

Religious Women Empowerment Using the Shine Theory in the Tiv Catholic Women Organizations' Incessant Leadership Struggle, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to discover and classify the non-Christian politicking problems for leadership in the Tiv Catholic Women Organisation (CWO) of Nigeria using the Shine Theory. The theory originates from women's groups for empowering women in politics, businesses, and social situations and so, we thought it plausible to empower religious women to be firm on religious ethos. We used a qualitative methodology, in-depth individual interviews of 42 women, present/past presidents, and ordinary members of the organisation in Makurdi, Gboko, and Katsina-Ala dioceses in Benue state. Administering four semi-structured individual interview questions and two structured multiple-choice questions. Our findings surprised us as we thought that the leadership struggle in Tiv CWO was fundamentally husband and priest, male-related, manipulation, and interferences. However, the women report that they are mostly responsible for what is happening in their midst. We classify the non-Christian leadership fighting in the organisation into seven categories: spiritual, psychological, political, business, social, family, and cultural. This theory applies to religious groups as well; Biblical women like Mary the Mother of Jesus and Elizabeth the Mother of John the Baptist; Ruth and Naomi, and many others, Biblical heroines, practiced the theory in their lives. Hence, the Tiv CWO should develop a systematic spiritualitybased on the study of Biblical women as their models since the organisation does not have a clear spirituality. This modest study fills some of the gaps in the theory since there is little on it from the religious perspective. However, more studies need to be conducted to firmly establish a religious context and further development of the Shine Theory for women's empowerment.

Keywords: Religious women empowerment, Shine Theory, Catholic Women Organisation

Background to Catholic Women's Organisation (CWO)

The CWO is a worldwide organisation. Its members are committed to the re-awakening message of the favour given to the Catholic Church and the world as



described in the event of Nazareth, Mary, and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Luke 1:26-38¹ as the command of the Good News. Its work comprises peace-making, reconciling and unifying human beings, and integrating creation. The World Union of Catholic Women Organisation (WUCWO) states that women are called to holiness to sanctify the world for holistic development.² These facts are contained in its mission statement, motto, and objectives.

WUCWO: Mission statement

WUCWO promotes Catholic women's presence, participation, and co-responsibility in society and enables them to fulfil their mission of evangelisation and work for human development.³

The Catholic Women Organisation of Nigeria (CWON) constitution: Article 1.3, motto:

Light, unity, peace, and love

CWO Nconstitution, article 2.1-6, objectives:

Its social aspect, the unity of women

1. To unite Catholic Women of Nigeria in purpose and direction;
2. To unite all Catholic Women of Nigeria and to direct them to be light, unity, love, and peace among themselves and all people;

Its spiritual aspect, the light of Nigeria and the world

3. To give priority to the Christian formation of all members of the National Council of Catholic Women, through an emphasis on unity and a deeper understanding and participation in the life of the Church leading to a greater understanding of the role of a Christian in today's world.

Its business aspect, the empowerment of women in Nigeria

4. To serve as a medium through which the Catholic Women of Nigeria may speak and act as a unit for the good of our country and the world at large;
5. To render assistance to Catholic Women groups in their efforts to give service in their respective fields;
6. To encourage, establish and maintain interreligious and intra-religious relationships with other religious Organisations sharing similar or

¹New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

²World Union of Catholic Women Organisation (WUCWO), "Mission," accessed 26 June 2023, <https://www.wucwo.org/index.php/en/home-4/mision>.

³WUCWO, "Mission."

complimentary aims and objectives with those in Nigeria and abroad; and to act as an affiliate of the World Union of Catholic Women Organisation (WUCWO) and to represent Catholic Women of Nigeria on WUCWO board.

7.

We were struck that obtaining a copy of the CWON constitution took us such a long time. It was the Diocesan President alone who had a copy. It raises the issue of how many Tiv CWO members know what is in their constitution.

A cultural aspect of the Tiv CWO

The Tiv CWO has its slogan, "CWO! The Pillars of the Church, the Family, and the Marketplace!" The Tiv CWO is fundamental to the Roman Catholic Church in Tiv land. Every Roman Catholic Tiv woman is obliged to join the organisation. The women are considered mothers of the Church and they are yeast in their churches. They take care of priests, and priests' residences; buy generators for churches; own business malls in some dioceses. Transport-wise, almost every parish Tiv CWO owns a Bus, a fit that is not achieved by even the Roman Catholic Nights society. Culturally, Tiv CWO buries good-standing (due paying) members who are widows, but have no one to bury them. It carries the coffin of good-standing members to their graves. This seems to be a very important ritual (a pride) for Tiv CWO members. Visibility-wise, wherever the Tiv CWO gathers in their hundreds and thousands, praising God, raising funds, and other dynamic activities, it is obvious that the Tiv Roman Catholic Church is gathered. However, there is, often a serious leadership struggle, and often the women play non-Christian politics just to lead the Tiv CWO raising questions.

