

ABSTRACT

The Role of the Church in Poverty Eradication in Kenya:**A Focus of A.I.C. Kijabe, Region.**

by

Simon K. Thiongo

The majority of people in Kenya and Africa live below the poverty level. A good number of people cannot afford food and the drought has killed a lot people and livestock. Despite all these challenges the church in Kenya has continued to thrive numerically. Yet, there is very little done to fight poverty among the parishioners and the community. The inactiveness to fight poverty is witnessed in many denominations including the Africa Inland Church which came to be from Africa Inland Mission.

The purpose of this study was to identify the levels of knowledge, training, and practice exhibited by leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in A.I.C, Kijabe Region, to discern best practices for poverty eradication. The assumption is that, if more churches were to start teaching and implementing poverty eradication programs, there would be fewer people who are starving and perhaps dying. The study was successful and obtained data from leaders and district chairmen from across the district. Surveys and interviews schedules were used to collect data. The study found that there is very little done in the district to fight poverty. The low participation was caused by little training in seminaries and in the churches and minimal sermons about poverty eradication have also contributed to the problem. The study found that a lack of example of existing programs has played a role in not being active in fighting poverty. Finally, the study recommends Africa Inland Church to consider revising their theological training curriculum. They should make sure

that their colleges are offering short courses on business skills and community development, along with short courses in the local churches.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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by

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CHAPTER 1: NATURE OF THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter generally highlights the understanding and knowledge of pastors and leaders in addressing poverty eradication in Africa Inland Church, Kijabe region, and how the project was conducted. The chapter highlights information about the writer and his experience concerning the project. The problem and the purpose statements are highlighted to show the validity of the project.

The chapter includes the definitions of key terms used in the project. The terms defined include pastor, poverty eradication, local Church, Kijabe Region, Great Commission and holistic ministry. At the end of the chapter, the writer highlights the delimitations of the research explaining the demographic and geographical areas covered by the project and the reasons why Kijabe region was chosen for the study. The remaining part of the chapter covers the research methodology which includes; participants, research instruments, data collection approaches and data analysis.

Personal Introduction

My experience with poverty started when I was young. I grew up in a family of seven with an absentee biological father. My mother struggled to raise all of us while my dad was away enjoying all the money with friends. Being brought up in a family with an alcoholic father who came home once a year from his working place was in its own way an experience of a life in poverty. I was lucky that I managed go through high school education. My high school encounter with people who struggled like I did, added to my desire to do something towards poverty alleviation among communities. I am convinced that empowering people both in the church and the community is the best thing we can do to help them come out of their current needy situation.

My other personal experience of extreme poverty happened between 2005 -2009, when I served as a senior pastor in Thika. The four years I served in Thika were a great eye opener that the church needs to fight poverty. During my tenure, I witnessed Christians who were unable to come to church due to lack of proper clothing and food. One of the most devastating things and hard to hide is seeing Christians in Kenya who can hardly afford three meals in a day. Despite being committed Christians, they are left wondering what to do to feed their families. It is an utter shock that preachers just teach them to trust in God and say nothing about how they can at least feed themselves and their families. Since they want to prove to the community that they solemnly believe in God, it is somehow a shame to ask for help from other people.

During my time as a pastor, I had an encounter with families that were committed Christians yet living in abject poverty. This level of poverty became my day-to-day encounter, something that really bothered me. The experience I had in my childhood and in the church stirred my current desire to address poverty. I am convinced that fighting poverty is one of the right ways of fulfilling the Great Commission and imitating Christ.

I served as an Anglican priest for eight years before I joined the African Inland Church. I now have served in Africa Inland Church for the last thirteen years. I have also served for almost three years as an adjunct instructor at Moffat Bible College Kijabe, an Africa Inland Church institution. It is unfortunate that none of the three institutions seem to be active in holistic ministry. Currently, I am serving in one of the local churches in Kijabe District, Kijabe area. The congregation I am serving is made up of about 50 adults, eighteen young adults, and twenty children. My primary task is to offer pastoral care, encouragement and discipleship.

In 2013, I attended Earlham School of Religion to do a Master of Divinity in Quaker-sponsored School. Quakers are so much into social justice, peace and reconciliation. Their main

emphasize of empowering the community intrigued my urge to not only start a program which would enlighten the church but to also offer suggestions of helping the needy to be self-sustained. My involvement with Indiana farmers as I tried to integrate farming and spirituality also acted as an eye-opener. Unlike in Kenya where farming is perceived by some people as a job for the primitive and the old, in America it is done by well-to-do people and some are very rich.

