant nothing, and when they ceased to be it was not easily noticed.⁶⁸⁴

Atiamuga was the first woman to serve as deputy clerk, Nyamusi succeeded her but when she finished a man succeeded her and no woman has ever been elected to that post. Why? The explanation given to this is the development of the Women's Yearly Meeting. According to Lung'aho, the failure to have women elected into the leadership structure of EAYM after 1966 was as a result of the Women's Yearly Meeting. It was assumed that since women had a Yearly Meeting, they could choose their own leaders. But when they came to the main meetings it was the responsibility of the men.⁶⁸⁵ But as this chapter continues to show there were reasons other than the Women's Yearly Meeting which made women to be sidelined from the leadership of EAYM.

7.5 REASONS AGAINST WOMEN LEADERSHIP.

As it has been shown in the sections above, the position of Atiamuga and Nyamusi were viewed with ambivalence both by their male colleagues and the public. While conducting this research I sought to find out why there was such an ambivalence and various reasons were given including the Abaluyia cultural factor, prejudice against women, the methods of electing leaders and the perception of time. This section analyses these reasons in detail.

7.5.1 THE CULTURAL FACTOR.

Asked why women are not elected as officials in EAYM, most men and women pointed to the fact that it was due to the Abaluyia culture.

⁶⁸⁴ Solomon Adagala, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

⁶⁸⁵ Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

It is purely *cultural* because from the faith and practice of Friends women are free to participate in the leadership of the church but in EAYM it is not easy.⁶⁸⁶

While there is no clause in the constitution that bars women from being presiding clerks the *cultural factor* stops them because it is passed on by word of mouth from one group to another and it has become an accepted tradition.⁶⁸⁷

Even though the Quakers taught men and women about equality of men and women, in reality it is culture, which is used to define equality.⁶⁸⁸

We cannot deny our culture because even Jesus Christ said 'he did not come to destroy the law [the person equates law with culture in this case].'⁶⁸⁹

Culture is important in any society because it gives it a meaning or an identity. Culture consists of a people's language, ideas, habits, beliefs, customs, social organisation and traditions. It is through culture that peoples' relationship with each other are defined and according, to Smith,

The dominant mythic structure or worldview shared by members of a culture gives them the belief that their social order is legitimate i.e. natural.⁶⁹⁰

The culture of a people can be invoked to justify for instance the subordination of women to men. This justification is reinforced by the religion which inspires the culture and sanctions the subordination. The reason why things cannot be changed easily is because they are embedded in a people's culture. Once a culture has become firmly established it creates its own traditions. Any individual who challenges the ideas and structures of his culture becomes branded as a rebel or a heretic.

As we have seen through chapter one of this thesis, the original culture of Abaluyia as expressed in the *engoko* taboo was thoroughly patriarchal. Power and authority were vested in the patriarchs, the male heads of the family, and all women were subordinate to that power and authority. The American Quaker missionaries, although they believed in and preached equality between women and men, were themselves to a great extent conditioned by American culture which was also patriarchal to a degree.

⁶⁸⁶ Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 22/2/1996.

⁶⁸⁷ Philemon Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁶⁸⁸ Abigail Indire, Oral Interview, 4/4/1996.

⁶⁸⁹ J Kesohole, Oral Interview, 12/2/1996.

⁶⁹⁰ John C. Smith, *Psychoanalytical Roots of Patriarchy*, New York: William Marrow Press, 1950. 50.

Even though these missionaries preached equality, and as we have seen tackled after their fashion the *engoko* taboo they failed to destroy the ingrained patriarchal culture of the Abaluyia. This culture was strong enough to pervade the African Quaker church structure and thinking and even today its traditional influence is strong. It is this cultural factor which worked into the forming of the structure of EAYM. In accordance with this culture it appeared natural and was taken for granted that men should be in the dominant positions.

7.5.2 PREJUDICE AGAINST WOMEN

Both men and women hold the view that it is women's fault for failing to be leaders in EAYM. Men argue that women are not aggressive enough to challenge the system, even when they are aware that they are being discriminated against.

It is the fault of women not to be leaders of EAYM. They have not challenged the male dominance, which they know is not proper.⁶⁹¹

Am also tempted to say that women are to blame because they are not coming up to take the positions that are available even though I do not want to be judgmental on that.⁶⁹²

The constitution does not bar women from being leaders in the Yearly Meeting but the women have not come up to say that we should have a woman as the presiding clerk of the yearly meeting and we have refused.⁶⁹³

When there are nominations for these posts it is the women who nominate the men they do not nominate women candidates.⁶⁹⁴

Some women also express similar views:

Our women are polite and to show respect they wait for men to give them something [leadership] but they are never given. So the women do not push themselves they are not ambitious.⁶⁹⁵

Even though the men did not like women to be their leaders the women too were not courageous enough to take up such positions, they fear what the men will say men about them.⁶⁹⁶

These remarks show clear prejudice against women. Prejudice against women is implied in associating aggression and ambition with men and fear and respect with

⁶⁹¹ Francis Mwashu, Oral Interview, 3/2/1996.

⁶⁹² Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 22/2/1996.

⁶⁹³ Fred Kaiga, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

⁶⁹⁴ Jamini Boiya, Oral Interview, 7/4/1996.

⁶⁹⁵ Norah Musundi, Oral Interview, 20/3/1996; Rachel Wanyonyi, Oral Interview, 23/2/1996.

⁶⁹⁶ Rasoah Mwashu, Oral Interview, 3/2/1996.

women. Prejudice against women is one way patriarchal society has defined men and women. Fear and respect are part of an education process and from an early age, men are trained to take risks but women are not prepared in the same manner. The women are conditioned to be timid because this is considered a woman's virtue, but to show power or ambition especially before men is considered a trait for a bad woman who wants 'to be like men'.⁶⁹⁷

Fear and respect, which is portrayed by women, is a survival tactic in a system, where men are dominant, it is not a natural trait as is implied in the prejudices. Illustrating survival tactics for women in Abaluyia culture, Makino notes that

When a man wants to stage a fight with you in the home we are taught to take a broom and use it to sweep the floor. This is a symbol of being submissive even if you are not. But you clear the fighting atmosphere and you get away from it.⁶⁹⁸

When this is applied to the choice of leaders in EAYM, women are aware that prejudices against them have been made into the finality of a divine law and it is not easy to argue for an end to discrimination.

7.5.3 THE METHOD OF ELECTING LEADERS.

In any given organisation, it is the election procedures that determine its leadership. According to the EAYM constitution, the nomination committee does the election of leaders during the annual conference. These leaders are elected from among the full members of the meeting. The procedure for election in a Quaker tradition is that:

A small group of Friends meets to do business, and begins with a time of worship, long enough to 'centre down' to a level where the accidental-prejudice, whim, fear, selfish interest - begins to edge away from the centre of attention. The agenda is then considered, in much the same way as any committee considers its agenda, but the conditions are different from most committees. There is no chairman, armed with authority: only a 'clerk' at the table charged with the duty of catching eyes both of those who speak and those who only nod, and of drafting and re-drafting a minute that represents the 'sense of the meeting, a minute that is read aloud and pulled about until it is 'right'. No votes are taken, and the question is never 'put.' It is considered to be settled only when all present are convinced that the 'right' decision has been reached, when they have 'recognised the depth' in much the same way as they recognise the depth in a meeting for worship.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁷ Elisabeth Yano, Oral Interview, 5/1/1996.

⁶⁹⁸ Priscilla Makhinio, 'Sermon illustration at Kigama conference'. December 1995 at which the researcher was present.

⁶⁹⁹ Harold foulkes, *A Quaker contribution*, London: SCM. 1965, 105 -106.

This method for choosing leaders is meant to be fair and free from fraud and Quakers especially in Britain, Europe and Eastern Europe follow it because they still maintain unprogrammed meetings. But in programmed meetings like in the American 'Middle West' clerks, pastors and superintendents assume they are free to exercise their judgement as authorities perhaps on the basis of the Bible which they hold as the supreme authority. The situation is worse in East Africa where not only the Bible is used as the Supreme authority but age and gender also determine both the type of leaders and the nature of leadership.

As well as this the sheer numbers in the nominating committees do not give room for people to discuss at length and for the leader to determine the people's consensus.

Where a single meeting grows too large, or too fluid in membership, to permit of genuine face-to face relationships, it loses its characteristic quality: and decision-making becomes a routine affair, falling into the hands of a few members.⁷⁰⁰

This was the situation of EAYM, especially from 1962 to 1979, when the same people were re-elected every year because that is the way the few who wanted to remain in power interpreted the clauses of the constitution.⁷⁰¹ But because the constitution was in the hands of a few they used it to suit the interests of the few ignoring the procedures for election. Instead of the nominating committee consulting with the proposed nominees to know whether they were too busy to take the post, lobbying and elimination of opponents to retain some people in leadership was employed.

The election of leaders therefore depended on what the leader of the nomination committee wanted and how he effected it. The mode of election was one that avoided any dissenting voices, but instead effected a leadership, which was based on age and gender, thus disqualifying the young and the women.

Apart from the mere sizes of the meeting, the concept and the interpretation of leadership also affected the election procedure. In the culture already mentioned leadership was associated with power, authority and the masculinity of physical strength. Consequently it was assumed that women did not have either the physical

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 108.

⁷⁰¹ Article VI, the Constitution of East Africa Yearly Meeting. Appendix III.

strength or the intelligence required for leadership. It is this false assumption, debasing women, which barred them from the leadership of EAYM.

Since EAYM was composed of different clans each of them wanted to be represented, because representation meant access to the seats of power, women were not easily chosen as representatives because they were considered to be weak and they did not belong to a clan as already explained. Each clan therefore sent men to represent them because they assumed that men were physically strong, intelligent and they were members of the clan. They would not send in people whom they considered weak or women in that case.

7.5.4 TIME FOR THE MEETINGS.

The interpretation of time and leadership roles is another factor that is used against women and leadership. Time is interpreted in two ways. Firstly a woman's time is defined by her duties in the home in the role of wife and mother. The second usage of time is that which links time with maturity, with the implication that women are not mature enough to become leaders. When the men are satisfied that the women are mature, then the latter will be allowed to lead.

Most male interviewees argued that it is '**not yet time**' for women to become leaders in EAYM.

The leadership of a meeting requires so much time and it is not easy for a woman to combine leadership and her family responsibilities. Alongside this women are not free to be anywhere at any time for a long period just as men.⁷⁰²

Women are not very free to be anywhere any time without the permission from their husbands. If you lead a Yearly Meeting as a clerk it is a very demanding job. One has to be able to move from one place to another any time when there is need. I have my doubts if a woman can make it as a clerk in such a circumstance.⁷⁰³

These views were a representation of what most men said in regard to time. When I asked them how women manage their time between family responsibilities and their secular work such as engineering, teaching, administration, and how church work was different from secular work, I was told there was a difference. In the men's view a woman could be both a teacher and a housewife but she could not combine family

⁷⁰² Joseph Kisia, Oral Interview, 18/3/1996.

⁷⁰³ Ezekiel Wanyonyi, Oral Interview, 23/2/1996.

responsibilities with church work, because there is no place in the leadership for women and church work is too demanding.

As well as the link between time and domestic work, time is linked to growth or maturity as expressed in the phrase '**it is not yet time**'.

Women have not been denied leadership in EAYM, but is just because their time has not come and we can see it coming. Women have to show that they are capable so that we [men] will allow them to lead in the Meetings.⁷⁰⁴

The implication includes seeing women as lacking in courage to face the challenges of leadership in the church, and lacking education, and training. These views are not based on facts but cultural beliefs and male assumptions based on prejudices against women. Lack of education for instance is a baseless argument because if one considers the educational standards of the EAYM officials between 1946 to 1979 they were no better than the women who were not officials. It could be argued that in the initial years between 1946 to 1956 women with high educational standards were less than the men. But the situation improved from 1957 onwards and the more women became educated the more they were sidelined from leadership.

In 1966 Lena Mwenesi pointed this out during the annual conference when she said,

It is high time the Friends in Kenya began electing people into leadership positions regardless of sex, as this is what is happening in other yearly meetings.⁷⁰⁵ [*She was comparing them to Friends in other parts of the world especially in North America where she had just visited while attending a conference*].

This year saw the last woman clerk from the mainstream leadership when Keran Alfayo the only woman official was dropped and she was not replaced even though there were qualified women candidates. Lack of training is another reason implied in the '**not yet time**' phrase. But this too has no basis because leadership in EAYM was not based on training. If it was then a woman like Rasoah Mutua should have been among the first leaders of EAYM. She was qualified as a pastor in 1945 but was never elected as an official of EAYM. The issue of '**not yet time**' still lingers in the minds of many men to date. For instance, in the FWCC Africa section gathering in August 1996, the issue of women and clerkship was raised and a male clerk is quoted

⁷⁰⁴ Fanuel Kaiga, Oral Interview, 8/4/1996.

⁷⁰⁵ Kaimosi Office: EAYM Conference 1967. Min 28/67 *Avatumwa va* (the delegates) Friends World Conference Consultation America. During my interview with her on 12/1/1996 she confirmed this information to me.

as having said, 'when the women are ready, we'll make them clerks:' asked when the women will be ready he said, 'they need another thirty years to come.'⁷⁰⁶ It can be argued from this attitude that the phrase 'not yet time' is based on *engoko* thinking in which women were treated as outsiders and never allowed into positions of authority. From this it follows that the phrase **not yet time** does not mean women are not yet ready but men are not ready for women's leadership. It is therefore the men who are not yet mature and not the women.

7.6 EAYM AND THE WOMEN'S YEARLY MEETING.

In 1966 the women saw the last woman official being dropped from EAYM, and among other reasons for this was due to the presence of the Women's Yearly Meeting. This view which is held by some adherents of EAYM is used to justify lack of women officials in EAYM. But when the women are asked about their relationship to EAYM most of them say that EAYM is *livugana Lia avasadza* (the Meeting of men).⁷⁰⁷ The phrases used to describe the relationship between EAYM and the women's Meeting could be interpreted to mean that EAYM is a meeting exclusively for men and the Women's Yearly Meeting is for women. But this is not the impression one gets when one attends the meetings of EAYM because there are men, women, and young people but it is exclusively male in its leadership. This is what women mean when they say that EAYM is for men.

And when the women are asked about the place of their Yearly Meeting in EAYM they say the Women's Yearly Meeting is subordinate to EAYM. The women's Yearly Meeting is not equal with EAYM because decisions passed by the women cannot be implemented unless they have been ratified by EAYM. In this case the women have a separate space in which to operate as defined by EAYM. From a legal point of view, the Women's Yearly Meeting is not registered by the registrar of societies so that it can qualify as an independent Yearly Meeting (church), but it is registered through EAYM, which means it is a subordinate meeting and has to serve the interest of EAYM.

⁷⁰⁶ Wena, Answering *the Love of God*, 11.

⁷⁰⁷ Inis Mugesia, Oral Interview, 20/12/1995, Roselida Mwengu, Oral Interview, 16/2/1996, Loice Keya, Oral Interview, 20/2/1996. Other phrases such as, *livugana lia makoti* (the meeting of coats

But how do the women perceive this especially when leadership of EAYM is exclusively male? Although the women did not voice a formal protest against EAYM to show that they were dissatisfied with its organisational structure, their request for a women's co-ordinator in 1965 said it all as discussed in chapter six⁷⁰⁸. Much of the work of EAYM was organised centrally through various departments based at Kaimosi offices. These offices dealt with administration, finance, institutions, youth work, and church extension services. Men managed all these offices; the few women in the central office did secretarial duties. In theory the central offices were meant to derive their strength from the local meetings, but in reality the offices just exercised a considerable authority on their own account.

The reason why the central office commanded a lot of authority was that it was handling and disseminating a huge amount of information within and outside EAYM. Through the central office, for example, EAYM communicated with other Quaker organisations such as FUM and FWCC. It handled all the finances from both the local contributions made by the churches and the outside grants especially from FUM and its related institutions. The office acted as an ecumenical link between the EAYM and other denominations through their representation in the National Christian Council of Kenya.⁷⁰⁹ The central office was also a link between the church and the government in relation to the institutions that were under the sponsorship of EAYM. As a link the central office held not only power to deal with information but also the social, economic and political power that went with the handling of the information.

The administration of EAYM was designed in such a way that power was invested in the office of the general secretary who was seen, and has been described, as a very powerful man.⁷¹⁰ Even though according to structure, this post was under the

implying men) *Livugana lia siasa* (the meeting of 'politics' implying that men's meetings are full of debate and arguments),

⁷⁰⁸ A woman's co-ordinator pages 225-230

⁷⁰⁹ EAYM is a member of National Council of Churches of Kenya. The EAYM involvement goes back to the beginnings of the council through the Kikuyu conferences. M. G. Capon, *Towards Unity in Kenya: The Story of Co-operation between Missions and Churches in Kenya 1913-1945*. Nairobi: Christian Council of Kenya. 1962.

⁷¹⁰ Stanley Indezwa, Presiding clerk of Nairobi Yearly Meeting: A speech given at the funeral of Rachel Chilson at Kaimosi on 23rd of March 1996 at which the researcher was present.

executive committee⁷¹¹, it appeared to be the highest post in EAYM. The presiding clerks, the recording clerks, the treasurers and the chairman of the permanent board did not have equal powers to the general secretary despite the fact that the general secretary was an employee of EAYM.

With this kind of administration women were pushed to the periphery because they lacked both space and personnel in an office which held so much power in EAYM. Like women in other churches they were made invisible even though they were the majority in the church.

It is often said that women are in the “background” and should be kept there. They are merely support workers.... In many churches women are consistently given responsibilities in the kitchen, while men are elected or appointed to the important boards and leadership positions. While decisions and policies may be discussed in the kitchen, they are certainly not made there... the conspiracy to keep women relegated to the background is also aided by the continuous psychological and political strategizing that keeps women from realising their own potential power in the church. Not only are they rewarded for performance in “backbone” or supportive positions but they are penalised for trying to move from the backbone to the head position -the leadership of the church.⁷¹²

The Women’s Yearly Meeting was expected to work and support EAYM from the background. According to the constitution, the women’s Meetings fell under the category of subordinate meetings.

Any group of Monthly or Quarterly Meeting and any special group such as women’s organisation may form associations provided these come within the limits of Article III and are consistent with the Welfare of the Yearly meeting.⁷¹³[Article III is about the purpose of EAYM, which is to maintain and promote Christian faith and service in accordance to the principles and practice of Quaker faith]

By 1965 the Women’s Yearly Meeting was no longer a prayer group but a Yearly Meeting with a structure similar to EAYM. Nevertheless during its development the Women’s yearly Meeting was being stripped of all its powers because the expatriate women who used to represent it at the EAYM level decreased and in 1962 Dorothy Pitman who partly did women's work left. Even though Keran Nyamusi Alfayo was an official in EAYM she had the title with no authority. In 1965 women began to

⁷¹¹ See figure two. The structure of EAYM. page 258

⁷¹² Jacquelyn Grant, “Black Theology and the Black woman”, in Gayraud S. Wilmore and James H. Cone (Eds.) *Black Theology: a Documentary History 1966 - 1979*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979. 420.

⁷¹³ Article VII. The Constitution of EAYM. Appendix III.

find ways of recreating their space in EAYM especially at the central office. In 1966 they saw the last woman official in EAYM being dropped and not replaced. This made them press harder for a woman co-ordinator as was narrated in chapter six.

This woman would act as their administrator even if the women did not use this name for fear of raising difficulties with EAYM. But the presence of a woman's co-ordinator was definitely going to affect the relationship between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting because she would be close to the centre of information power. Between 1974 and 1976 the women were served with two expatriate women co-ordinators and the relationship between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting was amicable.