Research questions

1. What are CWO problems leading to non-Christian leadership struggles?
2. How can a Christian ethos leadership contest be maintained?

Research objectives

1. To classify the Tiv CWO problems that lead to their non-Christian leadership struggles;
2. To develop proposals using the Shine Theory that enable a firm Christian ethos in the Tiv CWO.

Research methodology

This research carried out a literature review of the history of CWO to understand the background of CWO and provide a basis for its empirical

research. Desk research of the Shine Theory provided the approach to select relevant data collection and analytical methods. A qualitative, in-depth individual interview of 2 present Tiv CWO presidents, 2 past presidents, and 10 ordinary members in the Dioceses of Makurdi, Gboko, and Katsina-Ala (42 women) took place between February to August 2022. We administered four semi-structured individual interview questions and two structured multiple-choice questions as presented in the research finding section.

Statement of the problem

The Tiv culture gives poor socialisation for girls and women to be leaders in Tiv society. Yet any Tiv woman becomes a full CWO member on day one, once you pay your dues; and every Tiv Roman Catholic woman is obliged to membership of CWO. For any CWO member to receive proper attention from the priests in cases of death or sacraments, and others, such a member simply presents a recommendation from the CWO president. So, CWO presidents are very powerful women in the Tiv Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps, one of the reasons for seeking to be president by all means possible amongst the women members. Moreover, CWO does not have a clear spirituality nor does it have a programme of pre-initiation, initiation, and on-going formation for its members. However, CWON states in its objective article 2.1.3 that it must give priority to the Christian formation of its members. Thus, a need to find a Christian spirituality that will lead the Tiv CWO women to be true pillars in the Church, the family, and the marketplace.

Theoretical framework: The Shine Theory

Terms conception

Firstly, the word Shine brings to mind light. The Sun, a Star, is light that shines brightly that we cannot look at it. So, the Shine theory means to be a star and light. Secondly, mentality here means a particular way of thinking of an individual or a group; it applies to the Shine Theory as it calls on women to change their present mentality. Thirdly, metanoia, a Greek word, means to change one's mind, to make a Christian/spiritual conversion, Matthew 1:17, a transformative change of heart into the image of God. As God made us in his image and likeness, male and female He created, Genesis 1: 26-27. Therefore, the Shine Theory here means a call on religious women to change their mentality—metanoia, a spiritual conversion to be **Light, Stars**, in the world, as God intended for women and men, Genesis 1: 26-30.

The Shine Theory. In “Why Powerful Women Make the Greatest Friends,” the author, Ann Friedman, explains the concept of women empowering each other and holding each other up, rather than bringing one another down.⁴ She suggests four core principles about women's change of mentality:

⁴Ann Friedman, “Shine Theory: Why Powerful Women Make the Greatest Friends” The Cut, 31 May 2013, accessed 7 June 2023, <https://www.thecut.com/2013/05/shine-theory-how-to-stop-female-competition.html>.

1. A woman does not shine if another woman does not shine;
2. When a woman meets another woman, who is knowledgeable and professionally accomplished; she befriends her;
3. A woman surrounding herself with the best women does not make herself look worse; rather, it makes her better; and
4. True confident women infect other women with confidence.⁵

This is a positive approach as it suggests that women should not seek to become like men but be the best humans of themselves. As Genesis 1: 27-28 illustrates, "God created humans in his image ... male and female he created them ... God blessed them ... be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." Therefore, the Shine Theory is a strategy that women empower other women to resolve women's problems to work together and fulfil God's command in businesses, politics, social, family, and cultural settings.