I encountered farmers who donate food to the community kitchen and food pantry in the counties. In particular, I served a church which had a successful program of helping the poor and former prisoners to resettle. The poor were taught some basic skills in farming and business and later were connected to nearby farmers for manual jobs. Through the school, I attended great conferences and encountered prominent ministries which were doing holistic ministry. I was fascinated by the great work done by *Partners Worldwide*. It is a Christian organization that uses farming, business, and economic empowerment as a tool to share the love of Christ. They discourage handouts, and instead, they empower and teach people to be self-sustaining.

The experiences that I have encountered throughout my life in relation to poverty, qualifies me to not only research on this topic, but to importantly start a program which can be used to implement the ideas that I have learned. When I came back from the United States of America, I felt the need of empowering people holistically. Consequently, I registered a group known as the *Family Empowerment Program*, as a community-based organization. The primary objective is to use farming as a tool to share the gospel and to empower the community to be self-sustaining. It is a golden opportunity to show the Church the need for doing holistic ministry. My vision is to be an example of doing holistic ministry and to encourage the Church leaders to establish programs which will support the needy and be self-sustaining.

It is unfortunate that there are only a few pastors and church leaders who seem to understand the need of doing holistic ministry. When we organize for workshops and seminars to address the pressing needs in our churches and community, most leaders are busy doing things that matter to them. If something is not done to empower the church and the community, the gospel will have no impact and there will be no peace. The rate of crime, prostitution, and divorce might increase. The church has an obligation to prepare people to go to heaven and to help them be self-sustaining, live a comfortable life, and enjoy God's creation as they wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The intention, therefore, is that findings from this study may lead to the development of a program or curriculum which may be of great help in poverty eradication both in the Kenyan church and beyond.

Statement of the Problem

The Africa Inland Church (A.I.C) came as a result of great evangelism by Africa Inland Missionaries from Scotland in 1894 (Anderson 69; Omulokoli 47). Peter Cameroon Scott, a passionate and dedicated man of God is the one who spearheaded the start of Africa Inland Mission in Kenya. He was later joined by other missionaries (Gehman 13). However, they did not teach about holistic ministry, and perhaps that is the reason the Africa Inland Church denomination does not emphasize much on poverty eradication. Their main vision was to evangelize and build schools and hospitals. Although the Africa Inland denomination has started many social facilities such as schools, hospitals, a printing press and Bible colleges, most of them are beyond reach since their rates are quite high for the average in the community. The problem of not fighting poverty is not unique to A.I.C. Many other churches face the same challenge (Kinoti 62).

Poverty is not only visible but it is real in Kenya despite the proclamation of the word of God gaining momentum (Bansikiza16). It would be a very big mistake if the church claims to not recognize the dire need amongst its congregants. The issue of poverty, therefore, should be taken seriously. Unfortunately, the Church is not doing enough to address the issue of poverty.

While the factors for poverty are complex, church leadership has created a culture that emphasizes spiritual development while paying less attention to the importance of addressing poverty. The church has become so heavenly minded that it is of little earthly good. Some pastors are opting to preach other topics and avoid addressing the issue of poverty. The inability for the church to do much in addressing the issue of poverty may be partly attributed to selective reading of scripture, while ignoring the passages that discuss the importance of empowering the needy (Kinoti 62). Although there have been teachings on stewardship in some churches, there is little implementation of programs that can fight poverty. The Church leadership has failed to exercise responsible stewardship. Therefore, the upcoming leaders and Christians lack good role models to emulate. If the church in Kijabe region would teach the members the need of addressing the issue of poverty, then many people might be inclined to do the same (Kodia ix;Smith and Greer 68).

Purpose of the Project

The Purpose of the Project was to identify levels of knowledge, training, and practice exhibited by leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in A.I.C, Kijabe Region and to discern best practices for poverty eradication.

Research Questions

The research used the following questions to explore the levels of knowledge, training, and practices exhibited by A.I.C. leaders in Kijabe Region in poverty eradication.

Research Question #1

What level of knowledge, training, and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C, Kijabe Region?

Research Question #2

What challenges have A.I.C. leaders experienced in dealing with poverty eradication in Kijabe Region?