But the situation between EAYM and the Women's Yearly Meeting began to go sour with the arrival of Mary Lwaki, the national woman co-ordinator.⁷¹⁴ She held a position similar to that of the general secretary of EAYM. She had access to the wider Quaker world especially strengthening the women's link with USFWI to which the Women's Yearly Meeting had been admitted in 1967. She had ecumenical links with women of other denominations who also discussed women's issues. She was able to travel widely, representing the Quaker women in various meetings. She was entitled to sit in the meetings of the workers of EAYM which were exclusively male and through her the women could get to know what was going on in EAYM.

Through her position women were no longer in the background but in public. With the Women's Yearly Meeting moving away from feminine roles to roles that were traditionally in the male arena, what would stop the Women's Yearly meeting from demanding equality? The threat posed to EAYM by the behaviour of the women's Yearly Meeting led EAYM to challenge the office of the co-ordinator rather than review the place of women in its organisational structure. Lwaki was accused of not being loyal to EAYM. 'To whom is the woman's co-ordinator responsible? Is it the EAYM or the USFW international?'⁷¹⁵ Such questions were never raised when the co-ordinators were expatriates because it was assumed they were serving the interests of USFWI which also reflects on how the Abaluyia men perceived the expatriate workers. Even if the expatriate co-ordinators failed to serve the interests of EAYM

⁷¹⁴ The issues involving the national women's co-ordinator have been dealt with in chapter 6:4.

⁷¹⁵ Kaimosi Office: Letters between EAYM and USFW International Secretaries 1977- 1978.

they would not be accused because their term of office would come to an end. Similarly, the expatriate co-ordinator could be told what the men in EAYM wanted them to hear which would not necessarily be the truth.

But this was not the case with Lwaki, the national co-ordinator who knew the inside story and was able to unravel it even more. In doing so she was perceived as a woman who had lost her feminine qualities and she could not possibly be serving the interests of the Women's Yearly Meeting. By questioning her allegiance EAYM wanted to prove that she was not serving the Women's Yearly Meeting but an outside body and this is why she had the courage to raise certain issues. By sidelining her EAYM was evading the issue at stake which was the place of women in its structure. This was a way of dealing with both the office and the person of a women's co-ordinator and to silence the women on the whole. In 1979 amidst other conflicts in EAYM Lwaki resigned and the office of the women's co-ordinator was closed. The fact that it has never been re-opened is indicative of how EAYM perceived the Women's Yearly Meeting and the role it was expected to play and that is to serve EAYM from the periphery and not to seek to come to the centre.

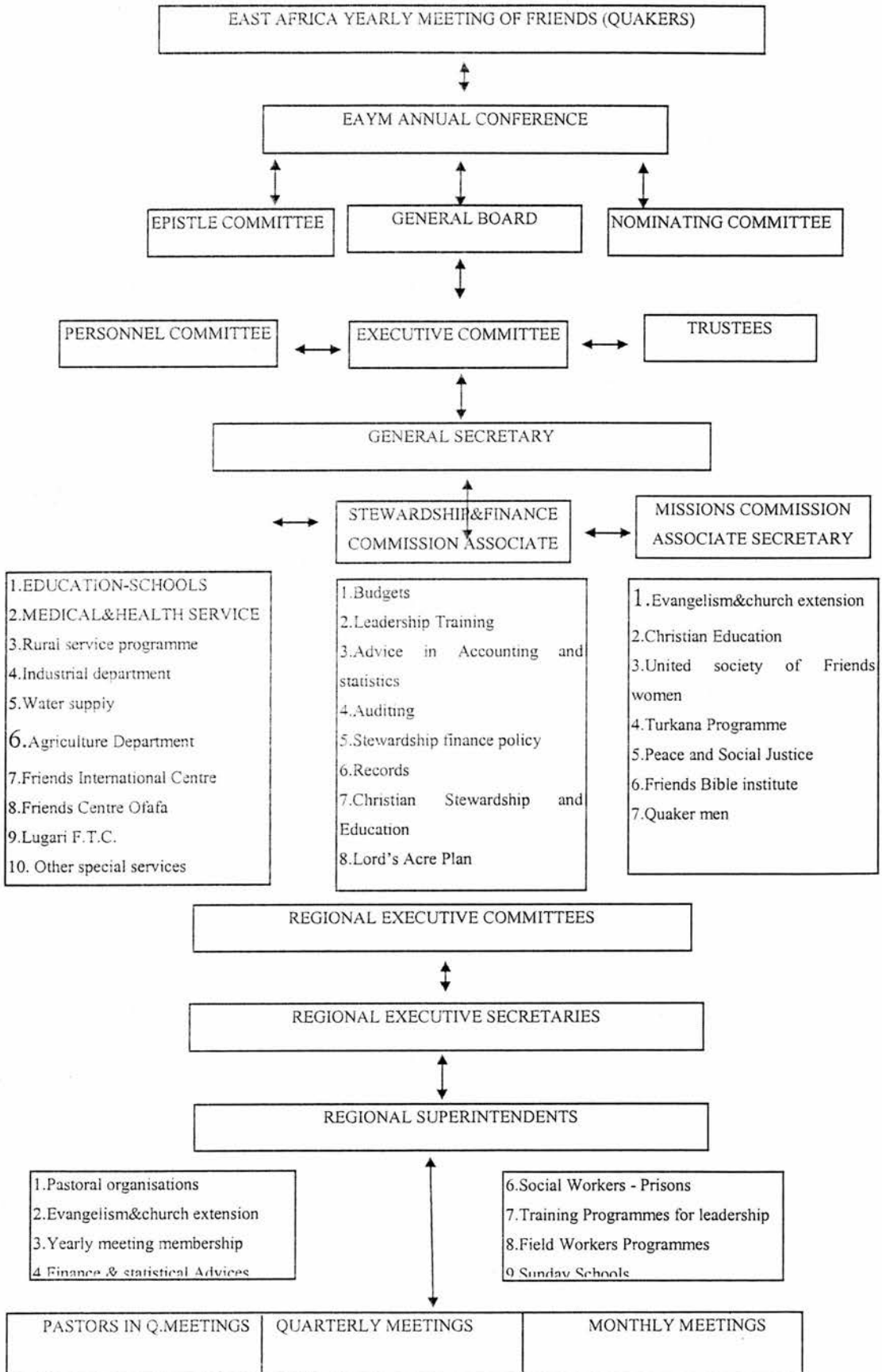
7.7 CONCLUSION

Although EAYM is part of a religious community that reacted against structures which were hierarchical and authoritarian, its practice indicates the opposite. The concept of *engoko* permeated EAYM's structure and thinking and influenced the way leadership was understood and interpreted. As a result male dominance in the administration of EAYM became part of its organisational structure. Between 1946 when EAYM was established and 1996 when this research was conducted women have remained on the margins of leadership. The cases of Atiamuga and Nyamusi have shown the contradictions of the place of women in the leadership of EAYM.

These contradictions are rooted in the patriarchal culture of both Abaluyia people and American Quakerism. At the beginning of this chapter I noted that patriarchal leadership is one of the things that united the American missionaries and Abaluyia men. Although the American Quakers challenged some Abaluyia traditions that they thought were incompatible with Quakerism, patriarchal leadership was left untouched. Because Abaluyia culture and American Quakerism united in patriarchal leadership, EAYM adopted it as the norm. As well as patriarchal leadership, the

secrecy with which the constitution was kept resulted in the failure of the members of EAYM to understand their role in the election of leaders. The minority who had access to the constitution interpreted it to suit their own interests. Thus the leadership and administration of EAYM remained in the hands of a few men. The majority especially women were pushed from mainstream leadership to the periphery. They together with other adherents accepted the situation as it was because they thought it was the norm. When the women began to realise that it was not the norm they tried to move from the periphery to the centre but the centre was too hard to break into. Instead the women were made even more silent when the office which brought them nearer to the centre was closed. As long as the women remained in the periphery, EAYM was content with them but when they questioned this position EAYM worked hard to silence them.

FIGURE 2. The Structure of EAYM



CHAPTER EIGHT

8 MINISTRY IN EAYM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF WOMEN

8.1 INTRODUCTION.

Quakers have earned plaudits for consistently championing women's rights because they have no ordained clergy, anyone male or female is free to minister within the simple meetings for worship as she or he is led by the spirit of God; From the earliest days when meetings recorded the gift of ministry, they recognised women along with men.⁷¹⁶

This section considers this statement in regard to women and ministry in the East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends. Even though the statement might be true as far as the Quaker teaching is concerned, the practice in EAYM reflects a very different situation. Why is this the case? This issue will be explored against the background EAYM's doctrine of the church as 'a priesthood of all believers' and its practice as a programmed Yearly Meeting. As we have seen earlier in this thesis a considerable number of Yearly Meetings including EAYM, while still maintaining the doctrine of 'the Priesthood of all believers' adopted programmed worship conducted by a pastor. The duties of a pastor are to conduct the meetings of worship (which include vocal prayer, the singing of hymns and preaching), to dedicate infants, to accept new members and to conduct weddings and funerals.

The preparation of a pastor is through theological training which is given to both men and women. This chapter will examine theological education especially for women in pastoral ministry which appears to be influenced more by gender than qualification. In doing this the chapter will seek to show that even if Quakers were among the first denominations to give theological education to women for pastoral ministry, the position of Quaker women in pastoral ministry is not different from those denominations which require ordination for ministry. The chapter will also demonstrate that Abaluyia notions of ritual authority have had a greater impact on EAYM's view of ministry and pastoral duties. This has arisen due to the fact that

⁷¹⁶ H. Larry Ingle, 'A Quaker Woman on Women's Roles, Mary Pennington 1678.' In *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 16. No. 3.1991. 587.

EAYM has not been able to formulate its own theological position on matters of doctrine and faith and relies heavily on tradition as it was handed down to them by missionaries.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first one sets the scene of ministry among Friends. It is followed by an analysis of training for ministry and its implications on women. The last section looks at the view of ministry in EAYM and how women have been sidelined from it.

8.2 SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY ABOVE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY.

Writing about the work of women in early Quakerism William Braithewaite has observed that ‘the equality of men and women in spiritual privilege and responsibility has been one of the glories of Quakerism.’⁷¹⁷ Historical accounts on the place and role of women in Quakerism give Braithewaite’s claim support.⁷¹⁸ How did the Quakers manage equality in ministry and personal relationships? The answer to this question lies in the Quaker doctrine of the ‘Inner Light’ which applied no distinction of sex when it was used to define faith. It brought into effect the realisation and acceptance of the equality between men and women in matters of spiritual privilege, ministry and responsibility. Faith for these Quakers was understood as a matter of experience and life rather than an adherence to certain theological propositions. With this definition the Quakers rejected the authority of Scripture and church tradition which were often used to establish human authority and instead they stressed spiritual authority.

As regards ministry, Quakerism grew out of a 17th century context where ministry was defined in terms of age, gender, and education. Fox, the founder of Quakerism, challenged this view when he said that ‘being in Oxford or Cambridge did not qualify one to be a minister.’⁷¹⁹ This affirmation was an antithesis of the commonly held view about ministry. Fox enlarged the concept of ministry to include everybody who was in communion with God through the Spirit.

By emphasising the Spirit the Quakers designed their meetings for worship in such a way that the worshippers simply gathered, listened, waited, and sought to be

⁷¹⁷ Braithewaite, *The Second Period*, 270.

⁷¹⁸ Bacon, *Mothers*, 3.

⁷¹⁹ Nickall, *Gorge Fox*, 18.

obedient.⁷²⁰ In this kind of worship there was no need for an intermediary such as a priest or minister. The Quakers rejected the very concepts of priest and minister, which were used to define ministry. They recognised, however and accepted the belief in the ‘priesthood of all believers.’⁷²¹ In their meetings of worship therefore, God appointed those whom He wanted to speak.

Margaret Fell, wife to George Fox, defended the ministry of women through her writings and was herself a great preacher.⁷²² Barclay, who was a theological archetype of the early Quakers, also gave a justification for the ministry of women. He devoted a large portion of his 1667 Apology to ministry especially by women. He argued that ‘the gospel ministry was not monopoly by a certain kind of men, but it was a gift of God to whom he chose, male or female.’⁷²³ These Quakers defended the ministry by women on the grounds that their basis of authority was the Spirit and not the Scriptures. But this does not mean that the Quakers did not value the Scriptures, they held the Scriptures in high esteem and used them in their preaching but they defined them as a declaration of the fountain but not the fountain itself. In this case the Scriptures were subordinate to the Spirit ‘from which they have all their excellency and certainty’.⁷²⁴

8.2.1 SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY ABOVE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY.

Views of the nature of ministry among some Quakers began to change as a result of revival and the holiness movements in America which affected them from 1860. The Quakers who were influenced by revival shifted their emphasis of authority from the sense of the Inner Light to the authority of Scriptures. As a result they designed their meetings to be in line with their view of authority. Public testimony and prayer followed by preaching and a teaching ministry superseded silence in the meetings for worship.⁷²⁵

⁷²⁰ D. Elton Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers*, New York: Harper and Row, 1966, 87-88.

⁷²¹ I Peter 2:9. ‘But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.’

⁷²² Margaret Fell, *Women’s Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures; A Warning to Friends*. York: Epistle. 1667. Kunze, *Margaret Fell*, 19 - 20.

⁷²³ Robert Barclays, *Apology for a True Christian Divinity is The Same as held forth and Preached By The People in Scorn Called Quakers: Being in full Explanation and Vindication of their Principles And Doctrines*, First English Edition, 1678. 308.

⁷²⁴ Ibid, 46.

⁷²⁵ Russell, *The History*, 427; Ham, *The Transformation*, 125.

These changes had repercussions on women because, instead of the elders and overseers, who had been female as well as male, the leadership of the Meetings passed into the hands of the newly appointed pastors, who were almost entirely male. Thus the office of pastor came to be regarded as a male prerogative and 'women lost many of the opportunities for service they had before - not only as elders and overseers, but also as ministers.'⁷²⁶ In this way the whole nature of ministry was changed from being a shared responsibility to a speciality of a chosen few. This male pastoral system passed into EAYM when it was founded.

In addition to the reduction of women in ministry, the introduction of pastors to Quaker meetings raised the issue of ministerial training, thus forcing the establishment of Bible Colleges to prepare people for ministry in the Quaker meetings which had adopted aspects from the revival movement. One such college was the Cleveland Bible Institute College in Ohio founded in 1879.⁷²⁷ It trained pastors for the Quaker churches but also encouraged and prepared people to be overseas missionaries.

By 1902 the school had twenty-one alumni serving as foreign missionaries. Arthur Chilson, Jefferson Ford, Willis Hotchkiss, Edgar Hole, and Emory Rees in Kenya where the Malones had persuaded the Ohio Yearly meetings committees to support missions.⁷²⁸

Training for ministry had other repercussions for Meetings because it meant they had adopted a specialised kind of ministry with a trained pastor whose living they had to provide.⁷²⁹ But this raised a further question for Meetings: what was the difference between a trained pastor and the 'hireling ministry' which the old Quaker tradition condemned?⁷³⁰ This created a dilemma between the old Quaker tradition and the desire to keep the revival fire burning. While their doubts were genuine, Jones has argued that

This objection was in the main a misdirected point of opposition. There was no good reason why one who was giving his life, his powers and his time to the work of the society should not have financial provision made for him, so that the work should be physically possible.⁷³¹

⁷²⁶ Rasmussen, *A History*, 18

⁷²⁷ Barbour and Frost *The Quakers*, 249.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁷²⁹ Russell, *The History*, 485.

⁷³⁰ Nickalls, *George Fox*, 109.

⁷³¹ Jones, *The Later*, 917.

The early Quaker principle was a reaction against a 'hireling ministry' which was maintained by the state in Britain through the taxes drawn from the public. But 'genuine' travelling ministers were to be given ample support.

From the above analysis it is evident that the shift from spiritual authority to scriptural authority changed the view of ministry among some North American. Instead of ministry being open to men and women alike it became a ministry for a specialised chosen few. As well as this the financial implications for ministry were different from those of the 17th c. Quakers.

It is against this background that the rest of this chapter analyses ministry in EAYM with special reference to women, starting with the training of women at the Friends Bible Institute (FBI) Kaimosi known now as Friends Theological college (FTC).⁷³² In this thesis we will use the first name.

8.3 FRIENDS BIBLE INSTITUTE.

When Rasoah Mutua⁷³³ was admitted to the Friends Bible Institute in 1943 it was an indication that the Friends Africa Mission which was to become EAYM in 1946,

⁷³² Friends Bible Institute is the only Quaker Institution of its kind in Africa. It is one of the institutions that is still managed by the Friends United Meeting. It was started in 1943 at Lugulu under the leadership of Jefferson Ford, assisted by Joeli Litu and James Sangole. In 1948 when Jefferson Ford retired from the field, the school was temporarily closed and in 1950 it was reopened and moved from Lugulu to Kaimosi where there were more resident missionaries who could help with the teaching and administration. The administration of FBI remained in the hands of missionaries until 1970 when the first African principal was appointed. Since 1943 the Institute has trained over four hundred pastors mostly men from EAYM, Uganda and Tanzania Yearly Meetings. Despite the age and work of the institute it has not been able to develop both physically and theologically to match up with the development of EAYM. Part of this is due to the fact that FBI has never been integrated fully into EAYM to be supported financially and to make full use of those who are trained at the institute. FBI instead has relied heavily on FUM's funding through the presence of missionaries who have determined the nature of theological education at the institution.

⁷³³ Rasoah Mutua commonly known as Mama Rasoah was born 'during the hunger of Demesi' (It has been calculated to be 1895) at Bukokholo in Bungoma and she died on the 20th of July 1996 at Lugulu. Mutua first went to a Church Missionary School at Butonge for one week, and left because Lukhale the Headman wanted to marry her and a cousin of hers. Mutua and her cousin fled from Bukokholo to Nambami near Lugulu. From Nambami she heard about the mission school at Lugulu and went to be enrolled as a student. Her father was opposed to her going to school but she managed to stay through the help of Andrea Chemiati and Yohana Masambu. These elders threatened her father wrongly by telling him that if he took Mutua away from the school he would have to pay a fine of two cows to the missionary for her name to be deleted from the register. But her father could not afford to pay two cows so he reluctantly let her continue with school. While she was a student, she became a Christian through the preaching of Jefferson Ford making her commitment through the song 'Jesus is calling you'. It was not easy to be a Christian during her time because society was very suspicious of the missionaries and the new religion. Despite the difficulties, Mutua was among the first people to be confirmed as members of the Quaker church at Lugulu Monthly Meeting in August 1919, four months after it had been established. By this time Mutua had finished her basic education and was qualified to

gave men and women equal opportunities in ministerial training. However she remained a preacher for the rest of her life rather than become involved in pastoral duties which her male colleagues conducted.⁷³⁴ Does this suggest that both men and women were trained as pastors but only men were given the authority to act as Pastors? A survey of women graduates of FBI indicates that Mutua was not unusual in this regard.⁷³⁵ Before we examine further the distinction between preacher and pastor in the context of EAYM, we will look at FBI as an institution and women and pastoral training.

8.3.1 BACKGROUND TO FRIENDS BIBLE INSTITUTE.

When FAIM was set up in 1902, their aim was to create a 'self-supporting, and self-propagating native church in the mission field'⁷³⁶ In order to accomplish this, the missionaries who went to Kenya had to win the confidence of Abaluyia among whom they worked. Even though it was not an easy task to begin with, they were joined by brave Abaluyia men and women who helped to set up the first mission stations and to initiate sub-mission stations which they managed without the help of the missionaries.