Women in businesses. Women empowering women challenges the notion that women have to put successful women down to be successful in business. Friedman reveals the mentality that,

in many industries, women are still perceived to be token hires — which means that other women can feel like our chief competition[...]When we hate women whom we perceive to be more 'together' than we are, we're just expressing the negative feelings we have about our own careers, or bodies, or relationships.⁶

This mentality requires a change, she suggests, when a woman meets a good, stylish, beautiful, and professionally accomplished woman, she befriends her. A woman who surrounds herself with the best women makes herself better.⁷She illustrates, "I want the strongest, happiest, smartest women in my corner, pushing me to negotiate for more money ... not competition and body-snarking."⁸Furthermore, she reiterates the mentality that women are conditioned to compete for quotas to fill in managerial positions and on boards, and when a woman gets such a position should feel empowered among men must also change.⁹Women are within their right to be on boards given their qualifications like men.

In the Shine Theory, collaboration amongst women seems to be the new mental attitude, as Anna Friedman calls on women, "condition your mind to look for opportunities, instead of threats. Study what other women in your industry are doing and see what you can learn from them to help your business grow. If you

⁵Friedman, "Shine Theory."

⁶Friedman, "Shine Theory."

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Shannon Threlfall, "The shine theory: We need to debunk the myth only a certain number of top jobs for women," Smart Company, 16 February 2021, accessed 7 June 2023, <https://www.smartcompany.com.au/people-human-resources/leadership/shine-theory-woman-entrepreneurs/>.

are stuck on something, ask for help. Then think of something you could offer in return.”¹⁰The mentality of women sharing experiences with women, she contends, encourages women to look for women who have come before them;ask them about their experiences and share their struggles; gain insights from them and avoid the same mistakes; thus, each woman should do the same for the women coming up after them.¹¹The theory insists that women’s new mentality should embed compassion into their business model. Shannon Threlfall maintains women should develop a business model that supports women; provide job opportunities to other women; use their business profits to support women who are going through tough times; or train other women by holding workshops or networking events.¹²Women should follow the common mentality that successful people socialise and do business with successful people. The Tiv CWO women can use this principle to empower themselves in their businesses.

Women using business ideas in politics. The Shine Theory empowers women against the cultural mentality that women fight against each other in the business cycle. As Marie Claire notes

women are pitted against one another all the bloody time. We’re told that Rihanna is ‘the new Beyoncé’ – God forbid that there would be space for two successful Black women to coexist in the same industry – and we’re taught to literally *elbow* one another out of the way to catch a bouquet (husband) rather than risk ending up entirely alone. We hear that women who are high flyers are probably horrible – and that bitching about them behind their backs is definitely justified.¹³

Claire argues that success isn’t finite. It is not a substance that can run out or a product that can be used up. One woman’s success does not counteract other women’s success. If a woman is shining brightly, she does not put other women in the shadows. Rather, she lights them up, too.¹⁴ Using this mentality, during the first term of President Obama (the US, 2008) when 2/3 of the staff were men and women were not listened to, but men were taking credit for women’s ideas. Saddened, the women decided to amplify women’s voices. Susan Rice states, “it is not pleasant to have to appeal to a man to say, “include me in that meeting”¹⁵to make input to cabinet decisions. Consequently, when one woman said something in a meeting the others acknowledged it loud and repeated the

¹⁰Shannon Threlfall, “The shine theory.”

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Marie Claire, “What is shine theory (and how can it benefit your social life?),” Marie Claire, 15 September 2016, accessed 7 June 2023, <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/life/what-is-shine-theory-295830>.

¹⁴Claire, “What is shine theory.”

¹⁵Marie Claire, “How Obama’s female staff members hatched a plan to make their voices heard in the White House: When they realized no one was listening to them, they decided to do something about it,” Marie Claire, 15 September 2016, accessed 7 June 2023, https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/life/work/obama-s-female-staffers-top-tips-for-making-your-voice-heard-295875?_gl=1*w0ixz5*_gcl_au*MTA0MjYzODYwOC4xNjg2MTMzODU5.

point and the name of the woman. It did not matter who or if they agreed with what was said. In this way, men could not claim it as their ideas. This change of mentality led to their success. President Obama started asking his female staff for more input, and then, in his second term, the male and female staff ratio was more balanced.¹⁶ The Tiv CWO can adopt these ideas in their politicking too.