Research Question #3

What practical steps need to be taken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing the problem of poverty in Kijabe Region?

Rationale for the Project

The emphasis to take care of the less fortunate was evident even in the Exodus events that can be interpreted as “God’s intervention on behalf of the poor” (Bansikiza 62). The scriptures both in New and Old Testament have acknowledged the existence of poor people (Deut.15: 11, Mark 14:7). Therefore, the Church ought to be active in following the Bible in regards to helping the needy. The nation of Israel was supposed to help the needy physically and pray on their behalf (Ps. 72:12-14,109:13). The church has been active in praying for the needy, but just like

the Israelites, prayer alone is not enough. The poor were encouraged and given hope that they shall eventually come out victoriously (Ps. 113:7-8). The human dignity needs to be protected to avoid dishonor and retain the likeness of God who created them (Johnson 94). Our church should emulate the high value of the poor among the Israelites and empower them rather than giving handouts.

One of the main reasons that Jesus came was to bring the Good News to the poor, and to let the oppressed go free (Luke 4:18). Jesus acknowledged that there will always be poor people and the need to help them (Matt. 26:11). On several occasions Jesus healed the sick (Matt. 4:23-25, Mark 2:9-12), and in other instances he fed the crowd (Matt. 14:13-21).

The early church had an understanding that they needed to support the needy in their midst (Acts 4:32-35, 2:44-45). Their generosity to the needy is the same call that Jesus has to the twenty-first century Church, to preach and apply in their lives and especially to those who live with improvised poverty (Mat 25; 40, Luke 10:29-37). Supporting the poor will be a great example for people who understand Jesus' teachings.

The church in Kenya is thriving with many new churches being registered every year. The number of churchgoers is increasing each day, yet the rate of people who are poor is growing expansively. While some churches may be doing holistic ministry, more advocacy is needed to suppress the rate of poverty in the communities. One of the possible strategies for engaging the Kenyan church to empower the needy is through teaching and engaging them in programs that help the poor directly. If the church would plan for teaching and establishing programs to empower the poor, the congregants and the community might feel compelled to do something to fight poverty.

The Africa Inland Church vision is to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Mat 28-16-20) and to glorify God in everything (1 Cor.10:31) (Constitution 4), yet the church involvement in programs which would help the physical needs of the members is very minimal. The Great Commission according to Greer and Smith is not propositional evangelism. Instead it was supposed to mean following everything Jesus taught both with his words and his life. Therefore, the Great Commission passage should help us follow Jesus's model of ministry (Greer and Smith 46). The good news to a needy person might be food and clothing.

Lack of training about poverty eradication might have contributed to not having active programs that are dealing with issues of poverty. Some people may not realize the need for doing holistic ministry. Others may interpret the scriptures wrongly. According to Herrington, "the call of great commission is as relevant and urgent today as it was when Jesus gave it to the disciples" (Herrington ix). As Herrington et al. observed, I strongly believe that the Church has a responsibility of serving and empowering the poor. This study seeks to explore the teaching and understanding of leaders in the fight against poverty. I hope to suggest some steps which can be useful in A.I.C, Kijabe Region. The program and the teaching will be beneficial not only to A.I.C, but also to other churches in Kenya and beyond.

The project is essential for finding a realistic solution that can help the church get involved in dealing with poverty among the congregants and community. The findings help the author to know how to address the problem in group dialogue, in teaching, and from the pulpit. They also suggest ways to develop a curriculum for training on poverty eradication in the Kijabe region, other churches, seminaries, and the community.

The study aims to inspire church leadership in Kijabe Region to realize the need of empowering the poor. I also hope to motivate them to act and be part of the solution towards the

eradication of the poverty that a significant number of Christians in Kijabe region experience. The study helps clarify the reasons why the church leaders are inactive in addressing poverty issues in the region.

Definition of Key Terms

Some key terms are used repeatedly throughout this dissertation. They are defined here.

First, the term pastor, in the context of A.I.C, this is a person who has received a call to serve the Lord, has been approved by the district church council, and has attended a recognized A.I.C. Bible school for at least three years.

Second, poverty is a term used to describe a lack of basic human needs. According to Kodia, “Poverty is a state of being in shortage of basic elements required for dignified living. The elements could be economic, material, moral, spiritual and intellectual” (

Third, poverty eradication, in this study it will be used to mean, doing away with poverty.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “eradication is an act of putting an end to something” (389). In this study it will be used to mean, doing away with poverty.