In Vihiga for example Amugune and his wife Amigidzi started the work of evangelism at Mbale in 1908. In 1911 they moved to Chavakali and started a church on their own initiative. This was just in one area of the region that was covered by FAM. Similar cases were taking place in other areas too. Because the Quakers did not have to wait for people to be ordained before they could minister in the churches it was easier for a self-propagating church to be realised.

teach. In 1921 Mutua received a call to preach the word of God, a gift that Helen Ford noticed, appointing her to be a leader of the *Halhamis* morning meetings for women and this earned her the name of 'our Bible woman'. As a teacher she was to be paid, but public opinion, jealousy and sex discrimination forced the missions to stop paying her. Ironically she never trained as a teacher because of the belief in society that women in teaching were running away from family responsibilities and becoming lazy. In 1921 she got married to a man who was not yet a member of the church but he became a member in 1928. As a wife and mother Mutua served as an evangelist to women of her area helping her fellow women at Lugulu as well as raising her family. In 1931 her husband died leaving her with small children. She worked in the mission station of Kaimosi as a matron for the girls' school between 1940 to 1942 to provide education for her children. When FBI was opened at Lugulu in 1943, she decided to return home and train as a pastor. After training, Mutua became an outstanding preacher speaking mostly to women but also in mixed groups. She travelled extensively in EAYM as a preacher and was one of the women who became prison preachers.

⁷³⁴ Rasoah Mutua Oral Interview, 27/2/1996.

⁷³⁵ A survey of women graduates of FBI between 1946 to 1996. Appendix VI.

⁷³⁶ Hotchkiss, *Sketches*, 111.

The increase in the number of people attending the services of worship and the number of churches further encouraged the practice a self-governing church. Even though the missionaries in the field seem not to have been prepared for Abaluyia leadership, the board of missions in Richmond Indiana (USA) sent out a circular in 1922 urging the missionaries to train local people to be in charge of their Churches.

Instead of serving as pastor of the meetings, the missionaries should devote their time and strength to training and preparation of Christian leaders on the various fields.⁷³⁷

This laid the foundation for the training of Abaluyia pastors although it was not until 1930 that the first steps for training were taken. It was a case where the Mission office passed on policy in regard to the native church, but it was up to the missionaries to implement it. The missionaries in the field did not in this case implement what the mission office had directed because this period for them was a difficult one as they were faced with challenges from Abaluyia Quakers on matters of doctrine particularly the Holy Spirit. This doctrinal misunderstanding led to the establishment of the first independent church in Western Kenya, 'The Holy Spirit Church.'⁷³⁸ Although the situation that led to the rise of the Holy Spirit Church, is complex and beyond the scope of this thesis, the issues that led to its formation are worth mentioning because they laid the foundation for the type of theological education that was adopted by the Quakers. These issues were the differences between Arthur Chilson and Jefferson Ford on the Bible, Salvation and the Holy Spirit.

Because the Quakers did not have a formulated creed to which its adherents subscribed, they had formulated a form of catechism which was being used in their congregations. Converts began by being inquirers then probationers and when they renounced all the 'heathen' ways and followed the laid down rules of the church including paying *ezaka and ekehanwa* (tithes), they were recorded as members of the

⁷³⁷ Painter, *The Hill*, 111.

⁷³⁸ Detailed research about these churches has been done by Anne Marie Bak Rasmussen in her book *Modern African Spirituality: The Independent Holy Spirit Churches In East Africa*, London: British Academic Press, 1996. Kasiera Has also written some chapters on The Holy Spirit Movement in Western Kenya in *The Development of Pentecostal Christianity In Western Kenya: With Particular Reference To Maragoli, Nyang'ori And Tiriki 1909-1942*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Aberdeen University, 1981, chapter five & six.

church, thus being saved. Even though this is what was laid down not all the missionaries followed it.

Chilson for instance stressed the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with its manifestations including speaking in tongues. He was of the view that the work of mission would be easy if both missionaries and Africans were filled with the Holy Spirit.⁷³⁹ Ford on the other hand was a staunch believer of 'Holiness' and though he believed in the work of the Holy Spirit unlike Chilson he did not stress the baptism of the Holy Spirit or its outward manifestations. He was mostly concerned with teaching the Bible which he interpreted literally, and with care that nothing heretical against the Bible was taught.⁷⁴⁰

The doctrinal and theological issues between the missionaries began to be evident during the Native Prayer Conferences (NPC) that took place between 1924 and 1927. In 1924, a NPC was held at Lugulu, Chilson and Joseph Ngaira his helper spoke at this meeting laying emphasis on public confession of sin; repentance; forgiveness; sanctification with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; heaven and the Second Coming of Christ. As well as teaching, Joseph Ngaira led the people in public prayer and confession. This became a format for other NPC's which followed as Chilson's wife recalls in her writing.

During one of the conferences people were stirred, they began crying and praying all over the house. They began making confessions, until it was necessary for us to hold meetings for men and women separately, where they could find help with their burdened, condemned hearts. This work of grace continued from conference to conference.⁷⁴¹

Public confession and emotionalism in prayer became an issue for the Quaker establishment and Abaluyia themselves. The Quaker establishment represented by Ford reacted against the teaching of Chilson because it seemed to undermine the teaching on salvation as taught by Quakers and also it was introducing into the church public confession which was an Abaluyia tradition. But the people who followed the teaching of Chilson were reacting against the legalistic way in which salvation had been taught to them, leaving no room for the working of the Holy

⁷³⁹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 25, 57, 66.

⁷⁴⁰ Ford and Anderson, *The steps*, 21.

⁷⁴¹ Chilson, *Ambassador*, 156.

Spirit. And also they were indigenizing the faith by making use of their traditional custom of public confession to show that they were Christians.

In 1928 the board moved in to arrest the situation by granting leave to Arthur Chilson who was not allowed back to FAM. It was said that this was because of economic considerations and policy changes, but the real issue was that both the board and the missionaries in the field could not cope with Chilson's theology and his intolerance of other ways of thinking.⁷⁴² Jefferson Ford was asked to take over the evangelistic department in order to suppress the new wave of teaching. However the seeds of discord and division had been sown and those who confessed that they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit continued to meet and dig in their heels and finally left to form The Holy Spirit Church.

In order to prevent more of such happenings, Ford thought it was necessary to teach what was proper Quakerism from his perspective to the elders so that they could teach it to the people. In 1930 a committee of missionaries and Abaluyia men was set up to plan and organise the type of training suitable for the churches. This committee organised short courses in January 1931 and 1932 for elders who were leaders of Monthly Meeting. The courses were open to elders who were leaders of the Monthly Meetings. As we have seen in chapter seven, *abakulundu* (elders) were always men and so it was men only who attended. Even leaders of the Women's Monthly Meetings were excluded because the women's Monthly Meetings were subordinate to the main Monthly Meetings. The courses taught to the elders included the Bible, the doctrine of the Friends Society, and its history and methods of work.⁷⁴³

The teaching of the Quaker history and doctrine was done from the perspective of the evangelical Quakers who had adopted programmed Meetings and accepted the role of pastors.⁷⁴⁴ To teach the history of Quakers whilst not having women on the course was in itself a contradiction of the Quaker position on women. Although Quakers saw themselves as champions of equality between men and women on spiritual matters, practice, especially in the Kenyan context was different. The exclusion of women from learning their history implied that their position in the movement would

⁷⁴² Rasmussen, *The History*, 62.

⁷⁴³ KNA: Report of the committee on pastors short courses 1932.

⁷⁴⁴ FYM, *Faith and Practice of the Five Years Meeting of Friends in America, Book of Discipline*. Richmond Indiana: 1902.

be different from the men's. The elders who studied the history interpreted it from their own perspective and continued to see women as recipients rather than participants just as in the history of the Abaluyia, women were on the periphery.

The course on Quaker history outlined the beginnings of Quakerism in Britain and its spread to America. It tended to represent evangelical teaching and implied Quakers had always been evangelical. The context out of which Quakerism grew and developed was not clearly defined to show the difference between Quakerism and mainstream Christianity. Neither were the different Quaker traditions explored to show that evangelical Quakers were one of the groups in the Quaker traditions. There was silence over the unprogrammed Hicksites and the British Quakers even though Quakerism started in Britain.

The position of Quakers on the concept of the Inner Light, the authority of Scripture and ministry were presented from an evangelical perspective. This form of Quakerism was untrue to the original Quakers, and it failed to show that women had in fact equal opportunities in ministry. The historical contribution of Quaker women was presented in a way that justified their position in the context of the Abaluyia society, but not in the Quaker movement at large. It seems that the history and doctrine of the Quaker movement was presented with a view to convert the people or to strengthen the faith of followers rather than understand the movement itself.

The use of the Bible in teaching Quakerism was so strong that it presented Quakerism as indistinguishable from mainstream evangelical Christianity. Of this the elders were custodians and if anyone challenged or questioned this teaching they were seen as disobeying God. The teaching of the Bible was literal because Jefferson Ford was a fundamentalist and for him the prime source of teaching and authority was the Bible which he interpreted literally. The literal interpretation of the Bible reinforced the role of elders in the church and the community because whatever they said was taken as the divine truth. Since women were excluded from the courses given to the elders they lacked the knowledge with which to challenge the authority held by the elders in the Meetings.

Even though the Quakerism taught to the elders represented a particular perspective, they managed to learn something of their Quaker roots. It is this type of Quakerism which they passed on to those whom they were leading. At the same time this type of

Quakerism gave them an identity in regard to other denominations around them. It also gave them the courage to ask for a school where they would receive more knowledge.

Plans were discussed for a school for our church elders and it was hoped this year some of the women workers of the mission could attend also, but lack of finance made it impossible to arrange, for even the smaller group who have attended the past two years, to falter [sic] again this year.⁷⁴⁵

It is not clear who the women workers mentioned here were and there are different interpretations of the report. If it meant women missionaries there are questions as to why they would need to take the course unless they were facilitators. Since the issue is linked with finances it is possible that these were women from the local community, probably the wives of the men who worked at the mission

The use of financial constraints as an excuse not to include women was not a strange phenomenon. It is possible that there were no funds to increase the number of people by accommodating women, but much of it was to do with the beliefs and prejudices against women in regard to their place and role in the society. Knowledge was power and it had to be given to the people in society who would be in a position to use it for the growth of the mission. When it came to choosing these people the elders were the obvious choice and since women did not qualify to be elders they were excluded from this power.

This raises doubt on how genuine Friends Africa Mission was when they talked about raising the standards of the Abaluyia women whom they saw as downtrodden with the social and cultural norms of their society. The fact that they denied women the very knowledge which would have liberated them is an indication of how Quaker missionaries were not ready to confront the patriarchal systems of Abaluyia society. But why was this the case? Either the patriarchal system of leadership reflected a similar pattern to what the missionaries were used to or it was too complicated for the missionary to understand and get involved.

To confront the system would mean a shake up of Abaluyia society, challenging the very men who designed the system and the women who held the system together. The missionaries who were keen to save souls would not dare take this path, and therefore acquiesced in the patriarchal system to establish themselves. It is in this

⁷⁴⁵ KNA: Report on pastors committee 1939.

connection I argue that the missionary ideals were compromised and the Abaluyia patriarchal system was reinforced.

Women's exclusion from Bible training was brought to light by Esther Ford the daughter of Jefferson Ford, when she accompanied her father to the Monthly Meetings to see how women were getting on. During these visits she discovered that men were attending special courses at Kaimosi but women had nothing of that equivalence.⁷⁴⁶ She introduced Bible study for women at the local level which developed into Bible study groups. Although these Bible study groups gave them courage to cope with issues in Christian family life, they failed to empower them to ask for equal opportunity in other areas of church life. These study groups were treated as adjuncts to the main meetings and at the same time they justified rather than challenged the prejudices of men against women. As women were having Bible study groups the elders' committee continued to press hard for a Bible school.

8.3.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FRIENDS BIBLE INSTITUTE.

In 1941, the elders came to certain conclusions on how the Bible school would be built. It was going to be done by the local people through the help of the missionaries in charge of the stations. In their last committee meeting they agreed that,

- (a) 11 monthly meetings unite in building a mud and grass classroom and 2 dormitories
- (b) 8 monthly meeting to pay an African teacher 600 shillings per year. Two students from each monthly meeting who are old enough to know what they want to do. Students supply own clothing and bedding monthly meeting care for food.
- (c) J. F. Ford head of the school therefore built in Kitosh.⁷⁴⁷

Soon after this committee meeting the buildings of the Bible school begun to be erected with labour given by the local people and the purchase of local material. This was supplemented with 'a gift of \$800 through the initiative of Jefferson Ford who became the principal of the School.'⁷⁴⁸

Local involvement was not only with the building of the school, but with other aspects as well. The task of selecting and supporting candidates was given to the Monthly Meetings ensuring that the local community was involved in the preparation of its own leaders.

⁷⁴⁶Chapter six, Esther Ford and the growth of prayer groups. 6.3.1. Page 186 ff.

⁷⁴⁷ KNA: Report on pastors committee. 1941.

⁷⁴⁸ Painter, *The Hill*, 111.

While we were at the Bible Institute it was the practice of the School and the Yearly Meeting that all students had to be members in good standing. This meant that the students to be admitted had to be approved not only by the school but by their Monthly Meetings. The practice meant they had to bring a letter from the Monthly Meeting recommending them. This was true for both men and women.⁷⁴⁹

In Kimball's view this gave men and women equal opportunity. However there were several ways in which this did not lead to equality. It was up to the Monthly Meeting to decide on who was to be trained, and this depended on cultural perceptions of leadership and the position of women. According to the Luyia tradition, age and gender influenced leadership and when training for leaders was introduced it was as an investment for a Monthly Meeting. It was unlikely therefore that a Monthly Meeting would chose to invest in a woman for training even if the regulations were similar for selecting men and women.

As well as this, the views on marriage for Abaluyia people were also an impediment to women and their training for the leadership of the church. Single women were seen as a potential loss to their homes of birth and married women were aliens in their husband's homes. The role of women seen as producers rather than leaders and since church structures were patterned after the traditional society, views on women in regard to marriage remained the same. Thus lessened their chances of leadership, and effectively excluded them in terms of spiritual leadership.

The other area which made it difficult for women to be selected for training, was the criterion of selection based on maturity. In a society where the concept of maturity was associated with marriage and family life, men had an advantage over women. This is not because married women were not regarded as mature but after marriage, mobility was much easier for men than for women. As producers, women had a heavier responsibility for the home and the clan than men. Therefore if a woman was to leave home for studies she had to be given permission by her husband to do so.

A married woman who left home to study was seen as abandoning the family, or being lazy as we shall see from the experiences of some women who did go to the Bible school. It was no easier for single women, since being single was in itself regarded as a state of immaturity. The fear that single women would be a temptation

⁷⁴⁹ Herbert and Beatrice Kimball served at FBI between 1955 and 1960. Personal correspondence. October 21/ 1997.

to the men at the college was another factor which curtailed their chances of being accepted into training. Despite these difficulties some women did receive the training, but they were special cases such as widows or those who came from influential Quaker families, for example Rasoah Mutua and Rabeka Nasibwondi. Their presence at the Bible school still needed justification such as that they were training to help with women's or children's work.

Even though the Abaluyia elders had summed up the criteria for joining the Bible school in terms of the 'concept of maturity', the missionaries explained it further by adding their concerns, which equally made it difficult for women.

The missionaries suggest that there be certain educational requirements for students and that the choice of students be on a basis of call and spiritual status.⁷⁵⁰

The level of education was going to affect women because not many women in 1940 had attained more than reading and writing because parents did not see it as important to educate girls. Most women finished school at the lower primary school and not many of them went into higher grades of primary school because their school system did not allow them. Whatever level of education the Bible Institute was going to require women would still be disadvantaged.

In April 1943 FBI opened its doors to the first students among whom was Rasoah Mutua. This was a big step forward for the Quaker church in Kenya compared to other denominations who took much longer before admitting women into their theological institutions. Although the Quakers were ahead of their time in allowing Mutua and two other women entry to FBI from the start, the later developments of their careers show that discrimination against women still persisted.

The philosophy of FBI Lugulu was similar to that of some Bible Colleges in United States such as Cleveland Bible Institute which had been built at the peak of the revival movement of the 1860s.⁷⁵¹ The aim of these colleges was to equip pastors for ministry in the Quaker churches which had been influenced by revivalism. The

⁷⁵⁰ KNA: Evangelism report, 1942.

⁷⁵¹ Bible colleges were a phenomenon, which came out of the revival and Holiness movements in America from 1860. These colleges were modelled on Moody's Chicago institute. They were mainly rural and they served small towns, each ministering to the holiness churches that were around. One of these colleges, which played a great part in the setting up of EAYM, was the Cleveland College which was set up by Walter and Emma Malone who became great supporters of mission work. In fact some of the first missionaries of FAIM like Arthur Chilson was a graduate of this school.

curriculum and the theology of these colleges were similar to that which was taught at FBI.

At the present time FBI offers two types of courses. It offers a three-year course leading to a Diploma. This course is patterned after the standard course of the American Association of Theological Schools. It is based on classes in the Bible, Church History, Friends History, Church Polity, Homiletics, Christian Education. In addition the school emphasises practical experience for working in the meeting, with class work on methods and fieldwork in the local Meetings.⁷⁵²

This type of theology had implications for the students and the ministry they would offer in EAYM. On the one hand, it was important that those who were going to be church leaders received formal training rather than relying on oral information being passed on from one elder to another. On the other hand this theology had pitfalls because it was not contextual: Americans formulated it in America and it was taught to Abaluyia students who were going to work in an Abaluyia setting. This theology disregarded the challenge of indigenization which had been raised by the Quakers who became members of the Holy Spirit Church as discussed earlier in the chapter.

Like most theologies of the same period, FBI did not have room for the study of the society in which the students were going to work and there was no room for them to engage in a theology which raised issues in regard to their context. Failure to do this meant that the missionaries gave the students ready-made answers for a context which they had not themselves come to terms with. Thus Theology of EAYM stayed as a largely prohibitionist theology, interpreted as a system of do's and don'ts

In common with many missionaries, there seems to have been an assumption on the part of Quaker missionaries that as soon as one professed to be a Christian one's context ceased to exist. There was an automatic shift from sin identified with the cultural context to salvation identified with the missionary context. This was enhanced by the way the Bible and the history of Quakerism were used to justify the new system as opposed to the old system. There was a lack of a hermeneutic principle to the Bible which would help people come to terms with their cultural context, rather than struggling with two cultural systems where one was being used to denigrate the other.

⁷⁵²KNA: FBI Report, 1944.

While the missionaries thought that conversion meant an end to the traditional culture, when it came to issues on which the Bible was not clear, the converts trusted their culture more than what the missionary termed as Biblical. Even if missionaries of all religious groups of this period have been termed as 'cultural imperialists,' cultural imperialism merely succeeded in pushing Abaluyia culture underground where it continued to thrive. Abaluyia Quakers seem to have operated between the two cultures using them both to their advantage.

Apart from preaching for conversion FBI graduates were prepared for pastoral ministry in church polity and Christian education. This included aspects such as preparing people for church membership, conducting weddings and funerals. These aspects of theological education defined a Christian pastor, although in practice to some extent they were an extension of the traditional rites of passage. The pastor therefore took on the role of a traditional priest which was only performed by men and in the eyes of his congregation was seen as having ritual power. The graduates were able to practice as pastors in this context because it was their background.

These are some of the factors that contributed to the distinction between the male pastor and the female pastor in EAYM. While both the sexes went through the same training women retained the name of being a pastor without power to function as pastors. The male on the other hand had both the name and the power to practice as a pastor. The spiritual equality between men and women of Quakerism was undermined by the understanding of ritual significance based on the traditional Abaluyia custom.