Women in social settings. The Shine Theory appeals to women to empower themselves in social settings as Mia Holt the founder of “The Lift Up Project,” new consciousness, “I’m constantly in awe of the drive and talents of the creative women I surround myself with, both on social media and in real-life, so I decided I wanted to create a space to celebrate them,” she tells Marie Claire. She continues, “I also wanted to introduce creative women to one another ... I decided to profile different women from different creative backgrounds in every newsletter... to give the women I was following a little helping hand and acknowledge and celebrate their work.”¹⁷ Changing the mentality of gossiping behind the backs of other women. The new mentality is that a woman reaches out to some womans headmires. Anna Friedman explains if a woman sees a girl on Facebook who is ambitious, cool, and fits her aesthetic; she should contact her and let her know that she thinks she is cool.¹⁸ In this way, women socially adopt a mentality to empower other women even on social media; consequently, the Tiv CWO members may decide to do likewise in their social setting.

Women in family and cultural settings. The Shine Theory requires women to acknowledge a new mentality that women’s leadership starts at birth, follows through childhood, girlhood, then womanhood in the family, and society. By so doing, recognise that women’s societal struggles may be cultural and psychological; women’s negative reactions and self-promotion may be due to a socialise mentality that can also be observed in girls. Marie Claire describes a woman, who is “killing the game” in her personal life, career, marriage, etc does not mean that another woman should give into jealousy—socialise mentality.¹⁹ On the contrary, women need a re-socialisation, that mothers begin to teach girls to talk and learn from each other, a teaching that must form part of women’s resources, advocacy, and empowerment in girls and women’s programmes.²⁰ This will prepare girls to practice the value of collaborating rather than unhealthy competition with other girls and later on as women. It is certainly within the capacity of the Tiv CWO women to cultivate this culture in their families.

Justification for the use of the Shine Theory.

Given the often-non-Christian politics, character assignation, and pulling fellow contestants down, for leadership in Tiv CWO, it fits a women’s narrative of the Shine Theory. It seems, religious women too can choose to use Christian

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Claire, “What is shine theory.”

¹⁸Friedman, “Shine Theory.”

¹⁹Lysse On Life, “What is Shine Theory?” A Blog for the whole you, accessed 7 June 7, 2023, <https://lysseonlife.com/what-is-shine-theory/>.

²⁰Lysse On Life, “What is Shine Theory?”

principles, given a women-led spirituality to empower other women. This approach is informed by the gap in the growing literature about the Shine Theory. The women's new mentality has been applied in business, politics, social, and cultural settings, but little is known about its application in religious cycles. Hence, the empirical findings of this research might fill that gap. We are not arguing that the theory is a panacea to women's problems, but that given its success in other areas of women's endeavours, a study, and application of it to a religious group, the Tiv CWO is a plausible approach.

Classification of key research findings on CWO leadership struggles

All the women interviewed spoke with intensity such that it seems that they represent true members of the organisation. However, they expressed serious concerns on the internal affairs of the organisation. The women believe that this research will suggest a way forward in their organisation. For this reason, they were happy to answer this research interview questions as presented.

1. At a spiritual level, the women testified to a lack of prayer life, lack of unity, trust, and peace, some interference from parish priests, and non-Christian politicking for leadership in response to, what are the general problems of CWO.

Prayer life

1. A lot of CWO families do not pray together, the mother may be praying with the children, but the father may not like to come to the prayers; and
2. A lot of CWO members have little interest or pride in the Catholic faith; rather, they prefer the social aspects of CWO.

Lack of unity/trust and peace

1. A lot of women do not show support for their leaders;
2. We have cases of past leaders refusing to support present leaders that they may have supported their emergency;
3. Some women just follow other women without checking what they do—sheep mentality;
4. CWO may be seen together, but there is little unity and so little peace.

External interference

5. Sometimes Parish Priests impose leadership on CWO.

1. At a psychological level, the women expressed low self-esteem in the group; a lack of group confidence, and projected aggression against other women in response to, how is women's self-esteem in CWO?

1. Some members lack personal confidence e.g., when a member receives an appointment, you hear, I am not able to do it;
2. There is plenty of faithlessness in the group e.g., you hear one saying that she is not able to do what she says she will do;