In Fourth, is holistic ministry which means ministering to physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people. It also refers to “reaching out with the whole gospel in both word and deed”(Sider 45) (meeting both spiritual and physical needs).

Fifth, is region, in the context of A.I.C, this is a group of District church Councils made up of different congregations.

Sixth is the local church, in the context of A.I.C, it is a group of believers (church/es) lead by a licensed or ordained minister helped by deacons.

Seventh, the District church council. It is the council that governs the district and is comprised of pastors from different local churches.

Eight, the term development, in this context, it will be used to mean, the ability to create an environment with a surplus.

Delimitations

This project only explored the leaders' knowledge and understanding of poverty eradication in Africa Inland Church, Kijabe Region. Kijabe Region is made up of nine districts. However, the research was limited to only four as it was not possible to study and collect data from each congregation in the region. The Districts were Kikuyu, Bibirioni, Kijabe, and Limuru. The study mainly concentrated on pastors and leaders from different departments within the region, who have been in ministry for more than two years. The study relied on interviews with the region's chairman and senior clergy.

To make the study more inclusive and realistic in exploring their willingness and availability in teachings related to supporting the needy, other lay leaders within the church also completed the survey.

Review of Relevant Literature

To bring the work into completion, a broad scope of literature was consulted. The literature sources consulted included journals, books, reports, internet sources, projects, documents, and dissertations. The Bible was consulted to give biblical foundation and authenticity of taking care of the needy; theological inputs were consulted to justify the need for poverty eradication. The history of Christianity in Africa was evaluated to bring to light activities related to poverty eradication undertaken by A.I.C and other denominations in the continent of Africa. The rate of poverty was explored to show the need for the church to be more active in fighting poverty both in Kenya and beyond.

There is a variety of literature relating to the biblical and theological dimensions dealing with poverty. The study relied on authors who are well known both globally and locally and have addressed issues of poverty in the twenty-first century. The study consulted the work of Ronald J. Sider (1997), Robert. D. Lupton (2011), and Constance Bansikiza (2007). Regarding the social responsibility of the Church in the war against poverty, David Kodia's work entitled *Poverty In Grace: Social Responsibility of the Church and Society in War Against Poverty* was consulted. According to Kodia, the church must be willing to exercise responsible stewardship. Otherwise, it will not be relevant. The work of J.N.K Mugambi added significantly to the role of Christian theology in the social re-construction of Africa. Mugambi strongly believes, "Christian theological reflection is essential for the healthy development of any church" (1) Bryant L, Myers has done great work in his recent publication titled, *walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. His work gave a clear understanding of why we should empower and take care of the needy. It also dealt with the importance of bringing transformational development among the poor. Peter Greer and Phil Smith have done a tremendous job and offered practical guidelines in helping the needy. They also advocate against the dishing out handouts. Instead, they advocate the transformation of the mind and providing employment rather than giving handouts. Their work, *The Poor will be Glad: Joining the Revolution to lift the World out of Poverty* shed light on ways the Church can strive to succeed in the fight against poverty.

The work of some individuals who are instrumental in combating poverty was used. *The Journal of Innovation and Knowledge* by Sapena gave great insights on what Pope Francis and the Catholic Church is doing. Looking closely to Theological foundations of poverty, the work,

Faith, Health and Prosperity edited by Andrew Perriman was integrated with other work to give a clear concept of taking care of the needy.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The study used pre-intervention methods since the aim of the study was to give insights and ideas towards implementing poverty eradication programs for A.I.C., Kijabe region. The literature review was a great source of information in trying to understand what other people are saying and have done towards poverty eradication. The data collected in the field also played a big role in this study especially on what can be done to implement programs. In data collection, the regional chairmen were interviewed. The other part of data collection, surveys were administered to the leaders from different districts. The research used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Participants

Since the implementation of poverty eradication will involve the whole of A.I.C. Kijabe region, it was vital to involve senior leaders in the project so that they own the vision and thus succeed. The regional chairman who is the main policy maker was a great source of information. The leaders from different departments in selected local churches were also great participants with the hope that they shall be part of the group which might take part in fighting poverty.