8.4 WOMEN AND THEOLOGICAL TRAINING.

The aim of any form of theological education is to equip people to preach good news effectively, through word and deed. This was a reality for the Quaker missionaries in western Kenya. In order to meet the needs of a growing church the Quakers set up a form of theological education which was to meet the needs of the people they were dealing with. Theological education was also a way of preparing leaders for a Yearly Meeting which was about to be established. The Quakers did not discriminate against women for training. The following section examines the nature of theological education for women and the opportunities open for them in pastoral ministry

8.4.1 THE CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S TRAINING.

Even though when the FBI was opened in 1943 and women were among the first students, the number of women students has been much fewer than that of men. The case of fewer women doing theology is not uniquely Quaker but one that is common to other denominations.⁷⁵³ The reason behind this is the nature of ministry as interpreted by EAYM and the cultural context within which this ministry is practised. Before we look into this in greater detail, we will look at the development of the women's theological training at FBI. We have divided the training into three historical stages, all of which are significant in the history of EAYM. In each stage we shall analyse some of the issues which arose, to see what part they have played in women's theological training in Kenya.

8.4.2 TRAINING BEFORE 1964.

FBI was opened in April 1943 as a training institute for leaders for the envisaged EAYM, which was established in 1946. Because of the geographical position of FBI during its first years, the first women students came from Lugulu. The two names that appear are those of Rasoah Mutua, the first woman graduate, and Rebecca Nasibwondi, who had to complete her studies at Kaimosi because the Bible school was moved in 1948. Mutua was widowed when she went to FBI but Nasibwondi left her family behind, an act that her husband was challenged for allowing.

When I decided to join the Bible school, my husband accepted. But he was challenged by other men in the village as to why he had allowed me to leave the family for the Bible School. It was not easy for men to allow women to go to the bible school because they believed that it would make them lazy and instead become busybodies.⁷⁵⁴

Some of the allegations about women who chose to go to the Bible school were propaganda to deter other women from receiving the knowledge that would help them to improve their position. Other allegations if they were not propaganda were based on the Abaluyia perceptions that the Bible institute challenged traditional relationships between men, women and work. First the Bible school was seen as a place where no work was done; in a society where work was defined as manual labour, sitting to read books was not work. Second it was men who were seen as

⁷⁵³ 'Women in Theological Education in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.' A Study on Partner Institutions Carried out on Behalf of the EMW Theological Education Desk 1994.

more suited for the Bible school because they were the ones who traditionally carried less of the burden of manual work.

The argument that women were not suitable candidates for the Bible school because it meant a loss of labour for their families was based on a gender related division of labour. This division of labour had been used to exploit and control women, and any move to change it was viewed with suspicion. The admission of women into Bible school was both a threat and a challenge to the men because it was going to undermine the social structures, which the latter had designed for their comfort. The real issue was not the loss of labour but the undermining of a system of control over women. Even though there was opposition against women going for training, their interest in it was not diminished as the 1944 report shows: 'there are more girls interested in education but the mission is not prepared for it'.⁷⁵⁵

Lack of 'preparation' on the part of the mission can be interpreted in various ways: it is possible that there were no facilities and personnel to cater for 'girls'. The reluctance of the mission to create antagonism between itself and the families of these 'girls' which would make its objective of winning souls for Christ harder; the fear of the role these girls would play after Bible school as independent women serving in a culture which defined women as either daughters or wives. This did not deter single women from coming to FBI. The report for 1953, for example, noted that

Students at FBI include Rebecca Inyanya who is 18 years old. We encourage married men to bring their wives, their families with them so that wives may become better partners to the work.⁷⁵⁶

Apart from her age, nothing else is said about Rebecca Inyanya; the attention of the report shifts to the training given to married men rather than single women. The immediate shift from her to the couples shows some uneasiness with her presence. Most of Inyanya's colleagues were either married men or women. There were single men but they are not mentioned because it was not unusual to have them in training. For Inyanya her dream had come true

I had always wanted to be a student at the Bible School because I wanted to serve God in the church. But it was not easy to be admitted to the Bible school. Even if there was no written rule against women joining the school there was a tradition which acted as a rule. When I expressed my interest about the Bible

⁷⁵⁴ Rebecca Nasibwondi, Oral Interview, 8/3/1996.

⁷⁵⁵ KNA: FBI report, 1944, 7 – 8.

⁷⁵⁶ KNA: FBI report 1953, 17.

school it was received with mixed feelings because of the belief that girls did not go to the Bible School.⁷⁵⁷

The principle for training couples was that they were going to be partners in the ministry although only the man was formally trained. The educational standards for most women did not allow them to go through the same courses. In 1951 it was reported that 'FBI has 34 students, 9 women students four of whom are illiterate and have had a good time learning to read and also sew and knit.' [Sic]⁷⁵⁸ It is not clear what this report meant as far as the women in question are concerned. Either they were enjoying themselves learning to read rather than doing heavy manual work at home or they needed more time to learn to read. The latter could be the case since these women were illiterate.

The situation was not different even in mid 1960.

Wives in training bring great opportunities. It would however be misleading to overlook the difficulties incurred. There is a grave difference in the educational level between the married men at the Bible school and (almost always) the wife. This means apart from the fact that much of the wife's training is "home training", they cannot generally share the same classes as the man because of the educational difference.⁷⁵⁹

Elisha Wakube a teacher at FBI noticed the difference in educational standards.

In terms of educational standards the men were better educated. The men would have finished primary five or six while their wives had either nothing or they had just finished primary three. In this case she was disadvantaged but she understood that the education was meant for her and she would appreciate the education, which the husband was receiving.⁷⁶⁰

It was therefore difficult for women to be trained as equal partners in ministry because of the educational level. However by living at the Bible School Compound in the mission station, they were introduced to the 'culture' of the middle class missionary family and were expected to practice this culture in an environment where economic and cultural pressures made it impossible for them to do so. Single women ended up by not being treated as students in their own right but as impending wives, reflecting the sexism of both the mission and the church as expressed by Inyanya.

When I finished the training at the Bible school I was not deployed as a pastor but the men were. I used to preach in the local congregation when I was given

⁷⁵⁷ Rebecca Mackenzie, Oral Interview, 10/2/1996.

⁷⁵⁸ KNA: EAYM report 1951, 11.

⁷⁵⁹ Kaimosi Office: FBI annual report, 1965/1966.

⁷⁶⁰ Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 23/2/1996.

the chance. I had no financial support from the church, but I depended on my family for support until I got married.⁷⁶¹

The issues that emerge from this phase in theological training for women are based on the cultural prominence of men and the illiteracy of women. Even if the desire among women to train was strong, illiteracy made it difficult

8.4.3 TRAINING AFTER 1964,

1964 was a significant year for EAYM because it marked the beginning of its full independence from FAM. This independence brought with it new challenges for EAYM because of the need to produce leaders for the church and the institutions that had been led by missionaries. Apart from the Teacher Training College which trained teachers, FBI was the only Quaker institution for leadership training. This is why in the 1964 annual report FBI laid down how it was going to meet the leadership needs of EAYM.

The present idea is to work at two levels short courses to help people become more effective members of their meetings, and long courses for training full time workers as pastors in EAYM institutions and administrators.⁷⁶²

Even though FBI was keen to meet the needs of leadership for EAYM it faced the challenge of personnel and finance. FBI, was the only institution in EAYM that heavily depended on expatriate workers and funding from FUM. It was never integrated into EAYM thus being seen as an outside institution. In order to meet the needs of EAYM after independence FBI had either to change dramatically to meet the needs of EAYM or it had to keep to its tradition and provide the 'spiritual leaders' for EAYM. The later was the case so that two strong offices of a General Secretary and General Superintendent emerged in EAYM which were sustained by the tradition left behind by the missionaries.

We have seen the issues involved with the office of the General Secretary in chapter seven as regards the place of women in EAYM. We will look at the office of the General Superintendent with some detail in this chapter. A point worth mentioning here is the fact that both the office of the General Secretary and the General Superintendent were highly influenced by gender and ethnicity, which explains why women failed to occupy them.

⁷⁶¹ Rebecca Mackenzie, Oral Interview, 10/2/1996.

⁷⁶² FBI: FBI annual reports, Minute 7/64, Courses at FBI.

During the years after independence the men took up the training opportunities at FBI, but training for women never got beyond the discussion stage as noted in this report.

At present only men can be accepted as regular students, though it is hoped to take women later, married men will be expected to come the first year without their families. While no assurance can be given, every effort will be made to allow families to be brought in subsequent years of a student's course.⁷⁶³

The focus for training was on couples even though the actual training was given to the men. Lack of education was used as a justification for women not being involved in leadership and there was no attempt to correct this shortcoming. However discussions on women's training occurred at most meetings of FBI.

Women's training including wives of students, be deferred meanwhile the principal should consult with the Yearly Meeting leaders⁷⁶⁴

Before any steps would be taken about training women, consultation with EAYM was recommended. The consultation with EAYM emphasised that the training of women was not a matter to be treated lightly. The case of women needed approval from EAYM because of the financial implications involved and the future of these women in ministry. Consultation with EAYM did not bring an immediate result but it raised other related issues. Two strong problems emerged which militated against training for women; accommodation and supervision

The committee re-affirms its decision that suitable accommodation and supervision are imperative before any regular women students can be accepted. The principal and his wife were encouraged to consider these issues with Leah Lung'aho who had been previously consulted.⁷⁶⁵[Leah Lung'aho also known as Leah Ganira, she was a long serving recording clerk of the Women's yearly Meeting].

The issue of accommodation was not uniquely Quaker as Amoah has observed in regard to theological education and women.

Very often the reason that has been given for low intake of women in theological institutions has been accommodation and other facilities. Surprisingly it is women who collectively raise a greater proportion of the funds that are used to support theological institutions and other church related activities. Yet these theological institutions tend to leave them out.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶³ FBI: Min. 3/1964, Admission to the Bible school.

⁷⁶⁴ FBI: FBI board Min, 45/64. Women's training.

⁷⁶⁵ FBI: FBI board Min 6/65, Min 45/64. Women students.

⁷⁶⁶ Elizabeth Amoah, 'Viable and Sustainable Theological Formation for Africa: Some Challenges' in *Ministerial Formation* 71. WCC October 1995, 49.

Like other theological colleges of the same period, FBI had been built to accommodate either men alone, or with their families and it was therefore hard to bring single women into such accommodation without considerable building work taking place. However nothing seems to have been done about accommodation even later when women were finally admitted. This raises the question whether it was really accommodation that was the problem for the admission of women or something more significant?

I think the real issue as far as women's training at FBI was concerned was not accommodation but supervision. While the men and their families were seen as not needing any supervision, according to the administration of both FBI and EAYM, women did. Both society and the church saw single women as minors who needed to be chaperoned in case they were seen as provocative providing sexual temptation for the men. This concept said more about those who were discussing the case than about women who were interested in training.

In addition to the feared problem of being provocative, supervision would have forced the administration to consider the identity and role of women in the church. In a society where women were identified as either daughters or wives, it was unlikely that they would be used as pastors. Supervision was therefore needed to ensure they grew to be 'good women' in such a society.

The question of supervision led to the need for more staff who, besides teaching, would be involved in supervision of female students.

We have the service of Moses Musoga for these and other courses; he with his wife Priscilla and family are residing at the Bible school village at Ludodo. We are very glad to have them with us, and now that they are here we hope soon to be able to admit women.⁷⁶⁷

The presence of a married couple on the staff helped solve the issue of women and ensured that they would be admitted. As a result this circular was sent out to meetings.

Should there be women applicants with satisfactory entrance qualifications for the course commencing 1967 the position should be reviewed.⁷⁶⁸

Although no woman was enrolled in 1967, in 1968 'There were two wives who were regular students of the Bible and home-craft'.⁷⁶⁹ It seems that the clause 'satisfactory

⁷⁶⁷ Kaimosi Office: FBI. Annual reports August 1965.

⁷⁶⁸ FBI: Min 43/66, Admission of women.

entrance qualification' barred even interested women from training. The level of education needed for FBI was even higher than in the previous years.

The committee approved sending an announcement and an application form to each monthly meeting. They also urged the principal and staff to contact secondary schools to recruit Form Two boys or higher.⁷⁷⁰

Even though this was an earlier arrangement, there is no indication that a similar notice was made for the girls' schools. There were few women with form two qualifications during this period and those who did have them chose not to go to FBI since there was no defined role for them in ministry after training. It was easier for women to enrol as students in other institutions such as nursing schools and teacher-training colleges, where their roles were well defined.

From 1968 there was a slow but stronger move to have women admitted as students in their own right rather than as wives of students. One of the people who was instrumental in ensuring the admission of women and was the longest serving principal of the institution Josiah Embego. He observes that,

Some of the members of the board were not in favour of training single women. But as members of staff at FBI we took time to explain to them why we thought it was necessary for women to be given equal opportunities for training just as the men. It was not proper Quakerism if we were denying training for women based on their marital status. The aim of training the young women was for them to be faithful in the ministry and prove to the world that they were capable of being pastors.⁷⁷¹

Josiah Embego and his staff faced a long struggle to challenge a system that had justified discrimination against women. This challenge took several years before it bore fruit. Thus the discussions about women's theological training after 1964 were marked by issues of literacy, lack of proper accommodation and supervision. Literacy slowly improved for both women and men after independence and accommodation would have been easy to deal with if FBI was financed to extend its accommodation facilities. The difficult area was supervision, which had to do with attitudes towards women especially their sexuality.

The fear of women's sexuality was not restricted to Quakers, especially in connection with theological training as Betty Ekeya points out in relation to Kenyan Catholics:

⁷⁶⁹ FBI: Min 19/68. Wives training.

⁷⁷⁰ FBI: Min 38/64. Recruitment for FBI.

⁷⁷¹ Josiah Embego, Oral Interview, 28/2/1996.

Woman is portrayed as the archenemy of a priest's holy vocation. Young women are to be especially shunned because of their terrible power to confuse the heart and head of a young man.⁷⁷²

While one could argue that Quakers do not train priests because they do not have any, there was and still is an assumption on the part of Abaluyia Quakers that a pastor was training for a holy ministry. The presence of single women in the college would lead men into sexual sin, bringing shame to the church.

It was feared that if single women went to theological training they would not complete their training before they involve themselves in illicit sexual unions. This would bring shame to the church because the church had to set a high moral standard.⁷⁷³

According to Embego, women's sexuality influenced the church against their training. Single women in particular were resented because of 'the fear that they would become pregnant out of wedlock and bring the college to shame.' Single women in theological college suffered more than single men because there was 'no physical sign to show men's sexual indulgences'. But if there was a sign Embego reckons that 'many of our male students would be among the first'.⁷⁷⁴ To choose to go to theological training was harder for a woman than a man because they were perceived as potential wives and feared if they were unattached.

8.4.4 TRAINING AFTER 1976

The 1970's were years of both progress and turbulence for EAYM. They saw the formation of the second yearly meeting through conflict in 1973;⁷⁷⁵ a growing dissatisfaction with the structure of EAYM;⁷⁷⁶ and women become more assertive in their activities in EAYM. As a result the Advisory Committee recommended to FBI that if there were any girls for training they could be tested.⁷⁷⁷

In order to make people see that FBI was keen to experiment with training women each Monthly Meeting received a letter and application form, indicating that both

⁷⁷² Betty Ekeya 'Woman for how Long.' Ursula King, (Ed), *Feminist Theology from the Third World A Reader*, London: SPCK, 1994, 146.

⁷⁷³ Agneta Igonga, Oral Interview, 10/2/1996.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁵ Rasmussen, A *History*, 114-127.

⁷⁷⁶ Kaimosi Office: A Proposal for Reorganisation. Report of Reorganisation Committee of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends to the Executive Committee.

⁷⁷⁷ Kaimosi Office: FBI annual report, 1976.

men and women were free to send in an application. As part of his program to give women a chance, the principal encouraged unsure women.⁷⁷⁸

I worked hard to advertise and to help the people understand that it was time to let the girls take their place in training too. The girls would be future mothers even though in Christ we have no men or women we are equal in the sight of God.⁷⁷⁹

Even though there was a move to give women a chance in theological education, motherhood was being used as bait for training. The thought of the women as future mothers made it less threatening for the church. It was assumed that the women who came into training would get married, possibly to the men in training and support them in the ministry. The idea of women being pastors in their own right was not yet envisaged in EAYM. There seems to have been a contradiction between the fear of the women's sexuality discussed above and their getting married. Even after agreeing to take women into theological training there were still uncertainties about their role and place in the church.

In this uncertainty the first batch of women students was admitted into FBI in January 1977. These were Pelisi Malesi from the Church of the Holy Spirit,⁷⁸⁰ Elizabeth Matafari Okasa and Margaret Namikoye Ngoya from Lugulu and Elizabeth Afwandi Mkutu from Bware.⁷⁸¹ The four women joined twenty men some of whom were married. These women were accommodated in a vacant staff house since nothing had been done about accommodation even though it was among the earliest issues raised. Lack of their own space made women see themselves as intruders into a male institution and they were expected to behave as 'women, more than as students.'⁷⁸²

⁷⁷⁸ For example Enisi Mugesia, Oral Interview 20/12/1996. Mugesia's daughter Elizabeth Afwandi Mkutu was among the first women students.

⁷⁷⁹ Josiah Embego, Oral Interview, 28/2/1996.

⁷⁸⁰ Holy Spirit Church split from the Quakers in 1927 as a result of a misunderstanding on the expression about the gift of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between the Holy Spirit Church and the Quaker church was very poor to begin with, but it improved as the church developed. The Holy Spirit Church did not have a institution for training their leaders and they requested to use FBI. Among the first people to be trained were Peris Malesi who was also one of the first women to be admitted into FBI. In fact in 1977 there were also two men who were from the Anglican Diocese of Maseno north one of whom is the present Bishop of the Diocese. FBI has acted as training institute for other churches as well as Quakers.

⁷⁸¹ FBI: FBI registers 1977.

⁷⁸² Elizabeth Afwandi Mkutu, Oral Interview, 6/2/1996. She is known today as Elizabeth Yano and is a tutor at FBI.

Both the student community and the neighbourhood received the arrival of female students at FBI with mixed feelings. The question that these women faced each time was about their identity: who were they and why did they choose to study theology? What was their motive? Was it genuine or did they have other concealed plans? As Ngoya later remarked: 'my going to FBI was interpreted as a way of looking for a husband, and in the eyes of FBI it would be considered a wrong motive.'⁷⁸³ These women were torn between being themselves and living according to the church's expectation of them. While they were seen as a threat to the morality of the male community, they were also expected to portray qualities of prospective good wives. These women had a difficult task trying to explain to their communities that they felt called to train for pastoral ministry. It was as though the call to the ministry was a male prerogative and a woman's call had a hidden motive. While a man's call was never doubted or challenged, a woman's was under constant challenge and scrutiny. The presence of female students at FBI brought new and different tensions in the student community as well. The male students had difficulties relating to them as equals because they were women⁷⁸⁴. Although the institution's curriculum was firmly based on the Bible and the history of Quakerism, women were not treated as equals. The married men saw the women students as a threat to their male dominance so they took upon themselves the role of fathers or senior male members of the community. The single men on the other hand saw them as prospective wives and they were keen to try their chance, despite the strict but non-written regulations on 'socialising.' The proper use of time in relation to being in the classroom, the library and in the dormitory was re-enforced to monitor the movements of the female students.