3. Lack of trust: any woman trusted with money is thought of as chopping CWO money; and
 4. True friendship is hard to find; friendship seems to be interest centred.
1. At a political level, non-Christian politics does not seem to matter as the women reported personal attacks and character assassination are often seen as fair game, and the purpose of leadership appears to be the control of money and the women in response to, what are the general problems of CWO?
1. There exists a leadership struggle to double-deal with money and have power over other women;
 2. Some women are said to use non-Christian means to win elections; and “worldly” politics takes place all the time;
 3. Oftentimes, dirty electioneering campaigns take place: personal attacks, character assassination, etc.; and
 4. Sometimes the husbands of women seeking leadership join in fighting for their wives to be made CWO president, and some husbands will also join in fighting for their wives who are CWO president.
1. At a business level, the women reported that CWO does not support its members to grow their businesses or their careers; members face economic problems on their own in response to the question, does CWO have class issues?
1. A lot of CWO members are unemployed; this leads to cheating among members;
 2. No one does a thing to help other women if you are living in poverty it is your problem, but you must pay your dues otherwise nobody will listen to you;
 3. Some men refuse to get married in the Church with their CWO wife because they cannot pay pride price; the in-laws want a public wedding, but they cannot afford it; the in-laws want a cow;
 4. Many children of CWO members do not go to school because their parents cannot pay school fees; many children have graduated but are unemployed; and
 5. Women living in poverty are errand girls to rich members.
1. At a social level, the women lamented discrimination based on marital status, and that social activities are not for the promotion of its members, but in the interest of their leaders who are elite in response to the question, does CWO have class issues?
1. For many women being a leader is attaining higher status and not necessarily about service e.g., you need to be literate, educated, and own a car to be a leader;
 2. Problems exist around dressing: expensive clothing vs poor clothing—the kind of shoes—fashion shows;
 3. There is preferential treatment for elite women; less attention is given to women living in poverty; and
 4. When it comes to holding office in CWO, there is a fight between those married in Church vs those not married in the Church.

1. At a family level, the women reported serious spousal, children, and divisions in the family, but there are no clear structures in the CWO in dealing with these issues in response to, does CWO have personal family problems?

Spousal issues

1. Some husbands complain that their CWO wife does not respect them;
2. Some husbands complain of their CWO wives who go to CWO meetings, but go elsewhere and sometimes stay overnight away from the family;
3. Some husbands complain of their CWO wives neglecting their families;
4. Some CWOs complain of their husband's infidelity;
5. Some women complain that their husbands do not contribute to the house upkeep; and that
6. CWO doesn't have a clear structure for intervening in spousal conflicts. If you are lucky, the CWO president may come, or send a delegation to speak with your husband, but in most cases, you are on your own with spousal problems.

Children's issues

1. Some children do not like housework;
2. Teen pregnancy happens often in CWO families;
3. There is exam failure among CWO's children;
4. CWOs children are involved in drug abuse;
5. Some CWO's children go about aimlessly, they come home late at night, etc.; and
6. CWO does not have structures to help its members with children's problems.

Family issues

1. Within CWO families, couples tell lies between themselves, and to children; children tell lies to parents;
2. In some CWO families, children do not eat together; parents do not eat with children; and parents do not eat together; and
3. In some cases, CWO officials come to intervene in family divisions and may even take cases to the Parish Priest, but in most cases, this is considered a private matter.

1. At a cultural level, the women expressed bias against women's leadership and suggested that mothers/girls and fathers/boys introduced this bias early on.

When asked, choose any of the following concerning women: (a) Men are less likely to support other women in leadership; (b) Women display bias against women as leaders; (c) Women support men in leadership more than they support women in leadership; and (d) All of the above. 70% chose (d), 10% (b), 6% C, and 4% A. Secondly, when asked, choose any of the following concerning girls: (a) Girls and boys are less likely to support other girls in leadership; (b) Mothers display bias against girls as leaders; (c) Fathers display bias against girls as leaders; (d) All of the above. Again 70% chose (d), 10% (b), 7% C, and 3% A. These findings suggest that the Tiv CWO women's difficulties in organizing elections and supporting their leadership is culturally correlated.

Our findings surprised us as we thought that the leadership struggle in Tiv CWO was fundamentally husband and priest, male-related, manipulation, and interferences. However, the respondents illustrate that women are mostly responsible for what is happening in their mist. We classify the non-Christian leadership fighting in the organisation into seven categories: spiritual, psychological, political, business, social, family, and cultural. Moreover, the passion and intensity with which the respondents spoke, and how we were intimidated at times by their knowledge and style, illustrate the importance of the organisation to its members and the Church. Hence, we infer that the women want to see a metanoia, a religious conversion; women empowering women in the Tiv CWO. We propose that this can be done by applying the Shine Theory following a religious methodology.

Analysis of the key findings applying the Shine Theory

The term Christian integrity here going forward means the habit that a Christian makes a choice based on Christian principles rather than worldly or purely civic principles. Christian integrity demands that Tiv CWO members habitually, and regularly, make their decisions based on Christian principles including the manner of electing their leaders.