Instrumentation

The data collection used interviews and surveys. The interviews were scheduled one to one, while the surveys were done in a group, but answered individually. The research instruments aimed to answer the three research questions which were: (1) What level of knowledge, training, and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C, Kijabe Region? (2) What

challenges have A.I.C. leaders experienced in dealing with poverty eradication in Kijabe Region?

(3) What practical steps need to be taken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing the problem of poverty in Kijabe Region.

Interview guides

The interview was the tool used to get information from the regional chairman. The regional chairman is the director of all activities and his insight in the program is paramount. The interviews were formulated within the three research questions.

Surveys

The leaders from different departments were crucial since they interact with congregants occasionally. These are the leaders who can be very instrumental in implementing programs, and they would need people with whom they relate well. The surveys were designed in alignment to the three research questions.

Data Collection

The interviews were scheduled with the regional chairman to collect the data. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis. The pastors were sampled within the region. The pastors were selected either because they are doing related work in fighting poverty, have invited the researcher to talk about the same, or have shown some interest in helping the needy. The interviews played a prominent role in assisting the researcher in understanding the lived experience of the interviewees and their take on that experience (Seidman 9). The questions in the survey were well formulated and were open-ended in nature. All the questions were explained for clarity and any misunderstanding was addressed. Each survey had an introductory page indicating that participation is voluntary and there would be no payments nor would anyone be

obligated to participate. Also, the survey had a timeline on when to finish and a “Thank You Note”. A sample of each survey is included as a separate document in the appendices.

The researcher spent almost an hour going through the material with the interviewees. The interviews were only for the Region chairman and District chairmen. The researcher had contacted them and booked an appointment to meet in their respective offices at different times. The surveys were done with the local church pastors and lay leaders. To get those who were willing to participate in this research, an announcement through the Regional chairman was made, and those who wrote their names were randomly picked. Every third name was selected.

Data Analysis

Since the research was aimed at understanding the knowledge of pastors and leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in Africa Inland Church Kijabe Region, a pre-intervention method was in use. All the information gathered from literature, books, journals, surveys, and interviews formed part of the collected data. A mixed method of data collection was used. Since there was a lot of data collected, it was hard to interpret such information in the raw form, and therefore it needed to be grouped and coded before analysis.

Analyzing data needs specific steps. First the information needs to be grouped and recorded by how they were collected. Editing was also crucial to avoid recording wrong information but being careful not to change the intended meaning. The data collected was coded with numerals. The study used the following codes: R1-LCA-001, R2-LCA-001, R3-LCA-002, R4-LCA-003, R4-LCA-004. The coding was only known by the researcher. The findings of the research were presented in codes with no use of the participants’ names. The information gathered was grouped according to the purpose statement and research questions. Both

qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data. The data collected was organized in charts, tables and graphs.

Generalizability and Significance

This research was aimed at exploring the knowledge and training levels of leaders in poverty eradication and discern the best practices in Africa Inland Church, Kijabe Region. There is a critical need for poverty eradication, and the author hopes that the findings will be helpful, and once implemented by the region chairman, pastors and other leaders in the region, it will bring an impact in helping the community. Since the researcher involved the key people, who make decisions and implement change, the hope is that they will embrace the idea and start programs which would fight poverty in the region and beyond. The research led to some concrete conclusions that will be useful to any A.I.C. pastor, leader or lay person interested in implementing a poverty eradication program

Although the focus of the study was on Africa Inland church, Kijabe Region, other Regions within the denomination can benefit from it. Also, this study provides beexcellent resource for other churches. Since not much is done in A.I.C. Bible colleges to fight poverty, this study can be used to enhance their curriculum. The findings have the potential for greatly impacting both the students and the teaching faculty.

Project Overview

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the knowledge and understanding of church leaders in their involvement in poverty eradication and discern best practices in supporting the needy in the communities served by the A.I.C., Kijabe Region. Chapter One introduces the nature of the project and the problem of Africa Inland Church not being involved in combating poverty. The three research questions which guided the research were well stated. Chapter two

deals with literature review for the project. The literature sources on which the study was anchored are explored in great depths. Chapter three focuses on the methodology used to do the research which included: research design, participants, instrumentation, validity, reliability, data collection and analysis techniques. In chapter four the findings from the interviews and surveys are presented with little discussion. Chapter five involves a comprehensive discussion of the findings, summary, conclusion, and personal observations from the study. The unexpected and surprises are highlighted, and recommendations for further studies and implementation are given.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the Chapter

John Creswell 85) points out, “that the purpose of literature review is to help the researcher avoid duplicating what other researchers have already done, but more so, literature review provides a justification for the study conducted”. The focus of this study was to explore the knowledge and training of pastors and leaders in dealing with poverty eradication so as to discern the best practices in Africa Inland Church, Kijabe Region. The practice of poverty eradication has not been much emphasized within the African Inland Church, Kijabe Region. The charitable work done by the church is not proportionate to her ability.