The other tensions emanated from academic performance. While in the 1960's there were very few women with secondary school qualification and those who had such qualifications chose to go into nursing or teaching where their roles were clearly defined, the 1970's were different. There were more women with secondary school training who were willing to try careers other than teaching and nursing. This is why three quarters of the women who joined FBI in 1976 had finished their secondary

⁷⁸³ Margaret Ngoya, 'Is it possible to forgive' Talk given at Liranda Pre Triennial Conference, in April 1996 at which the researcher was present.

school education. Their academic standards were higher than some of the men's and their performance was better. This was not only a threat to the men but it also challenged their male ego and thus re-enforced the men's desire for control.

Unsure of their own identity both in the college and in the wider community, these women struggled with the expectation of being students and prospective wives. Extra classes were put on especially for the female students on cookery and sewing as evidence that they were viewed more as prospective wives other than pastors in their equal right.⁷⁸⁵ The church, which had assumed responsibility for them, had defined their identity, and therefore they had to live up to its' expectations.

At the end of the first year Embego said, 'The advisory committee is very proud of these girls who heeded to the call of God into the ministry.'⁷⁸⁶ This pride was based on the fact that by the end of the year none of the women had become pregnant or had eloped and this opened the gates for more women. After 1977 it became a routine to have female students in FBI even though EAYM never attempted to record them as pastors. The numbers of women remained low and the pressure on them was greater than on the men as the moral failure of the men is blamed on women.

8.5 THE CONCEPT OF MINISTRY

In his analysis of ministry Mason has observed that

Ministry does not have to be a full time employment with pay, and it does not presuppose a theological training but it must be a willing response to a call of God.⁷⁸⁷

This observation fits in well with how EAYM has tended to deal with ministry, even though there is no clarity on how it is committed to support those who respond to the call of God. It is in this context that this section looks at the distinctions that are made between the terms used for those who take office as pastors and preachers and how these roles impinge on women and ministry in EAYM. Apart from the use of the terms the significance attached to the roles of both the pastor and the preacher gives evidence to the inequality between men and women in EAYM as far as ministry is concerned.

⁷⁸⁴ Josiah Embego, Oral Interview, 28/2/1996.

⁷⁸⁵ FBI: Sewing classes by Catherine Leslie, 1977-1979.

⁷⁸⁶ FBI annual EAYM, 1977.

⁷⁸⁷ T. W. Mason, *The Church's Ministry*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948. 55.

8.5.1 THE PASTOR.

The general meaning of the term pastor is a shepherd because a pastor has a role to protect, to nourish and to guide those who are entrusted to him or her. While it is true that the activities of a pastor are similar to those of a shepherd it is rare to find the word shepherd used for a pastor in EAYM. Rather *omwayi*, which is the term for shepherd, is mainly used when one is talking about God especially in reciting Psalm 23 which is done in most meetings. It is a popular psalm because it is taught to candidates during the preparations for church membership.

The common reference to a pastor is *omupastor* where the personal prefix *omu*, being the article 'the', is added. The term *omupastor* is used for both male and female, but when it is referring to a woman a distinction is made to show a woman's marital status. For a married woman the term is *omupastor omukali*, and for one who is not married it is *omupastor omukana*. When there is no addition to the term, it is assumed that the pastor is a man and his marital status does not matter.

The use of the word *omupastor* instead of *omwayi* is an indication of how people see the role of a pastor as being more than shepherding because it has some ritual significance. Because of its ritual significance the role of the pastor is defined through age and gender. This means that the training to be a pastor does not in itself qualify one to practice as a pastor. This seems to be what has taken place in EAYM

8.5.2 THE PREACHER.

The term preacher does not have those complications because the preacher is known as *Omwirwadzi*, a term derived from the root word *Okwirwadza* (to proclaim, to make a speech). The thing about the term preacher is the fact that it is not associated with any ritual power and preaching is open to all people. The role of a preacher is not defined by age, gender or ritual significance. The use of the term preacher in EAYM is similar to its use among 'early Quakers.'⁷⁸⁸

This is why EAYM has many preachers, men and women, young and old, literate and illiterate, some of them are trained and others are not. Even though preaching is open to all, in most Meetings precedent is given to the elderly men. If a young person or a woman is asked to speak, the meeting is concluded by an older man who then

⁷⁸⁸ Barbour, *The Quakers*, 1964. 131.

sends everybody off after the service. Women's preaching is more common in women's services than in mixed groups.

Preaching takes a very important place in EAYM, both in business meetings and in meetings for worship. The aim of preaching is to call people to repentance or to challenge them to remain true to their calling and at annual conferences it is given a high priority so as to revive people spiritually. Great care is taken when selecting people who are to preach during the annual conferences and the themes for each conference are chosen carefully. The themes focus on the needs of the Yearly Meeting and since the Bible is seen as the basis of all authority a literal interpretation aims to call people to repentance with the threat of imminent judgement.⁷⁸⁹

Even though preaching is open to all in EAYM, women tend to preach more to groups of women, than in main Meetings. Mutua was the first woman to preach before a large gathering during the annual native prayer conference of 1924.

In the afternoon session a woman spoke first. Although being criticised by others as being unhomiletical, she held the attention of the audience. The next speaker, a Maragoli leader, spoke thus before beginning his sermon: 'we thank the Lord for these words and for giving this woman strength to stand before all these men and preach. Long ago no woman would dare speak before the men. The only thing she had courage to do before the men was to dance.'⁷⁹⁰

This was before Mutua went to FBI for the pastoral ministry and her courage to speak before a public gathering was seen to be God's work rather than a human endeavour.

The importance of women among preachers was connected with the primacy of the spirit and not with any deliberate campaign for feminine equality.⁷⁹¹

Preaching is a point at which equality of men and women in the Spirit is achieved since God does not discriminate to whom words are given. Mutua's practice in the church was a challenge to the traditional norms which allowed women to express themselves only in music when it came to public sharing. Even though music was a form of expression, preaching had a greater impact than music in sharing.

From this time onwards, Mutua was asked to bring a message to a number of different conferences, but most of her preaching took place in the women's meetings. Before 1930 other women did not publicly participate in the new roles of preaching

⁷⁸⁹ For example these themes from a few conferences: 'Stand ye first in faith' I cor 16:13, Ephesians 6:10; 'Be ye prepared to meet your God' Amos 4:12.

⁷⁹⁰ KNA: FAM Kitosh Station, October 1924.

and teaching. Even after this period women who preached did so on a local level and among women more than in mixed groups. This was different from women missionaries because they are accorded a different place from the Abaluyia women because they are guests.

In 1975 there was a special request from Hezekiah Ngoya, the presiding clerk, to EAYM, for a woman to be included in the programme of speakers to mark the Women's International Year.

Judging from the whole world situation and happenings both in the church and politics I feel that if the theme is based on first Samuel 16:7 and Ezekiel 36:26 both can be used adequately. The 1975 being the women's year, I think Leah Ganira can help to suggest a woman to be one of the speakers. Rachel Wanyonyi of Kitale spoke very well at Nairobi women's conference. Am sure she has a message. You should consider her along with others.⁷⁹²

Ngoya wanted to ensure that EAYM was not overtaken by events, by ignoring the presence of women in meetings. The fact that he went ahead to make suggestions shows how serious he was in this matter and even though some women were included in the conference programmes it was not until the 1980's that meetings began using women as key speakers in their annual conferences. The eighties were difficult years for EAYM because of numerous divisions based on rivalries between various ethnic groups over the leadership and the division of the property formerly owned by EAYM between the various Yearly Meetings.

8.6 PASTORAL MINISTRY

At the beginning of this chapter we noted that the role of a pastor in EAYM includes the dedication of infants, admitting new members into the church and conducting weddings and funerals. As well as all these, a pastor is required to visit the members of the congregation to pray with them and offer guidance and counsel when it is needed. During a pastor's training the subject of pastoral care is emphasised because it through pastoral care that the congregation is nurtured. Although men and women are trained for pastoral ministry in EAYM, the roles that they play in the ministry are gendered. The women's pastoral ministry is limited to those aspects that do not require public attention or do not involve positions of power and authority.

⁷⁹¹ Barbour, *The Quakers*, 132.

⁷⁹² Kaimosi Office: Letter from Hezekiah Ngoya to the Acting Associate Secretary, Ministries of Missions Commission EAYM dated 12th June 1975 with Reference to the 1975 Conference Theme.

8.6.1 RITUAL POWER

In the eyes of the state and those of other denominations, a pastor in EAYM has the same status as an ordained minister in any other Protestant churches although he does not wear clerical dress or administer sacraments. The Pastor belongs to the ministerial association of the council of churches and similar bodies representing his denomination at ecclesiastical and public ceremonies.⁷⁹³

In EAYM a pastor is charged with the responsibility to perform the ordinances as taught and practised in EAYM. This is not through ordination, but through commissioning. As far as ordinances are concerned, EAYM does not practice Baptism or Holy Communion because of the Quaker position on sacraments.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit who enables us to have direct union and communion with God and brings true inward witness and spiritual renewal without prompting of symbols or ceremonial rites (acts 1:5 says, “for John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit”).⁷⁹⁴

Instead of Baptism and Holy Communion, the ordinances of the EAYM aim to help the new members to define their identity as Christians and Quakers. These ordinances take the form of the Abaluyia ‘rites of passage’ from which their fundamental principle is derived.

The Abaluyia rites of passage included naming of infants, initiation of youths, marriage and death. In each of these the candidate was helped through a ceremony to move from one state of life to another. For instance when an infant was given a name he or she was acknowledged as a human being and was welcomed into the society where he or she would be nurtured to grow. In each of the ceremonies that accompanied the rites of passage an elder who was acknowledged as ‘*omusalisi*’ (priest) played a key role. He welcomed the initiate into his or her new state of life. Likewise the various Quaker ordinances were structured within the same framework because they were to accord a member the authority of membership.

There are three types of membership in one particular meeting of Friends. There are those children who are born in the family of Friends who are known as birth right members. Those who study a little and go on with the teaching of Friends are known as Associate members. And there are those who have

⁷⁹³ EAYM has been heavily involved in the ecumenical process in Kenya and some key pastors have served in ecumenical bodies where they are referred to as “Rev so- and- so. Recently one George Kamwesa has served as the deputy general Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Kenya.

⁷⁹⁴ Kaimosi Office. Statement of Faith. Article 6.

intensively studied the beliefs and faith of Friends, they are enrolled as full members. These are the ones who can discuss matters of the church in the committees, hold positions of responsibility in the church, and represent the church in internal and external matters.⁷⁹⁵

Similarly Charles Wakhisi describes membership to EAYM in terms of receiving cards.

When a person receives the Associate membership card, his name is written in the 'First Book', and when he receives the full membership card, his name is written in the 'Second Book'. The birth certificate card is only written in the register.⁷⁹⁶

In both descriptions membership of EAYM begins at infancy. Infants are dedicated in a service of celebration which takes place either in the home, or at the church. In the service, the pastor assumes the role of a traditional priest, he takes the child and pronounces a name for him or her, and then says a prayer for the protection of the child and the entire family. Then there is a song by the congregation or the members present to welcome the child into the congregation.

The next stage of membership is when people are recorded in the 'First Book' as Associate Members. This takes place after a period of preparation where the candidates attend an equivalent of a catechism class where they are taught and expected to memorise particular Bible passages.⁷⁹⁷ After the classes the candidates face *Abakulundu* (male Elders) who interviews each one of them to test whether he or she has understood what they have been learning and how genuine he or she is to be registered as a member of the church. The use of the Bible passages in preparing people for church membership indicates how significant the Bible is in the life of EAYM, which is included as a statement of belief.

We believe that the Holy scriptures are given by the inspiration of God and are without error, supreme and final authority in all matters pertaining to God and man in Christian faith and conduct. All Scripture is God - breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16).⁷⁹⁸

It is in this connection that EAYM,

⁷⁹⁵ Jeremiah Mugofu, *Silent Look: Friends in Kenya*. Lirhanda: Privately Published, 1992, 12.

⁷⁹⁶ Kaimosi Office: Charles Wakhisi: *The Work of a General Superintendent*, 1966. 1. Ms.

⁷⁹⁷ These are some of the passages used during the classes. The Old Testament: Psalm 24:1-10; Psalm 32:1-11; Psalm 15:1-5; Ruth 1-5, 15-19; The New Testament: Galatians 5:18-26; Mathew 3:13-17, 5:1-16; John 3:1-8; 14-19; 14:1-18; 15:1-14; Acts 1:4-11; Corinthians 13:1-13; Revelation 21:1-8.

⁷⁹⁸ Kaimosi Office: *The Statement of Faith Article 9*.

lays much stress on the acceptance of Jesus as 'personal saviour' with renunciation of sin. The Ten Commandments were [are] supplemented by the strict prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, disapproval of polygamy dancing and of course irregular sexual behaviour.⁷⁹⁹

The thrust of the teachings in preparing candidates for membership is based on the 'theology of prohibition' which seems to form the basis of a Quaker identity, even though Quakers as a religious group do not adhere to a formulated creed.

The third stage of membership is when members are recorded into the 'Second Book' as Full Members. This also takes place in a special church ceremony, which Wakhisi calls a 'confirmation' service.

The candidates are in white garments. This is called 'confirmation' day - the word is borrowed from the Anglicans it means that they have already decided and now the society confirms them as full members. The door is now open for them to take part in committees, preaching etc.⁸⁰⁰

In the services of receiving new members and 'confirming' them, the General Superintendent who is a senior pastor presides over the meeting taking the role similar to an elder in Abaluyia transition ceremony. He greets each candidate and hands him or her a certificate to show that he or she has been admitted into the membership of the church. Even though this ceremony takes place in the context of a church service the framework within which it operates in is that of Abaluyia traditional understanding of a rite and therefore requires a man as the initiation leader.

The role of women in this context is nurturing the candidates that is why they participate in preparing the candidates for the ceremony but they can not preside over the actual ceremony because of the framework in which it operates.

In African society especially the Babukusu people of Western Kenya, it is the men who assume the priestly role especially when it comes to initiation. The Bukusu word is *kobita* to initiate, to give authority. To a young man who has been initiated the priest will say to him 'you are now a man' to a young woman who is getting married a priest will equally say, 'you are now a woman' so this work or office is held by the men.⁸⁰¹

As noted earlier the underlying principle of the Quaker ordinances is the Abaluyia notion of the rituals which accompany the rites of passage. The link between *omusalisi* (priest) and the Pastor cannot be underestimated. The pastor therefore

⁷⁹⁹ Allan Bradley, *One Man's Education: An Autobiographical Scrap Book*, Ebor: York, 1987. 170.

⁸⁰⁰ Charles Wakhisi interviewed by the late Ann Marie Rasmussen in July 1977.

⁸⁰¹ Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 22/2/1996.

assumes the role of *omusalisi*, and even if he is not performing a traditional Abaluyia ritual like *omusalisi* he is conferring 'authority' to the initiate 'to become'. Like 'rites of passages,' ordinances in EAYM are seen in two important states where in the first stage one is required and aided to shed off the past and in the next stage one is given authority to become a new person accepted into the new community.

As well as the dedication of children, and receiving members into the Quaker church, the ritual principle in the rites of passage is clearly identified in marriage and funerals rites.⁸⁰² The role of women in both marriage and funeral rites is to nurture and entertain. In marriage they participate fully in making the ceremony look beautiful and they entertain the guests by feeding them and making sure they are happy. Likewise at funerals they are expected to form a parade behind the cortege and lead in singing while the corpse is laid to rest. The role of song in Abaluyia society is multipurpose because as well as being a form of entertainment it is also a channel through which the cultural traits of a society are taught and passed on from one group to the other. Through the medium of song and dance, women express the views of the community about marriage and death.

To preside over a state or church marriage in Kenya one has to be registered by the state because it is the state which issue marriage certificates. In EAYM there have been two women missionaries registered as marriage officers. Dorothy Pitman was one of them. In her memoirs she mentions most of the activities that she was involved in as a pastor but does not show anywhere that she presided over a wedding.⁸⁰³ It is possible that the state and the missionary community approved of her as a marriage registrar but when the Abaluyia wanted a marriage performed they

⁸⁰² The ritual significance was very clear to me during my field study when attended six funeral services of Daudi Kadenge, Rael Wanyonyi, Arthur Litu, Rachel Chilson, Timothy Mayaka and Petero Mukonye. In four of these funerals, it was the male Pastors and the Elders who presided over the funeral service. The women who spoke at the funeral were either relatives to the deceased or leaders of the women's Meetings. The other women sat silently until the time of laying the coffin to the grave came and they stood to lead in singing. In one of the funerals a woman missionary was asked to preach and there was murmuring as to why she was allowed to speak at a funeral. But I discovered that the deceased was married to two wives and although he was being given a Quaker funeral it was not done in full. But because the deceased came from a prominent Quaker family the regulations could be flouted and one of the things which were done was to ask a woman to preach. From watching the funerals and the interviewees that I carried out, I came to the conclusion that Quaker funerals reflect largely Abaluyia traditional funerals even though they are carried out in the context of a Christian church.

⁸⁰³ Dorothy Pitman, *Four Scores and Ten years, Memoirs of Dorothy Pitman*, Indiana: Exponent publishers, 1992.

did not ask her because they did not approve of a woman presiding over a marriage ceremony.

The men who are registered as marriage registrars are appointed by the general superintendent and registered by the state.⁸⁰⁴ Some of these men have been trained in FBI and are pastors while others have posts in the EAYM structure. It seems to me that the criterion to be a marriage registrar is that of gender and age; namely a male, married with a family. This is based on traditional Abaluyia culture where presiding over marriage was associated with ritual blessings thus a wedding in EAYM is a conglomeration of the traditional Abaluyia rituals and western traditions, accepted as Quaker and Christian. These are confirmed by carefully chosen Biblical references, all of which talk about family and are interpreted to suit the 'patriarchal nature of the society.'⁸⁰⁵

Similarly presiding over the funeral rites is the prerogative of the men since it is a taboo for women.

When it comes to burial women wail but the men are the ones who handle the dead body the men are the ones who inhume the body women do not.⁸⁰⁶

The place of wailing at a funeral has been taken over by singing in EAYM, so in any funeral, women form the singing contingent to comfort the mourners, while the men bury the dead. In Rachel Chilson's funeral this announcement was made

It is time for us to bury our sister and we are going to say a prayer for those who will carry the cadaver to the burial spot. We call upon all the pastors who are present to come forward. If you are a pastor and a man like me come. Women [who are pastors] have work which they will do, that is to lead in singing.⁸⁰⁷

This man had to distinguish between the male and female pastors because it was a funeral service. Women pastors do not preside over a funeral service ostensibly because they are 'weak emotionally' and they 'cannot handle a dead body' but the underlying factor is the belief about the power of the dead on women's reproduction capabilities. Since women are viewed those who have the power to defeat death through reproduction, they are prohibited from handling dead bodies in case that power is tampered with, and they ceases to reproduce thus causing the possible death

⁸⁰⁴ Kaimosi Office: List of Marriage Registrars in EAYM, 1946-1980. Appendix VIII.

⁸⁰⁵ Genesis 2:18,21-24; Mathew 19:3-6; Ephesians 5:21-31.

⁸⁰⁶ Elisha Wakube, Oral Interview, 22/2/1996. Roselida Mwengu, Oral Interview, 6/2/1996.