At the spiritual/psychological level. The World Union of Catholic Women Organisation (WUCWO) holds the mission of enabling women to evangelise the world, and the Catholic Women of Nigeria (CWON)—the Tiv CWO have a motto of light, unity, peace, and love. CWON constitution article 2, 1.2-3 states that it prioritises the Christian formation of its members. Moreover, WUCWO considers women members as called to holiness.²¹ However, the findings suggest that a lot of the Tiv CWO women do not even pray in their families, many have no interest or take pride in their Christian faith, but prefer the social aspect of CWO. Hence, the women lack Christian integrity by their standards. The Tiv CWO women need a metanoia to practice the four core principles of the Shine Theory, that is, if one Tiv CWO member does not spiritually shine the other women do not spiritually shine too.²²

At the political level. Holy politics is deemed part of CWO, nonetheless, the women report non-Christian politics, character assignation, and personal attacks during leadership contests. These findings are consistent with Marie Clare's experience of women fighting rather than supporting each other.²³ However, these findings are contrary to WUCWO's aim to promote women's co-responsibility in society and the Church, for human development. The Tiv CWO needs the Obama women's choice, amplifying the voice that all women have good qualities to lead.²⁴ Leadership is every human being's political business and women are not an exception.

²¹World Union of Catholic Women Organisation (WUCWO), "Mission," accessed 26 June 2023, <https://www.wucwo.org/index.php/en/home-4/mision>.

²²Friedman, "Shine Theory."

²³Claire, "What is shine theory."

²⁴Claire, "How Obama's female staff members hatched a plan."

At a business level. The women lamented that unemployed women are not helped to gain employment; women in small businesses are not helped to grow their business; many of the children of members are not going to school yet they must pay their dues, and more, members living in poverty are turned into errand girls. Yet, CWON constitution article 2.1.5 maintains that it enables Catholic women in their efforts to give service in their respective fields. It seems a contradiction—a lack of Christian integrity by CWON's standards. The Tiv CWO may make a choice as in the Shine Theory that success isn't finite, one woman's success does not counteract the other, nor does a shining woman put others in the shadows.²⁵ CWO needs a mentality that all members can be successful in their businesses.

At a social level. Socially, CWON wants to unite its members to be the light, love, and peace among themselves and all people, but this is not what is found. The women lamented discrimination based on marital status in the Tiv CWO and that social activities are not for the promotion of its members but in the interest of the elite women. These women would need a new mentality that Mia Hol women's "Lift Up Project," and ametanoia, to help women socialise together to promote themselves and all they do irrespective of status and wealth.²⁶ Such a leap of faith may create magic in the women's gatherings, in their hundreds and thousands.

At a family level. CWON does not address an objective concerning the family life of members. However, we found this to be of serious concern to the women interviewed. They complained of undisciplined and unfaithful wives and husbands; a lack of economic support from husbands; children out of school, teen pregnancy, child drug abuse, and a lack of structure from the Tiv CWO to handle these matters. The Shine Theory does not address the issue of women's families directly but this is a serious concern to the women in this research.

At a cultural level. Biases against women's leadership have many factors. The findings in this study suggest that the average Tiv girl-child is not socialised well in leadership politics; fathers and mothers are biased against girls and women's leadership. This seems to be correlated to the lack of confidence and self-esteem in personal and designated leadership and as projected onto other women's capacity in leadership. Women refusing to make other women shine and be stars; a change in this mentality, a re-socialisation using a Tiv CWO spiritual formation is required.

Recommendations for Tiv CWO

The recommendations are based on the belief that good intentions as expressed in WUCWO and CWON's mission, motor, and objectives are not enough to make its members committed Christians. Reducing and preventing non-Christian politics requires a practical Christian formation that the women model and cultivate. The recommendations arise as Eileen C. Burke-Sullivan notes, every Roman Catholic Church's serious society like the CWO has developed systematic

²⁵Claire, "What is shine theory."

²⁶Claire, "What is shine theory."

spirituality since the 6th century,²⁷ e.g., the Knights, Legion of Mary, and Devine Mercy, female and male Religious groups. There are always pre-initiation, initiation, and on-going formation periods; CWO cannot be an exception.