This study informs what can be done to enhance poverty eradication programs and address challenges encountered by the leaders who might be involved in the task. For clarity and understanding, this section of the project explores the general historical development of the Africa Inland Church since it started. The historical section examines what the church did to support the needy. Further, in other sections the chapter examines the efforts of the Government of Kenya in poverty alleviation since independence in 1963. Besides the historical section, the chapter explores literature relating to the biblical foundation of poverty eradication. The Old Testament is used as the context and the year of the Lord and the Sabbatical year are used as the reference. Jesus’ and Paul’s ministries in relation to the poor are explored with the theological foundation in mind.

The literature review also explores the information relating to the importance of poverty eradication programs not only in Kijabe region, but also in the entire denomination in Kenya. The section also examines the challenges encountered by those who are involved with poverty eradication programs. The social action of the church (A.I.C) is closely examined, and the

strategies towards poverty eradication are also explored. The issue of poverty is no longer a secret, and it requires a vigorous response (Marshall and Saanen xi).

Biblical Foundations about Poverty

Larbi Emmanuel (58) asserts, “Poverty is a social issue developed after the fall.” According to the writer, poverty was not present when human beings were created. God is the God of abundance and it is contrary to reason or imagine on how God would create human beings in His image and likeness (Gen 1:27) and not ensure they had enough to sustain themselves (Larbi 58). The Genesis creation narrative portrays a close relationship with God. God created human beings, and they possessed the image of God (Gen 1:27). God provided Adam and Eve with all they required, and they could willingly fulfill the responsibilities that God entrusted to them.

Unlike any other creation, human beings were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) . The earth was given to human as his trustee, and the command to “subdue the earth” did not imply the transfer of right of ownership of earth and what is in it, rather it places man in a subservient role (Larbi 59). God still owns everything, but He left man to be a steward. In affirming the ownership, Christopher Wright says, “Both the ownership and the fertility of the earth lie in God’s hands. Any claim of economic ownership, therefore, either by individuals, groups of people or nations is secondary and subordinate to God’s ownership” (Wright 67). Although human beings are entrusted to take care of the earth it still belongs to the Lord.

The scripture in Psalms distinctively affirms that the earth and everything that lives in it belongs to God (Ps. 24:1) and human beings are given the earth to be in-charge (Ps.115:16). Not only were humans given the earth, but they were also entrusted to rule over it (Ps. 4:8). While human beings rule the earth, they live under God’s rule, care and enjoy the abundance which

comes from God alone (Ps. 116:12-13). Since humans cannot repay anything to God's goodness (Ps.116:12), they should be good stewards and utilize the resources for the benefit of humankind. When people support their fellow human beings, they are acknowledging their dependency upon God and the fact of his stewardship (Larbi 61). God's intention in putting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was for them to enjoy it and be a good stewards. Myers rightly notes, "The story of creation establishes the requirement for a Christian ecology. We are to be stewards" (Myers 24). God requires people to be involved both in taking care of the earth and the creatures who live in it and more so to the fellow human beings. If people would remain faithful and empower their fellow human beings life would be easier to all.

Being created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27), calls for clear understanding of reasons of existence. God's people should therefore, "make a contribution that adds value" (Myers 26). Anything that people do should be both for glorifying God and adding value to fellow human beings. The story of creation is not just to understand why we were created. Rather it, "provides a common foundation for all human enterprises we call culture not just theology, but science, politics, ethics, and art as well. We cannot separate people from the social systems in which they live" (Gunton 98). In understanding that God was not limited to a particular territory and the one who created the universe, then it should bring appreciation to creation. That recognition should intrigue the church in guiding the need to get out of their pathetic situation (Brueggemann et.al 68).