⁸⁰⁷ Rachel Chilson's funeral on 23/3/ 1996, Kaimosi Cemetery, at which the researcher was present. Appndix IX.

of the community. The fear of coming into close contact with the dead for women of child-bearing age is very real for most women.⁸⁰⁸

This is why only women, who are past child-bearing, can come close or handle a dead body in preparation for its burial. They can perform certain rituals for the dead such as planting flowers on the grave, a modern custom believed to be Christian while other women are advised to stay far from the dead in case 'they are affected.'⁸⁰⁹

While the Quakers would admit that pastoral ministry is open to both men and women in EAYM, pastoral ministry is defined by gender through cultural ritual significance. A man who becomes a pastor is accepted as a ritual person because he has gone through the traditional initiation ritual and the church ritual when he is trained. Women as I have shown in Chapter two of this thesis lack an initiation ceremony, which would allow them to have such ritual power. This denial in traditional societies of ritual power has been carried over into the Quaker church. So even if a woman now has been fully trained as a pastor she is still denied the ritual power and authority to practice fully as a pastor.

This exclusion of women from presiding over some church rites is not uniquely Quaker but it has been noted other churches in the same region for example the church of God in East Africa.⁸¹⁰

8.7 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION.

As we have seen the way in which women are marginalised in pastoral ministry was influenced by the ritual power accorded to men through the traditional initiation rite.

⁸⁰⁸ While attending a Women's Yearly Meeting conference in December 1996 a woman gave a moving testimony about how God had helped her to have children after ten years of marriage. She had been to several doctors for treatment but she was not able to conceive a baby. She was worried that she had been cursed or she had committed a crime. One of the things that had bothered her most was the fact that she had visited a friend at a hospital whose child had died and because there was no one to help her friend with her dead child she helped her friend to carry the dead child. She feared that by handling a dead body while she was in a child bearing age had stopped her from having her own children.

⁸⁰⁹ Rasoah Mwashii, Elizabeth Yano and Eunice Amugune, Oral Interview, 3/3/1996.

⁸¹⁰ Robert Earl Edwards, *Growth of the Church of God through Ushirika Groups among the Luhya in Nairobi, Kenya*. D.min. Fuller Theological College. 1989 119-120. Edwards has observed that 'only ordained pastors are the ones who perform the highest rituals in the Church of God in East Africa. Only ordained may perform baby dedication, direct communion services and baptisms. The church of God in East Africa and the government recognise a few ordained pastors to officiate at weddings.

This power has further been reinforced by financial considerations in EAYM. When FBI was founded in 1943 it was assumed that the pastors were going to serve in the churches which would support them. During these early years the people who were trained at FBI and who became leaders were the best educated of all. Even though their training was rudimentary it was better than anyone else's. But after independence in 1963 things began to change as more and more people advanced in education. This was a challenge to FBI in terms of training leadership for EAYM because it was difficult for educated people to be led by those with little education. This meant that FBI had to review its form of training and EAYM had to make plans for ways of supporting this venture financially as well as employing those who were being trained. It is against this background that in 1968 the principal of FBI observed that:

The purpose of trained pastors in EAYM, their functions status and employment are vague. Yearly Meeting must face these questions and decide whether we follow the tent-making pattern, or that of fully trained full-time pastors on paid and permanent terms of appointment, or perhaps a modified combination of the two.⁸¹¹

During this time the Yearly Meeting employed only three Superintendents and nine pastors to cater for all the Monthly Meetings. This was inadequate for a growing church. It was therefore the responsibility of EAYM to look into the nature of training and the way to support the training financially and how to make use of those people after training. Although the Principal of FBI in 1968 challenged EAYM in his report, he was also aware that FBI had to offer the kind of training relevant to the needs of society in which he said:

The purpose of the Bible institute of Friends in East Africa is to give the students a basic and practical training which will help to fit them for spiritual leadership. We believe this is still the basic purpose but that it has to be interpreted in terms to meet modern needs, particularly to meet the needs of educated youth and others.⁸¹²

Although both EAYM and FBI acknowledged the need to think of the issue of financial implications in the training and employing pastors none of them took active steps to work on it. Each time the issue was revisited it was never dealt with

Whereas women hold pastorates throughout the Church of God in East Africa, a few rituals remain that they cannot perform. Prayers for children, officiating at communion, and officiating at weddings.

⁸¹¹ Kaimosi Office: FBI Annual Report, 1968, 10.

⁸¹² FBI: Report to the Sub - Committee for Planning Commission, 1968.

adequately. During the discussions agreement was not reached on whether EAYM could adopt and work towards a full time pastoral ministry or a 'tent making' pastoral ministry. The former would require EAYM to formulate procedures of raising money for training and employing pastors and work out the terms and service for these pastors. But the latter would not require any financial obligations of EAYM. And although it was an easier option still no regulation was made about it because of the presence of employed pastors and superintendents in EAYM. It was easier to maintain both but not work out procedures for them either. EAYM in this case lacked a clear vision of what kind of leadership it required and they also lacked an adequate plan.⁸¹³

This inadequacy is brought to light when the question of women and pastoral ministry is raised. For instance when Lung'aho says,

In our churches we do not have pastors as such; we have evangelists because we do not have a geographical area assigned to a pastor and we do not pay the pastors.⁸¹⁴

This is a representative voice of many in EAYM, and reveals the reality of ministry in EAYM. By Geographical area Lung'aho means that EAYM does not have territorial divisions such as dioceses or parishes and does not appoint 'pastors' to particular areas. This is a falsification because the fact is that EAYM does have territorial divisions. The Yearly Meeting represents geographical area comprising several regions each represented by a Monthly Meeting, and each Monthly Meeting represents several Village Meetings.⁸¹⁵ EAYM also appoints superintendents who are senior pastors to supervise the spiritual work of the church a post which was set up in 1946 when EAYM was established.

There shall be one or more Ass. Supts, members of the African church, nominated by the Nominating committee and approved by the Yearly meeting. Their salaries shall be the responsibility of the yearly meeting. They shall give particular attention to the care of the churches.⁸¹⁶

Joel Litu was elected in this way as the first African superintendent and although he was not trained as a pastor he had worked as Ford's apprentice on some major EAYM projects, such as the translation of the Bible into *Llogooli*, the teaching at

⁸¹³ Kaimosi Office: Education for Leadership in EAYM, Ms, N.D.

⁸¹⁴ Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

⁸¹⁵ Article VII.the constitution of EAYM. Appendix III.

⁸¹⁶ Kaimosi Office: Discipline of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends, 11.

Friends Bible Institute, and he had been the first Luyia Marriage Registrar.⁸¹⁷ As a superintendent his work was to,

Deal with the spiritual life of the EAYM especially in the area of pastoral ministry. The General Superintendent co-ordinates the work of area superintendents pastors, evangelists and Sunday school superintendents. All these deal with the spiritual growth of EAYM.⁸¹⁸

For Lung'aho to say that EAYM does not employ pastors because of its geographical divisions is to falsify the position. However because geographical division is used as a reason when the question of women and ministry is raised it has another meaning. Geographical division determines jurisdiction, which is linked with authority and since women are barred from being in positions of authority, the geographical issue affects them more than men. If women are employed as pastors it is like giving them an area to be in charge of. But when they are preachers they have no particular area assigned to them thus no authority.

As well as the geographical divisions Lung'aho says that EAYM has evangelists but not pastors. But according to the above quote which talks about the work of a superintendent, EAYM has both pastors and evangelists. The sense in which Lung'aho talked about evangelists was in relation to finances. With evangelists EAYM has no financial obligations to them but they depend on the churches in which they preach. Apart from the financial aspect, the use of evangelists raises a deeper issue in EAYM and this is theological dependence.

8.8 THEOLOGICAL DEPENDENCE

Another factor which caused women to be sidelined in pastoral ministry, was the fact that EAYM was not independent in its theology. It relied upon a Book of Discipline bequeathed by the missionaries.

The Quaker church in Kenya suffers from the fact that we do not have our own faith and practice. [Book of Discipline] We have borrowed from the American faith and practice. We swing from one end to another as doldrums. EAYM has not defined how our church should be run which is a task of Quakers to define. The constitution, which we use on the faith and practice of the Quakers, is an America one. We have never written something for ourselves.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁷ Rose Adede, *Joeli Litu*, 22.

⁸¹⁸ Kaimosi Office: Charles Wakhisi, 'The Work of the General Superintendent' 1966.Ms.

⁸¹⁹ Thomas Lung'aho, Oral Interview, 13/3/1996.

The effect of this meant that there were issues and areas of discussion no longer adequately covered by the American inspired Book of Discipline and in this vacuum those in charge of EAYM fell back upon traditional thinking, and as we have seen, traditions never favoured women in positions of authority. Although EAYM became aware of this vacuum and voiced concern,

While we appreciate the reference we make on the faith and practice of the FUM, we feel time has come when a Friend should find time to write one based on the experiences of East Africa.⁸²⁰

No steps were taken to rectify the situation partly because most of the issues in EAYM were dealt with largely using tradition rather than a Book of Discipline. It was also because of the way Quakerism was taught to the first and second generation Quakers of EAYM. The fundamentalist literalist interpretation of the Bible which formed the core of mission theology failed to equip the Quakers to think beyond what the missionary taught. The theology of EAYM can still be described as a mission theology based on late 19th century missionary thinking.⁸²¹

The early debate on the need to move from a mission theology to a church theology stalled because it was conducted between two missionaries in EAYM, John Retherford and Herbert Kimball.⁸²² For John Retherford, mission theology was paramount for the development of EAYM and failure to stick to such a theology would mean betrayal of the mission and its work. He felt it was important to lay stress on the salvation of souls, the Second Coming and judgement as taught by the earlier missionaries. Herbert Kimball on the other hand wanted a theology which was radical and practical for the needs of the people in a changing society. As a principal of FBI his task was to prepare people to meet the spiritual needs of the people and contribute to the vision of EAYM theologically to which mission theology was too narrow. He argued that the theology of the Second Coming was not as important as the theology of the now. Kimball's views were seen to be too radical and threatening to the basis on which EAYM was built especially among the older members in EAYM.

⁸²⁰ Kaimosi Office: Study committee 9th April 1966.

⁸²¹ Rosino Gibellini, (Ed), *Paths of African Theology*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994. 14.

⁸²² Herbert Kimball and John Retherford were both missionaries of FAM. Retherford served as a missionary from 1952 to 1956 and was the head of the evangelistic department. Kimball was a missionary between 1954 to 1961 and served as a principal of FBI.

This early debate did not affect the ordinary members, who had been taught that mission theology was 'the theology of the church'. Relying on a mission theology brought a halt to any theological endeavours of FBI. The implications for women in all this is the fact that even if they train for pastoral ministry, tradition is used to determine whether they can serve as pastors. The situation is further complicated because EAYM has no control over the kind of doctrines that are taught especially by some of those who profess to be evangelists.⁸²³ Some professed evangelists preach a form of Christianity coupled with emotionalism which is identified with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fundamentalist views of the Bible in particular, both of which are alien to Quakerism. Even though this form of evangelism is doctrinally suspect, EAYM does not raise issue with them because some of these evangelists are self-funded. As well as this EAYM has not formulated theology to use to challenge these evangelists. It is left to the churches to choose what to do as such churches revert to tradition when it comes to the role of women in pastoral ministry.

This chapter started by considering the statement that 'Quakers have earned plaudits for consistently championing women's rights because they have no ordained clergy, anyone male or female is free to minister within the simple meeting'. By analysing the nature of training offered at FBI and the nature of ministry open to women in EAYM, this chapter has shown that there is a disparity between the traditional teaching of Quakerism and the practice of EAYM. This disparity is as a result of the impact of Abaluyia culture and philosophy on Quakers, and theological dependence of EAYM. Failure to formulate a Book of Discipline to define Quakerism in EAYM has left room for Abaluyia tradition to be used in recording pastors. The use of tradition marginalises women from taking part in the pastoral ministry of EAYM. Theological dependence of EAYM makes it lack the marks of an indigenous church but in so far as the role of women in pastoral ministry is concerned, EAYM is indigenous. This is because it has resisted any outside influence and maintained the traditional position of Abaluyia in which women do not preside over rites.

⁸²³ Kaimosi Office: Evangelism in EAYM, N.D. Ms.

9 CONCLUSION

This thesis took as its starting point the role and place of women in Abaluyia traditional society, and showed how they were largely in a subordinate position with regard to men due to the prohibition placed upon them on eating *engoko*. This prohibition was both literal and symbolic. Literally women were not allowed to eat *engoko* for fear that if they did they would fail to get married and perform their role as mothers in the society. But they were supposed to raise as many *zingoko* (*Chickens*) as possible because the wealth of any home grew out of them. Symbolically the prohibition stood for male dominance in the Abaluyia society. To eat *engoko* meant that a woman was defying the authority of the man in the home and society at large. She was therefore prohibited from public roles especially in leadership. Unlike the position for men, the prohibition for women meant they were not accepted as full members of the clan in which they were born or into which they were married.

The thesis then proceeded to show the position of women in the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) since its foundation, tracing the issue through the emigration of Quakers from England to North America, the divergence of American Quakerism, foreign mission and the founding of FAM and EAYM. Although the work of the missionaries had profound and far-reaching effects upon the whole Abaluyia culture, the position of women was not affected. This is because the missionaries interpreted *engoko* as a purely dietary custom and dealt with it only partially.

Even if the Quaker missionaries preached against the prohibition of women eating *engoko* and we were permitted to eat it, it was only partial because men have never accepted that women can share in the leadership of the Meeting like them. They still hold to the bit of culture that prohibits woman from being a leader as men.⁸²⁴

The thesis has shown that the *engoko* thinking was and is so strong that not only have women been marginalised in EAYM but also the story of their vast contribution to the work has been played down and muted. It has been the task of the research behind this thesis to uncover both by oral interviews and other sources as much of

⁸²⁴ Loice Eregwa, Oral Interview, 26/2/1996.

the muted voices as possible, to show not only the part played by women in the past but also to show that unless men in EAYM get rid of the symbolism of *engoko* in their thinking the church will not function to its full capacity. It is in this connection I suggest that the symbolism of *engoko* be replaced by a new vital Christian Quaker theology that accords an equality to women and men in the life and work of the church.

Although the Quaker theology should have done this right from the start because of its religious emphasis on the 'Priesthood of all believers', a non-hierarchical approach without ministers which ought to lead to equal participation among the adherents, it was not the case in EAYM. Contrary to the teaching and ideals of original Quakers equality between males and females was never even considered.

Blame for this negligence must be laid initially at the door of the missionaries. The main weight of their teaching was a set of don'ts against Abaluyia practices which were considered to be unchristian. There was very little attempt to present Quaker aspects of peace testimony, social justice and equality of sexes. If and when these aspects were presented they were on the level of the spirit and not in the material world. Instead of laying emphasis on the equality of the sexes, Quakerism in this regard, was modelled along gender lines and women were made to remain in the domestic realm as Christian mothers and wives. This model was very much in line with the patriarchal nature of Abaluyia society, and it reinforced male dominance in both the organisation and ministry of EAYM. The research established that male dominance in the leadership and administration of EAYM was part of its organisational structure. Between 1946 and 1996 women remained on the margins of its structure.⁸²⁵

The issues concerning the position of women in EAYM which have been raised and discussed in this thesis form part of the wider issues being raised by the Circle of concerned African Women Theologians.⁸²⁶ In the two publications that came out of the researches conducted by the Circle, theologians have criticised both African culture and the church for marginalising women in its theology. Many of the articles

⁸²⁵ See appendix VII page 373.

⁸²⁶ The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians was formed in 1989 to address issues of women in Religion and Culture. Since then a number of publications have come out dealing with issues of women in Religion and Culture.

written by women from the circle show how the persistence of customs such as widowhood rituals, food taboos, traditional laws on inheritance impinge on the rights of women.⁸²⁷ One of the practices that come under sharp criticism is polygamy because of the jealousies and rivalries of co-wives and the subordination of women.

It is true that polygamy does more harm to women than good, and like other customs in Africa, polygamy works through a framework which subordinates women in other spheres of society as well. The fact that a practice like polygamy persists in the African church is sure evidence of two things: first the church has been established not as a new and different institution but as part of the society and although it has preached equality between men and women this has not been realised. Second, the notion that the missionaries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were 'cultural imperialists' who did away with African culture is not entirely true if you consider the position and role of women in the African church especially in EAYM.

For instance Brian Stanley's analysis of the Protestant missions and British imperialism is preoccupied with the charge of missions as cultural imperialists. Mission Christianity he says 'destroyed the psychological and cultural defences of the African and thus played an essential role in the ideological thrust of Western colonial aggression.'⁸²⁸ Feminist historians like Margaret Strobel support the views of Stanley when writing about female missionaries and reformers whom she says operated ethnocentrically and materialistically in their attempts to improve the conditions of indigenous women. Their reforms she says,

caused indigenous people to identify more closely with western culture and disparage their own... the promotion of secular, Western education for females reshaped stratification in indigenous societies through the creation of a western-educated elite. Thus the process of externally induced reform itself can be seen as part of cultural imperialism.⁸²⁹

While the views of Stanley and Strobel are representative of what is popularly held in relation to the missionary interaction with local cultures of the late 19th and early

⁸²⁷ Mercy Amba Oduyoye & Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro, *The Will to Arise: Women, Tradition and the Church in Africa*, New York: Orbis Books 1992; Musimbi Kanyoro & Nyambura J. Njoroge, *Groaning in Faith: African Women in the Household of God*. Nairobi: Acton, 1996.

⁸²⁸ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Leicester: Apollos. 1990. 24.

⁸²⁹ Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, Bloomington Indiana: Indiana University Press. 1991. 51

20th centuries, this thesis argues to the contrary especially on the position of women. After examining and analysing the complexities of the Luyia traditional culture which the Quaker missionaries interpreted as oppressive to women, the thesis maintains that even though the Abaluyia traditional culture included elements which were oppressive to women, the coming of Quaker Christianity did not free them from those elements. The position of women in EAYM shows that Abaluyia people managed to integrate their culture into the new culture rather than discard it: thus showing that the Abaluyia culture was not so elementary as to be done away with easily by an outside influence. If there was any cultural imperialism it was from the Abaluyia men towards the missionaries and not from the missionaries towards the Abaluyia men especially on the roles status and place of women. It is the Abaluyia men who influenced the missionaries in dealing with the Abaluyia culture and not vice versa. The missionary culture therefore was compromised, and the Abaluyia culture was reinforced.

Against this background therefore the thesis proposes a replacement of *engoko* in EAYM. This is by rejecting several things including the creation of separate subordinate space for women in EAYM and that women should be only tolerated in the silent margins. The thesis also rejects the ideology of a church with gender roles which reduces female participation and enhances their marginalisation. This thesis advocates the equal involvement of men and women in the process of change, the transformation of relationships between men and women and the participatory sharing of both in leadership roles in the church.

9.1 REPLACEMENT OF ENGOKO AS A RE-MEMBERING OF HISTORY

A replacement of the concept of *engoko* means writing the unwritten history of women by re-interpreting the history of EAYM which is a replica of male dominance. To use the words of Ruether it is to do away with a history which 'has denied, distorted and diminished the full humanity of women'.⁸³⁰ The concept of *engoko* made women outsiders of both the clans into which they were born and into which they were married. While men were initiated into their clans through the initiation ceremonies, women were excluded as uninitiated. Men were makers of the

⁸³⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God Talk*, London: SCM, 1983. 19.

history of their clans through the circumcision age-set systems but women were not only spectators but they were excluded from the history of the clan thus making them rootless. The concept and practice of *engoko* also excluded women from participating in major decision making and actions in society.