1. The Tiv CWO should develop a systematic spirituality based on Biblical women

Spirituality here is by Eileen C. Burke-Sullivan the synergy that forms “a relationship between a believer and God mediated by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and brought forth by the power of God’s Spirit within the personality of the believer and according to the believer’s cooperation.”²⁸ According to Burke-Sullivan, a Tiv CWO spirituality should be characterized by Christian Baptism, the work of peace-making, division-healing, and unifying; the eucharist celebrated together with all the baptized; finding nourishment in prayer; being rooted in scriptural value-base of simplicity and human dignity—no rich no poor; being both affective and intellectual; and not confined to denominational boundaries as expressed article 2.1.6 of the objectives of CWON.²⁹ It seems that a systematic spirituality will empower the present Tiv CWO members to attain Christian integrity and so, women will cooperate with other women to massively tap women’s potential for an epic spiritual, political, economic, and social life. It may also empower new members clearly in the life of the Tiv CWO. This systematic spirituality should begin with a pre-initiation period.

2. The Tiv CWO should set aside a pre-initiation period

This pre-initiation period should be dedicated to the selection and study of potential members of the Tiv CWO. The present system of women joining without pre-preparation needs to stop. The pre-initiation period should take the model of the Biblical God’s calling of Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ and Elizabeth the Mother of John the Baptist for preparing women to experience “CWO’s Initiation Retreat.” Mary and Elizabeth are Biblical heroines, whose life is exemplary of the principles of the Shine Theory.

3. The Tiv CWO should visit and find out the background of new members.

For instance, in the story of Mary, Luke 1: 26-38, God, and the angel Gabriel, know the background of Mary before asking her to be the mother of his Son. The text demonstrates Mary’s spiritual and material preparation in a personal way. The angel lays out for her, how things will work out to dispel her fears so that she will be committed to her mission in the world. This visit reminds us of God’s visit to other women in the Old Testament: Sarah, mother of Isaac, Genesis 18:2-5; Anne, mother of Samuel, 1 Samuel 1:9-18; and the mother of Samson, Judges 13:2-5. To all these women, the text reveals the background of these women. Similarly, in the story of Elizabeth, Luke 1:5, she is of priestly

²⁷Eileen C. Burke-Sullivan, “Lay spirituality,” in *The new dictionary of sacramental worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1990), 673-680.

²⁸Burke-Sullivan, “Lay spirituality,” 674.

²⁹Burke-Sullivan, “Lay spirituality,” 679-680.

stock: from the tribe of Aaron. So, Elizabeth is a priestess.³⁰CWO can learn from this model to improve the quality of its membership; knowing the background of members is laying a good foundation for Christian integrity.

Mary and Elizabeth, Luke 1: 39-56 and the Shine Theory. At a social/cultural level, Mary chose to visit Elizabeth, Luke 1: 39-40, "In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth." This visit in Luke 1: 41-43 makes Elizabeth shine, "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Similarly, in Luke 1: 44-45 Elizabeth makes Mary shine, "And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." At a spiritual/psychological level, in Luke 1: 46 Mary has good self-esteem, she identifies herself as the "poor of God" and sings praise to God. The poor, in a strict Biblical sense, are those who place their trust unconditionally in God; but qualitatively, they are the best people with high self-esteem as the People of God. The proud, instead, are those who place all their trust in themselves—they have low self-esteem. At a business/family level, in Luke 1: 56, "Mary remained with her [Elizabeth] about three months and then returned to her home." The true reason for the trip is not indicated, but we get it through information deduced from the context. In Luke 1: 37, the angel had communicated to Mary the pregnancy of Elizabeth, already in the sixth month. The fact that she remained there for three months, just the time so that the child could be born, allows us to understand that Mary intended to help her cousin. It is more likely, Mary responded to the urgent needs of Elizabeth with a business spirit of running around for her who was almost 90 years, a clear sensibility, and co-responsibility in family life. This should constitute a model for the Tiv CWO to follow. A complete analysis of these two Biblical women concerning the Shine Theory is beyond the scope of this article due to space.

4. The Tiv CWO should introduce an initiation retreat for new members

During this retreat, the Tiv CWO should introduce the women to the Roman Catholic fundamental Christian teachings; use human and technical resources, translate the CWON constitution into the Tiv language, and study its articles, to proclaim God to the women so that they can accept Jesus Christ in a Tiv language. Moreover, they critically study the important women in the Bible, that is, Mary the Mother of Jesus and Elizabeth the Mother of John the Baptist; Ruth and Naomi³¹ as models of women who practice the Shine Theory concerning

³⁰Ratzinger, Joseph Pope Benedict XVI, *The infancy narratives Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore, (London-New York-Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2012), 18.

³¹Women in the Bible, "Who were Ruth and Naomi in the Bible?" accessed 10 June 2023, RUTH in the BIBLE. Naomi & Ruth fight to survive. Ruth finds true love. (womeninthebible.net); Phyllis Tribble, "Ruth: Bible," in the Shalvi/Hyman encyclopedia of Jewish women, Jewish Women's Archive, Sharing Stories Inspiring Change, accessed 8 June 2023, Ruth: Bible | Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org); Naomi: Bible | Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org).

cultural, social, and family life. Additionally, they should study Mary Magdalen³² as a spiritual model; Pricilla-Prisca and her husband Aquila³³ as a business model; Miriam³⁴ as a political model. At the end of this retreat, new members should be placed in spiritual, cultural, social, business, and political groups with women mentors each one according to their state and likeness.

5. The Tiv CWO should maintain an ongoing formation

The Tiv CWO should help women who experience the irinitiation retreat to realise their Apostolic Mission in the Church and the world according to their states and specific area of expertise. Moreover, they should systematically continue to study more women in the Bible like Judith, Shiprah and Puah, Jael, Rahab, Deborah, Yael, Bathsheba, etc. Following the Shine Theory, they may set up CWO women's social media groups; institute business training and mentorship programmes for CWO women to grow their businesses; and create structures that offer spiritual/psychological family therapy to promote solidarity and friendship amongst CWO women so that they can grow and be mature Roman Catholic Christians. Consequently, promote women to do well, do something good, and or change bias against women leadership in the Tiv society.

Conclusion

Our first objective for this study was to use the Shine Theory, to discover and classify the problems subsisting within the Tiv CWO that are correlated to the non-Christian politics concerning the election of its officials. We classify the problems as spiritual, psychological, political, commercial business-related, cultural, and family-correlated. Our second objective was to use the theory to develop proposals that will enable a firm Christian ethos in the Tiv CWO. The Shine Theory offers women four strategic principles for collaborating to remove women living in poverty, scale up their businesses, attain higher political positions, maximise their social activities for a better life; work to change cultural bias against women in leadership, and massively tap women's potential making humanity and creation a prosperous existence. We have applied the theory to the Tiv CWO leadership struggle and have proposed a Tiv CWO systematic spirituality based on women in the Bible. We illustrated Mary the Mother of Jesus Christ and Elizabeth the Mother of John the Baptist as exemplary of the Shine Theory in the Bible that should be used in the pre-initiation period. Moreover, we suggested that many other Biblical women fit the Shine Theory approach; women who are knowledgeable, stylish, beautiful, and professionally accomplished, Biblical heroines, for studies within the CWO family during its initiation retreat and ongoing formation. We have found that

³²The Samaritan Woman ... Bible Women Heroines accessed 17 June 2023, <https://womeninthebible.net/bible-women-heroines/>.

³³Priscilla-Prisca, Christian woman, Women in the Bible, accessed 17 June 2023, <https://womeninthebible.net/women-bible-old-new-testaments/prisca-priscillachristian-woman/>.

³⁴Phyllis Trible, "Miriam: Bible," in the Shalvi/Hyman encyclopedia of Jewish women, Jewish Women's Archive, Sharing Stories Inspiring Change, accessed 8 June 2023, Miriam: Bible | Jewish Women's Archive (jwa.org).

the family constitutes an important aspect for the women interviewed, therefore, the organisation may adopt seven values derived from the Shine Theory and the Bible to address this issue:

1. A Tiv CWO woman living in poverty is the Tiv CWO women living in poverty;
2. All women are sisters, sisters do not hate sisters;
3. A woman does not shine if her daughter does not shine;
4. A wife does not shine if her husband does not shine;
5. A truly confident woman infects her husband with confidence;
6. A husband does not shine if his wife does not shine; and
7. When a man meets a woman who is knowledgeable, and professionally accomplished, he marries her and they are one flesh.³⁵ This is God's command, Genesis 2: 24 and Matthew 19: 5-6.

Consequently, we have demonstrated that the Shine Theory applies to religious women; women in the Bible lived it; therefore, adding a religious perspective to the theory. It remains to be seen how this approach turns out in practice. Furthermore, more research needs to be conducted to firmly establish the Shine Theory in the context of religious women.

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³⁵Friedman, "Shine Theory."

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