In replacing *engoko* in EAYM, it is important that the muted experiences of women are uncovered and their hidden experiences 'reclaimed'. This thesis is part of the whole process of bringing these experiences to light. Women themselves in 1981 began the process of re-membering their story in a ceremony called '*kuhana heshima*' (to honour).⁸³¹ In doing this, women in EAYM are involved in replacing *engoko*, thus reclaiming their humanity which has been denied them by an 'androcentric historiography'.⁸³² In his article *Re-membering the Body: Discovering History as a Healing Art*, Thompson has noted that the way mission history has been written and taught in the west does not reflect the story of the body of Christ. The body is dismembered because the story is told only in part, emphasising the parts that deal with European missionary and 'to down-play, or even ignore that part which deals with the experience of local indigenous Christians.'⁸³³ As much as the local men are left out of the history of the body of Christ, the people who are invisible are women. Lack of documentary evidence about women in mission history especially in EAYM is equated with historical insignificance, so that women have simply disappeared from the Yearly Meetings' view of the past. It is in this context that Mary Daly has noted that 're-membering' in the sense of putting together, or re-connecting, all the fragmented and dis-membered elements of experience, is part of the recovery of a lost sense of wholeness.⁸³⁴

Through the ceremony of *Kuhana heshima* women re-enact their story in EAYM through the lives of their foremothers. The ceremony is also a reconstruction of the

⁸³¹ *Kuhana heshima* in the context of the Women's Yearly Meeting is to remember and to honour the Quaker foremothers. *Kuhana* (to give/to show) *heshima* (respect reverence). In the context of women in EAYM, this phrase is used mean a service where women re-member the founders of the women's Meetings, their work and contributions to the women's work. It is a service of remembrance but more than just remembering.

⁸³² Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of her*, London: SCM, 1983. 70.

⁸³³ T. Jack Thompson, 'Re-membering the Body: Discovering History as a Healing Art' in *Studies in World Christianity*. Vol. 2.2, 1996. 129.

⁸³⁴ Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, Boston: Beacon 1984. 172-173.

past through the evidence of the activities of their foremothers, which are read out as stories. Through this ceremony women challenge the male hegemony which sees its justification in the concept of *engoko* which was absorbed into and dominated EAYM.

When this ceremony was started men-scaremongers told old women that they would die if their histories were recorded and read in public. They argued that it was like writing an obituary.⁸³⁵ But the founders of this ceremony encouraged the women by saying that if their activities were not recorded and known their story which is the story of the women's activities in the Meetings would never be known and women would never be included in the past of EAYM.

When the first batch of women was honoured and no woman had died the practice was accepted and it has become popular. The men were threatened by the 'insurrection of the women's subjugated knowledge'⁸³⁶ because not only were the women affirming their roots but also creating an identity for themselves. Furthermore this ceremony is also an empowerment for the future because remembering their story is not being nostalgic about an imagined golden past but an affirmation of their history, owning it and working towards creating a better future for themselves.

As well as retrieving the women's stories, replacement of the *engoko* is a challenge to the way authority has been used in EAYM because as well as being gendered it is also based on power and domination.

What about our 'chiefdoms' which we have built around ourselves in our Yearly Meetings: the pecking order where we must show our worth, our leadership, our authority in everything we do, lest people forget our importance, our position? Here again we manipulate respect to mean consent for domination.⁸³⁷

⁸³⁵ Keran Alfayo, Oral Interview, 16/2/1996.

⁸³⁶ Michel Foucault, *Power Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1977–1977*. London: Pantheon 1980. 81. Subjugated knowledges according to Foucault refers to a whole group of knowledge pointing to the specific history of subjugation, conflict and domination, which have been lost or deliberately erased by a triumphant framework.

⁸³⁷ Joan Wena, *Answering*. 11.

Although authority in Quakerism is not institutionalised but derived from God,⁸³⁸ it appears distorted in EAYM where the old *engoko* authority persists. In replacing *engoko*, authority will not be based on domination but a sharing at a round table. In Chapter five of the thesis we demonstrated how the Quaker missionaries encouraged Abaluyia men and women to sit together and share meals at the table because this for them was a symbol of a Christian family. However they failed to extend the sharing of the meal to a sharing of authority and that is why Abaluyia women in EAYM still say they were given only partial freedom. Russell in her book '*The Church in the Round*' re-images the church using the central symbol of table, a round table where leadership is shared and inclusive, a hospitable table where diversity is welcomed and justice is served.⁸³⁹ In replacing *engoko* this thesis advocates a shared authority as opposed to domination.

9.2 REPLACEMENT OF ENGOKO AND BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

The authority of Scripture is one of the articles of faith in EAYM.⁸⁴⁰ Replacement endorses this affirmation. Hitherto however the way in which the Bible has been interpreted and applied by leaders in EAYM has in no way diminished the authority and power over women accorded to men not only by *engoko* but by the legacy of male-dominated mission. Against this, however, the Women's Yearly Meeting has demonstrated how the Bible can be interpreted and applied to the daily lives of women.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to enter into a theological discussion concerning biblical interpretation (hermeneutics), but to note that replacement seeks and requires an interpretation of the Bible which is free from *engoko* thinking. In this connection it takes note of the work of certain writers. For instance Tribble writes,

the Bible is a container of Divine Revelation and timeless truths. To decode the meaning of biblical texts, and to apply them to the complexities of women's existence, it is necessary to listen sensitively to the language and literary nuances of a given text. The reader needs to interact both with the form and

⁸³⁸ Janet Scott, (Ed), *Proceedings of the Consultation on Identity Authority Community* London: FWCC 1997. 48.

⁸³⁹ Letty Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, Westminster: Knox 1993. 42, Chapter 2.

⁸⁴⁰ The Constitution of EAYM. Article 6. Appendix III.

contents of the text before she can decode its meaning and apply to life situation.⁸⁴¹

Along the same vein Kanyoro notes that:

For women to find justice and peace through the texts of the Bible, they have to try and recover the women participants as well as their possible participation in the life of the text. Secondly women will need to read the scriptures side by side with the study of cultures and learn to recognise the boundaries between the two.⁸⁴²

As well as dealing with their cultural underpinnings of the Bible women need to take a closer look at themes such as Christology and the liberation of women. Anne Nasmiyu's work on Christology is worth mentioning. By using oral narratives from women Nasmiyu's says that women see in Jesus hope, refuge strength and comfort in their position of marginalisation and exclusion, hardship and burden bearing in the home, church and society at large. As in his day Jesus' attitude to women was revolutionary and 'counter cultural, he empathises with the situation of the African women today'.⁸⁴³ Therefore Jesus is in solidarity with women in their struggle and it is him who will liberate them. By liberating women in EAYM, men too will be liberated in order for it to be a place of service for men and women as equals.

For over fifty years women in EAYM have participated silently from the margins because it was in keeping with the *engoko* tradition of both church and society. But now the replacement of *engoko* calls for an equal involvement of men and women and a genuinely participatory sharing in the life of the church and community. This after all is the message of true Quakerism.

⁸⁴¹ Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1984. 15.

⁸⁴² Mercy Amba Oduyoye, & Musimbi Kanyoro. (Eds). *Talitha Qumi! The Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians 1989*. Ibadan: Daystar Press: 1990. 52 –53.

⁸⁴³ Ann Nasmiyu-Wasike, 'Christology and an African Woman's Experience,' in Robert J. Schrieter, J. (Ed), *Faces of Jesus in Africa*. London: SCM. 1992. 70-73.

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Because of the nature of my research, I have divided the Bibliography into three major sections. The first section deals with archival sources which are followed by oral interviews with past and present members of EAYM. The oral interviews are divided into two parts those that I conducted during my field research and those that were conducted by other researchers and are in archives. The next section of the bibliography deals with published works and this also is divided into three sections. The first section deals with Books on Quakerism, because the study is mainly on Quaker women. The second section is books on general topics and the third section is on pamphlets. The last section of the bibliography is also divided into two sections dealing with articles and unpublished works.

10.1 ARCHIVAL SOURCES

10.1.1 EAYM KAIMOSI OFFICE.

Kaimosi office, which is situated at Kaimosi, is the headquarters of EAYM. The office holds most of the archives of FAIM, FAM and EAYM. The files that I consulted included:

1. Records of Friends Africa (Industrial) Mission.
2. East Africa Yearly Meeting records and minutes.
3. *Mulina (Friend)* 1963-1968.

10.1.2 KENYA NATIONAL ARCHIVES (KNA)

Material consulted falls in these categories.

1. Microfilm records of FAM: Letters, reports and minutes 1902-1963.
2. Files for North Kavirondo, annual reports.1917 –1945.
3. Files for North Nyanza annual reports 1951-1960
4. Elgon Nyanza districts 1917- 1945.
5. Files of Maendeleo ya Wanawake 1950-1960.
6. Central Kavirondo Reports. 1924-1931.

10.1.3 FRIENDS LIBRARY LONDON.

Africa Record 1906-1916.

Missionary Advocate 1895-1979.

*American Friend.*1899-1955.

Five Years Meeting and Friends United Meeting Reports.1902-1963.

The Journal of Friends Historical Society.

Quaker life.

Friends' Quarterly.

10.1.4 FRIENDS WORLD CONFERENCE OF CONSULTATION (FWCC) OFFICE IN LONDON.

Friends News 1952 -1979

Triennial Minutes: Minute 626,1982; Minute 673-673 1985; Minute 709-733 1988; Minute 18/49 1994, Minute 22 1907. Alfred Wasike 'The Society of Friends in Uganda' Ms. 1985.

10.1.5 SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES (SOAS).

Records of International Missionary Council related to Kenya on Microfiche: American Friends Board of Foreign Mission 1932 –1937.

10.2 ORAL INTERVIEWS.

10.2.1 PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

NAME	DATE	PLACE.
Sitera Adogo	7/4/1996	Chango
Loice Abiria	28/1/1996	Kegati
Keran Alfayo	25/1/ 1996	Ikumba
Ezna Aliviza	7/4/1996	Chango
Samuel Amani	23/2/1996	Vihiga
Japheth Amugune	6/2/1996	Chavakali
Jannifer Amugune	6/2/1996	Chavakali
Eunice Amugune	5/5/1995	Kaimosi
Mabel Anaya	7/4/1996	Chango
Margaret Avwonda	7/4/1996	Chango
Ruth Barasa	.7/3/1996	Sirisia
Azbeti Barati	7/4/1996	Chango
Josiah Embego	28/3/ 1996	Chango

Thomas Ganira	13/3/1996	Madioli
Agneta Igonga	10/2/1996	Lusui
Abigael Indire	4/4/1996	Vihiga
Philemon Indire	4/4/1996	Vihiga
Daudi Kadenge	13/2/1996	Rosengeli
Faneul Kaiga.	2/2/1996	Vihiga
Fred Kamidi	20/2/1996.	Ndaru Scheme
Wilfrida Kasoha	21/3/1996	Kakamega
Zilipa Keseri	7/4/1996	Chango
Jamin Kesohole	12/2/1996.	Kaimosi
Loice Keya	20/2/ 1996	Muntsatsi
Margaret Kibande	7/4/1996	Chango
Joseph Kisia	2/2/1996	Vihiga
Mable Lamanya	7/4/1996	Chango
Joseph Lijembe	3/4/1996	Makhokho
Janefer Lodenyi	7/4/1996	Chango
Fenike Lugaria	10/2/1996	Lusui
Dorca Lugalia	9/5/1996	Bware
Leah Lungaho	12/1/1996	Madioli
Priscilla Lumwamu	4/3/1996	Chavakali
Niva Luvai	2/2/1996	Chango
Nathan Luvai	7/4/1996	Chango
Phoebe Luvai	7/4/1996	Chango
Josphine Luvega.	19/3/1996.	kaimosi
Mary Lwaki	21/4/1996	Kakamega
Rebecca Mackenzie	10/2/1996	Lusui

Tafuroza Magena	7/4/1996	Chango
Alice Manase	7/4/1996	Chango
Sarah Masingo	2/2/1996	Mahanga
Belita Mbalanya	7/4/1996	Chango
Sarah Mbechi	8/3/1996	Malava
Jotham Mbohia,	26/2/1996.	Gidagadi
Priscilla Misaki	25/3/1996	Vihiga
Mary Mombo	29/3/1996	Kegati
Inisi Mugesia	20/12/1995	Birongo
Ester Muhanji	7/4/1996	Chango
Joseph Mululu.	14/10/1996	Denamrk
Elisha Mushindi	8/3/1996	Vihiga.
Alice Musibega	7/4/1996	Chango
Timina Musimbi	7/4/1996	Chango.
Rose Musoda	7/4/1996	Chango
Norah Musundi	20/3/1996	Angle Farm
Rasoah Mutua	27/2/1996	Lugulu
Francis Mwashhi	5/5/1996	Cheptulu
Rasoah Mwashhi	5/5/1996	Sipala
Lenah Mwenesi	9/1/1996	Kigama
Roselid Mwengu	16/2/ 1996	Muhutu
Juliet Namono	19/3/1996	Kaimosi
Elise Nandaria	4/5/ 1996	Getembe
Rebecca Nasibwondi	13/3/1996	Toloso
Dinah Ngoya	24/2/1996	Ndivisi.
Hezekia Ngoya	7/3/1996	Ndivisi

Belina Ochwaya	2/21996	Sitiko
Pauline Odanga	7/4/1996	Chango
Mary Odongo	7/4/1996	Chango
Loice Omega	7/4/1996	Chango
Elizabeth Omega	7/4/1996	Chango
Esnansi Ongaji	7/4/ 1996	Chango
Florence Ozengo	7/4/1996	Chango
Edith Ratcliffe	12/3/1996	Kakamega
Rachel Sabwa	30/1/1996	Keveye
Maria Simidi	9/5/1996	Bware
Fanuel Simidi	8/5/1996	Bware
Sara Uwamura	7/4/1996	Chango
Vokoli Group	25/2/1996	Vokoli
Pilisika Vusaka	7/4/1996	Chango
Elisha Wakube	22/2/1996	Tranzoia
Melap Wakube	15/3/1996	Tranzoia.
Rachel Wanyonyi	23/2/1996	Kitale
Ezekiel Wanyonyi	23/2/1996	Kitale
Elizabeth Yano	7/1/1996	Kaimosi

10.2.2 INTERVIEWS ON FILE AT ST. PAUL'S UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIMURU. (SPUTC).

Zakayo Chumba	12/12/1966
Yohana Ingi	13/12/1967
Petr Isiaho	7/9/1966
Isaac Khakuli	13/12/1967
Festo Lisamamdi	14/12/1967

Joel Litu	29/12/1929
Yohana Lumwagi	28/12//1966
Daudi Lung'aho	28/12/1967
Simon Luvale	27/12/1966
Charles Mbecha	15/12/1967
Elizabeth Musavi	17/12/1966
Rasoah Mutua	5/1/1967
Abraham Sangura	12/12/1967
Andrea Simiyu	5/1/1967
Peter Wanyama	18/12/1966

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11 Appendices

11.1 APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PLAN

Some of these interviews were carried out with individuals-others with groups. On average interviews lasted from two to four hours. Most of them were taped. The pattern of interviewing varied from one interviewee to another. The first part of the interview dealt with the story of the interviewee, followed by her/his experiences...

- The story
- Education
- Work
- Church involvement.

The line of questioning often pursued events/themes issues about which the individual was knowledgeable.

- Women in traditional Abaluyia society
- The first Missionaries and the establishment of the church
- The first women to become Quakers
- Mission work: Evangelism, Education, Health, Industrial training.
- Church and Initiation rites: Circumcision/clitoridectomy
- Church and Marriage: Bridewealth, Polygyny, and Levirate Marriage.
- Church and rituals of death,
- Education for women
- Women's Meetings
- Women and leadership in the Church.
- The Women's Yearly Meeting
- Women Pastors.

11.2 APPENDIX II. Minutes of the Executive Committee, American Friends Board of Mission, Richmond, Indiana, September 17-18, 1934.

Minute 65. The special Africa Report was again considered and accepted with appreciation. It was directed that a copy of the report be sent as a letter from the Executive Committee to each worker on the Friends Africa Mission Staff.

In an increasing way during the months past the Executive Committee of the American Friends Board of Missions has come to sense a chaotic world. We consistently find ourselves in the throes of stress and strain. This will apply to you and to ourselves alike. No doubt a measure of isolation makes your problems even more difficult than our own. We can understand how the prestige of the Friends Mission in relation to other missions and its effectiveness as measured by your own standards have alike suffered because of lessened appropriations entailed by the diminished income of the Board. But we want to say that often your friendly words have heartened us in the tasks we have found arduous and perplexing. Our happy relations with all of you, which in most cases have extended into years, embolden us to say freely and frankly what is burdening our minds.

We want to make four statements of general application and follow these by three specific things which we have on our hearts.

1. The primary task of a missionary is a spiritual ministration. But spiritual ministrations can take place only in concrete, material situations. We minister not to disembodied spirits but to spirits that dwell in bodies which have to live in a material world of things.
2. Most of you are aliens in a foreign land.
3. It is important to understand that you are guests of the folks to whom you minister.
4. One of the greatest gifts which the Society of Friends can give through you to those whose guests you are is the gift of friendship.

Bearing in mind the above, let us now say three things to you in friendly counsel. First, the church which is being born on the field where you are is the church of the membership there. It is not yours in the sense that you may command its doings. Friendship and not command is the expression of your function. This is even more

important as the simplicity of the Society of Friends is made the channel of the fellowship. The church will make mistakes as the church throughout the centuries has made mistakes. The church may commit sin as indeed it has too often sinned in our own and other countries, but it will discover and correct its mistakes more quickly if left free with friendly counsel. It will repent of its sins more sincerely under the influence of Christlike friendliness. When missionaries arbitrarily command the church of the folks whose guests they are, to do this or to desist from doing this only because the standard of the missionary is opposed to it, the least that can be said is that it is unseemly. The Christ way is the way of friendship. In the second place, the matter of appealing to the governments for protection of life and property is a problem that has often been a matter of concern with Friends. Other religious groups are facing it now, as they never faced it before. If you choose the way of friendship instead of the way of force it should be done freely on your part and not alone because we urge it upon you. We would, however call your attention to one thing. It may be that you have more influence with governmental authorities and more resources and knowledge than folks whose guests you are. We can scarcely think of anything more unfriendly than the arbitrary use of such influence and power over the folks there, especially by methods of violence and intimidation. The way of friendship will lead both you and them to a happier and freer life.

Now third and last word: Through the years of fellowship and discipline on the mission board we have learned the value of friendship in doing our work. This way has not always been easy. It would be untrue if we say that we have not been tempted at times to use other than friendly means, sometimes attempting to arrive at decisions with the risk of sacrificing friendliness. Our highest reaches, our greatest certainty of guidance, our brightest glow of service have come when unfailing friendship prevailed, not just in a moment of ecstasy but through the sunshine and shadows of months and years. We urge you to let friendship prevail in your daily walk with one another. Let Friendship guide you in your personal contacts as members of the mission, in your worship and in your business sessions. In your relations with other missions, let unselfish love prevail.

11.3 APPENDIX III: Constitution of East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends. (As first adopted in 1963)

I. NAME.

The name of this organisation shall be 'East Africa Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)' hereafter known as The Yearly Meeting.

II. RELATIONSHIP

The Yearly Meeting shall be a constituent of the Five Years Meeting.

III. PURPOSE

It shall be the aim of the Yearly Meeting to function as a fellowship of Christians, maintaining and promoting Christian faith and life and service to fellowmen, in accordance with the principles and practice of the Quaker faith and the understanding of Friends.

IV MEMBERSHIP

All Persons shall be considered members who have been and currently remain full members of a Monthly Meeting within the Yearly Meeting. Monthly Meetings shall determine who are their own full Members on the basis of standards of faith and conduct set forth in 'Faith and Practice' of the five years Meeting. It shall be the responsibility of each Monthly Meeting to instruct applicants and to examine them according to the procedures established by the Yearly Meeting. It shall be the duty of each Monthly Meeting to maintain an accurate and up to date list of its members.

Members in good standing in other Yearly Meeting may be accepted into a Monthly Meeting of the Yearly Meeting by presenting a minute of certificate of transfer from the Monthly Meeting where they have been members.

V MEETINGS

All Friends being members of the Yearly meeting may attend the Yearly Meeting which shall normally held in August each year on such date or dates as the Permanent Board may appoint. For Business Sessions of the Yearly Meeting, the Permanent Board shall decide the number of representatives qualified to attend and participate in such sessions and shall apportion these among the constituent Quarterly Meetings, according to the respective memberships. In selecting their representatives Quarterly Meetings shall follow the same procedure in relation to

their Monthly Meetings. Only such representatives shall have the right to participate in making decisions in the business sessions of the Yearly Meeting.

VI OFFICERS

1. During the annual conference, The Yearly Meeting shall chose a presiding clerk, a recording clerk, a treasurer, and such other officers and assistants as it may deem necessary. These shall serve until the close of the following annual conference. All are eligible for re-appointment, except that the treasurer shall not serve more than five consecutive years and the others not more than three consecutive years.
2. The Presiding clerk shall conduct all business of the Yearly Meeting, and the recording clerk shall record all the decisions taken.
3. On behalf of the Yearly Meeting, the treasurer shall receive and disburse all funds of and as directed by the Yearly Meeting through its permanent Board. He shall report annually to the Yearly Meeting and shall give interim reports to the permanent Board as they may request. All funds of The Yearly Meeting, including those belonging to its institutions, shall be managed in one accounting office, providing always government regulations are observed.
4. The treasure's accounts shall be audited by a professionally qualified accountant, who shall certify them to be correct to a date within one month of the commencement of the yearly Meeting.

VII SUBORDINATE MEETING

1. The Yearly meeting shall divide the entire membership into Quarterly Meetings, normally on the basis of geographical areas. Each quarterly Meeting shall include two or more Monthly Meetings. New Quarterly Meetings shall be established by The Yearly Meeting upon recommendation of the Permanent Board.
2. Monthly Meetings shall be established by The Yearly Meeting upon recommendation of the Permanent Board. Each shall include the village Meetings in its assigned area. The Permanent Board shall not recommend establishment of any Monthly Meeting until it is satisfied that it will have adequate leadership and financial resources to function effectively. "Functioning effectively" shall include providing pastoral care of members and adequate preparation of new ones, as well as such other matters as the Permanent Board may determine.

3. The subordinate meetings shall convene at their intervals indicated in the names and on dates of their own choosing for worship, Christian fellowship, and the transaction of business. Each shall choose a presiding clerk, a recording clerk, and a treasurer, whose duties and length of service shall be as stated for corresponding of The Yearly Meeting.
4. Any Group of Monthly or Quarterly Meetings and any special group such as women's organisations may form associations, provided these come within the limits of Article III and are consistent with the welfare and progress of the Yearly Meeting.

VIII. NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

Each Quarterly Meeting shall forward to the designated Yearly Meeting official, prior to the Yearly Meeting, the names of not more than two persons to serve on the Nominating committee. The Nominating Committee shall meet prior to and during the sessions of The Yearly Meeting. It shall recommend to the Yearly Meeting the names of Friends to serve:

- (a) on the Permanent Board
- (b) on the standing committees
- (c) as officers of The Yearly Meeting (Article VI).

IX. PERMANENT BOARD.

1. The Permanent Board of The Yearly Meeting shall consist of 41 members as follows:
 - (a) the presiding clerk of The Yearly Meeting
 - (b) 35 to be recommended by Nominating Committee and appointed by the Yearly Meeting in annual conference, provided that each Quarterly Meetings shall be represented by at least one of this number.
 - (c) Five other members to be chosen by those in (a) and (b) above.

All those in (b) and (c) above shall be appointed for two years. In the first instance, half shall be appointed for one year and the other half for two years. Thereafter, half the Board will retire each year. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-appointment, except none shall serve for more than six consecutive years.

- (d) No employee of The Yearly Meeting or of any institutions or projects administered by it shall be a member of the Permanent Board.
2. The board shall choose its own chairman and secretary.

3. The board shall meet at least four times a year to conduct the business of The Yearly Meeting and shall have full power to act on behalf of the Yearly Meeting between annual conferences.
4. The Board shall appoint from among its members two executive committees-one for church program and one for institutions and projects. Each executive committee shall consist of nine members and shall be empowered to co-opt two additional members who need not be members of the Board itself and must be employees of it.
5. Each executive committee shall employ, with the approval of the Board, an executive secretary and any other staff it shall consider necessary. The two executive secretaries shall be ex officio members of the board and of the two executive committees.
6. Each executive Committee shall meet at least four times a year. It must be called at any time that four members request it in writing.

X. CHURCH PROGRAM.

1. The executive committee for church program and its employed secretary shall work with and through the standing committees to carry out the program of The Yearly Meeting. They shall meet with the chairmen of these committees from time to time to co-ordinate and expedite the programme.
2. The standing committees shall be as follows:
 - (a).Evangelism and church extension;(b) peace and social concern; (c)Christian Education (including Youth work as a special section); (d).Literature and Publication;(e) Stewardship and Finance. Each committee shall have a chairman and secretary designated at the time of its appointment. The executive secretary of the church program shall be an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The treasurer of the Yearly Meeting shall be an exofficio member of the Stewardship and Finance committee.
3. Each committee shall have not less than 14 and not more than 20 members, to be as representative of the Quarterly Meeting as practical. In addition, each may co-opt up to four members with special knowledge or skills in its area of interest.
4. In addition to other duties, the Stewardship and Finance committee shall prepare an annual Yearly budget to be presented to the last regular Permanent Board meeting prior to The Yearly Meeting.

XI. TRUSTEES.

1. The Yearly Meeting shall, at annual conference or through its Permanent Board appoint six trustees who shall hold all land belonging to The Yearly Meeting in their names or the names of their successors from time to time appointed provided that such successors shall be appointed only in the event of:
 - (a) The death of a trustee
 - (b) The acceptance of his resignation by the Permanent Board or The Yearly Meeting.
 - (c) His removal from office by the Permanent Board or The Yearly Meeting.Such trustees shall be appointed and shall be incorporated under the land (perpetual Succession) Ordinance, Cap.286, of the laws of Kenya.
2. The first trustees so appointed are Joel Litu, Samuel Imbuye, Peter Wanyama, Jeremia Segero, Timothy Bilindi and Elisha Shiverenge.
3. Any documents requiring execution by the Registered Trustees shall be deemed duly executed if the Common Seal of the Registered Trustees shall have been affixed thereto in the presence of any three Registered Trustees.
4. There shall be not less than three trustees holding office at any time, and in the event of the death, resignation or removal of any one more of the trustees, it shall be the duty of the permanent board or successor without delay.
5. There shall be a Common Seal of the Registered Trustees, which shall be circular in form with the words "East Africa Yearly Meeting" inscribed around the circumference, and the words "Registered Trustee" inscribed in the centre thereof, and such Common Seal shall be kept in the custody of the trustees.

XIII AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION.

1. Proposed amendments to this constitution may be presented by a Quarterly Meeting in the form of a written minute from its regular business proceedings. Such proposed amendments shall be brought to the Permanent Board as soon as practical by a Board member from the Quarterly Meeting concerned.
2. No amendment to the constitution shall come into force until
 - (a) It has been presented in writing to a regular meeting of the Permanent Board.
 - (b) Written notice of such proposed amendment has been circulated to all members of the Board and the officers of The Yearly Meeting for consideration at the next Meeting of the Board; and

(c) Such proposed amendment so circulated shall have been approved at a business session of The Yearly Meeting held not less than two months after the Boards approval under (c) hereof.

11.4 APPENDIX IV: QUESTION AND ANSWERS FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

1. Who created you?
God created me.
2. What else did God create besides you?
God created everything.
3. Which book tells us about God?
The Bible tells us about God
4. Where is God?
God is everywhere
5. Why can't we see God?
We cannot see God because God is Spirit.
6. What is Spirit?
Spirit is that which has no flesh.
7. Does God have a beginning?
God has no beginning or end.
8. What can God do?
God can do all things.
9. Does God watch you all the time?
God watches me, sees me and hears me all the time.
10. What is the nature of God?
God is all knowing, all-powerful.
11. Is God one?
God is one.
12. Who was the first man and woman?
The first man was Adam and the first woman was Eve.

13. What three things does every human being have?

A human being has flesh, spirit and heart.

14. In whose image was Adam created?

Adam was created in the image of God.

15. What did God use to create Adam?

God used dust to create the body of Adam.

16. Does God take care of the creation?

God takes care of the creation.

**11.5 APPENDIX V: WOMEN'S YEARLY MEETING CONFERENCES
FROM 1950 TO 1979**

YEAR	PLACE.
1952	Chwele
1953	Lugulu
1954	Vihiga
1955	Lugulu
1956	Chavakali
1957	Chebyusi
1958	Lwanda
1959	
1960	
1961	Chwele
1962	Vokoli
1963	Malava
1964	Ndivisi
1965	Mbale
1966	Navakholo
1967	
1968	Musingu
1969	
1970	Chesamisi
1971	
1972	Munzanzi
1973	
1974	Nairobi
1975	Matulo
1976	
1977	Magui
1978	
1979	Kitale.

**11.6 APPENDIX VI: WOMEN GRADUATES OF FRIENDS BIBLE
INSTITUTE 1943 – 1996.**

Name	Years	Work
Beth Afwandi	1992 – 1994	Secretary
Pamela Agesa	1989- 1991	Superintendent
Marita Amugodzo	1952-1954.	Preacher
Eunice Amugune	1984-1986	Secretary
Janeseffa Andole	1987 – 1989	Housewife
Alice Apencha	1990 –1992	Pastor/Secretary
Flora Ayesa	1990-1992	Pastor's Wife
Dorothy Chandi	1983-1985	-
Leonida Ehaji	1987 –1989	Caterer
Rebecca Inyanya	1952-1954	
Lilian Jaka	1986 – 1988	Secretary
Mary John	1979 –1981	Secretary
Helen Kageha	1995 –1997	Student.
Reba Kagonya	1988 –1990	Accounts Clerk
Winfrida Kasoho	1989-1991	Secretary
Violet Kisanya	1993- 1995	
Mabel Lugaria	1982- 1984	Pastor's wife
Peris Malesi	1977- 1978	Housewife
Linet Maraga	1980-1982	Pastor's wife
Elizabeth Matafari	1977-1978	Housewife
Mbogo Linnet	1990-1992	Secretary
Christine Miheso	1985-1987	Secretary
Elizabeth Mkutu	1977 –1979	Tutor
Ebby Modani	1990-1992	Business Woman
Alice Muhonja	1985 –1987	Pastor's wife
Esther Mukasia	1980 –1982	Preacher
Rasoah Mutua	1943 –1946	Preacher
Ruth Mwengu	1980 –1982	Women's co-ordinator
Elizabeth Namisoho	1978 –1980	Preacher

Juliet Namono	1994 -1995	Student
Rebecca Nasibwondi	1948-1951	Preacher
Margaret Ngoya	1977 – 1979	Sunday School superintendent
Alice Obote	1988- 1990	Tutor in Anglican College
Florence Onchiri	1988-1990	Housewife
Josephine Shikuku	1994 1996	Pastor's Wife
Carolyne Vuraya	1990-1992	
Ebby A Wasike	1983 –1985	Pastor's wife

**11.7 APPENDIX VII: PRESIDING CLERKS OF EAYM BETWEEN 1946 –
1979.**

NAME	YEARS
Samuel Imbuye	1960-1961
Joel Litu	1946-1948
Yohana Lumwagi	1949 -
Benjamin Ngaira	1950 - 1955
Hezekia Ngoya	1962 -1979
Jotham Standa	1957-1960

11.8 Appendix VIII. MARRIAGE REGISTRARS IN EAYM UP TO 1979.

NAME	REGION
Hudson Azangu	Lirhanda Region
Enos Bulimwa	Kitale Region
Stephene Chahasi	Nairobi Region
Christopher Fwamba	Lugulu Region
Erasto Keshole	Kaimosi Region
Isaac Lidonde	Nairobi Region
Thomas Lun'gaho	EAYM Office Kaimosi
Nathan Luvai	Vihiga Region
Shadrack Madasio	Liranda Region
Hezekiah Malala	Kaimosi Region
Charles Mbecha	Vihiga Region
Jeremiah Mugofu	Nairobi Region
Samuel Mwinamo	Liranda Region
Jeremia Ndalo	Chavakali Region
Zablon Ochwaya	Malava Region
Zablon Onde	Bware Region
Hezekia Onze	Chavakali Region
Herman Otioko.	Turkana Region
Charles Wakhisi	EAYM Office Kaimosi
Erasto Wameya	Lugulu Region
Justus Wasike	Lugulu Region
Tadayo Waudo	Kitale Region

12 APPENDIX. VIII. PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE REFERRED TO IN THIS THESIS.

KERAN NYAMUSI ALFAYO: THE DEPUTY PRESIDING CLERK OF EAYM 1960-1966



At her house in Ikumba Nyamusi talks about her life and work as the second and last women Presiding Clerk of EAYM.

RUTH BARASA.



At her house in Sirisia, Ruth Barasa talks about her role as the deputy presiding clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting between 1972 and 1979.

RACHEL SABWA.

The recording clerk and treasurer of the Women's Yearly Meeting 1952-1979.



Rachel Sabwa, at her house in Keveye talks about being a treasurer to the Women's Yearly Meeting.

LEAH GANIRA.

The recording clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting from 1952-1979.



This photograph was taken at Liranda during the women's Pre-Triennial conference in April 1996. Leah Ganira was among the key organisers of the conference which took place in Central Yearly meeting which is currently her Yearly Meeting and she is one of the officials in the Women's Yearly Meeting.

LENA MWENENSI.

The presiding Clerk of the Women's Yearly Meeting from 1963-1979.



In this picture Lena Mwenesi is addressing the delegates of the Women's pre Triennial conference at Liranda. 18th April 1996.

PRISON PREACHERS.

Dinah Musidikhu.



Dinah Musidikhu was among the first women to visit women's Prisons in Kakamega and Kisumu. 1968-1975.

In this picture, Dinah is narrating her story to the women delegates at the pre triennial conference in Liranda on the 19th of April 1996.

ENISI MUGESIA.

Mugesia was visiting Kisii women's prisons between 1968-1975.



This picture was taken in 1972 on a Sunday when she was returning from a visit to the prisons.

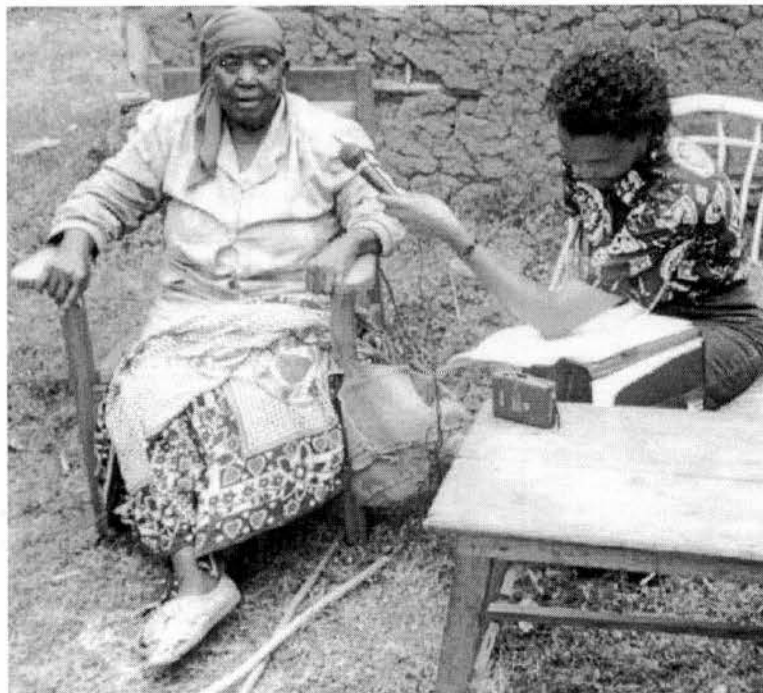
Below is Enisi Mugesia in December 1995



At her house in Birongo Village Mugesia narrates her story to the researcher in December 1995.

RASOAH MUTUA.

Mama Rasoah used to visit the prisons at Kitale and Eldoret between 1967-1975.



At her house in Lugulu Mama Rasoah shares her story with the researcher. Rasoah died in July 1997.

THE CEREMONY OF HONOURING THE FOREMOTHERS.



The women in Grey are the ones who are being given the honour. The women in white are their friends or from the same Meetings and they accompany them.

Below are some men who are invited guests to the ceremony. Some of these men are spouses and others are leaders of various Meetings.



Conferences

Loice Keya addressing women at the Pre triennial Meeting held at Liranda. 19th April 1996.



Edith Ratcliffe with Priscilla Misaki addressing the same meeting. 19th April 1996.



Edith Ratcliffe is a retired missionary nurse but who is now an evangelist in EAYM. She heads up an Evangelistic team with Meshack Mudamba who acts as her translator. In this picture Edith is about to address the conference at Liranda and Priscilla Misaki who is standing next to Edith is introducing her. Misaki is a presiding clerk of the women's Yearly Meeting in EAYM (South.)

FUNERAL

FUNERAL OF RACHEL CHILSON HELD AT KAIMOSI CEMETERY ON 23RD OF MARCH 1996.

Rachel Chilson was the daughter of Arthur Chilson the first FAIM missionary to Kaimosi. Rachel Chilson lived and worked in Kenya until she died and she was buried by EAYM at Kaimosi Cemetery.

Edith Ratcliffe and Meshack Mudamaba speaking to the congregation.



Ratcliffe is speaking on behalf of the FUM office. Meshack standing next to her is her official translator.

Funeral Procession, with men leading, and women following.



Further people mentioned in the Thesis

Fred Kamidi retired Educationalist.



At his house in Ndaru farm Kamidi explains to the researcher the role of Quakers in the education of women.

Mr and Mrs Simidi of Bware.



Simidi is among the first people who moved from Maragoli to Kisii District in search of Land. Maria is one of the women who raised the issue of Female circumcision in the women's Yearly Meeting conference at Chavakali in 1965 .

Abigael Indire at her house in Vihiga.



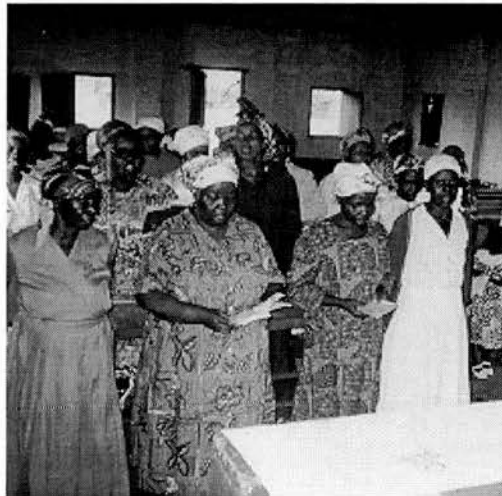
Abigael Indiri an educator and social worker. Trained as a teacher and taught in Vihiga TTC before it moved to Maseno. An active member of the women's Yearly Meeting. A recording clerk of the Women's EAYM South.

KAKAMEGA CHURCH



KAKAMEGA CHURCH BUILT BY THE WOMEN'S YEARLY MEETING.

CHANGO WOMEN'S GROUP.



Most women in this picture were my informants. In this picture on Sunday they women are seated on their side in the church singing a song.