The dominion entrusted to man in (Gen 1:26) has two dimensions as (Larbi 62) argues; First, is the fruitfulness and increase in number and refers to the human populace. Second, is the abundance in the earth's resources to sustain humankind? The dominion therefore should not be used to exploit the needy. Instead, such, "dominion in the image of God would entail benevolent

care of the rest of creation” (Lazonby 34; Wright 120). The whole story of creation calls all humanity to take good care of the rest of nature.

It is worth noting that the creation account (Gen 1:27) has four responsibilities which God entrusted to humans as outlined in Njuguna George 18. These are; filling the earth, subduing it, ruling the earth and taking care of the earth. Humans were to continue (creating) and filling the earth. In other words, they were given the power of planning, be able to manage the filling of the earth. In subduing the earth, humans were supposed to enjoy what God had given to them. In ruling the earth, the responsibility was to be good stewards and to make the earth fruitful. In order to make the earth fruitful, people need to be concerned about all aspects which affect human life, be it justice or economic empowerment and they need to be agents of peace. In the twenty-first century, there are many issues that are affecting humankind, and therefore the church has a great mandate of being at the frontline in suggesting ways and means that those issues can be tackled. Humans and the church (body of Christ) have a great responsibility towards this. In emphasizing the responsibility of humans to the earth Wagner notes:

God expects a great deal of those whom he has entrusted the earth and all of its goodness. Distribution of wealth, the balance of nature, marriage and a family, human government, keeping the peace, cultural integrity, liberation of the oppressed-these and other global responsibilities rightly fall with the cultural mandate. Since it is God’s will that the human race live in shalom, those among them who have been born again into the kingdom and who purpose to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ are required to live lives that will promote shalom to the greatest extent possible (Wagner 89).

Following the story of creation of human beings, God’s intention was to allow humans to continue enjoying the relationship with God, but the fall affected the relationship. Nevertheless, God wanted to bring back the lost relationship. Jesus had to die to bring back the broken relationship (1 Pet. 3:18). Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ are required to live their lives promoting peace among people and especially among the needy. It is hard for a hungry, sick or

oppressed person to experience shalom. But, once they are empowered to meet their daily needs, they shall enjoy and be hopeful in life. Just like how Jesus came to all people (Bosch 30), the church should work towards holistic ministry.

Since Jesus came preaching the good news of the Kingdom (Mark 1:15), the church should continue proclaiming the kingdom of God and respond to the sick, the hungry and to those who are mourning and not only give them hope but also support them with what they need. The central point of the scripture is to bring redemption (Eph. 1:7). This redemption is both spiritual and material (Kioko 12). God has not stopped the redemption and restoration of the whole of creation (Rom. 8:19-21). To help in the process of redeeming and liberating those who are agonizing, there is need to identify with those who are in bondage of this world and help them have freedom in Christ. God's people should exercise the deeds of love and work hard towards eradicating poverty and in helping one another and make sure that people have what they need to live (Deut. 15:4).

Whereas this study does not advocate for quick fixes of problems and issues, the early church model of selling properties and giving to the needy (Act. 4:34) should be exercised. However, there could be more practical and long-lasting solutions to the pressing needs. Since many people were able to attend the fellowship in the early church, the number of disciples increased thus the growth of the church. While good deeds cannot earn salvation, they can act as a motivation to listen to God's Word. Kioko rightly says, "Deeds of love are an integral part in the spread of the word"(16). The task of God's children is to do ministry that can touch people's greatest points of need, since "nothing opens people's hearts more than a loving ministry for physical and emotional needs" (O'Donovan 63, Greer and Smith 37).

The church is commanded to be generous otherwise they shall face consequences. In (Luke. 16:19-23) the Bible records the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man did not exploit Lazarus to acquire wealth, rather neglected to share and God punished him severely (Sider 57). To avoid being punished, there is need to not just know the needs of the poor but to come to their aid. Sider (58) continues to say, “The Bible is very clear that if we get rich by oppressing the poor or if we have wealth and do not reach out generously to the needy, the Lord of history moves against us. God judges societies by what they do to the people at the bottom.” God cares for the poor and whoever shows kindness to the needy is like lending to the Lord (Prov.19:17). Those who are unkind and unloving to the poor are, “showing contempt for their maker” (Prov. 14:31). Empowering the needy therefore, pleases the Lord.

The Bible calls the church to be an advocate and voice of the voiceless (Prov.31:8-9). The church is called for biblical appeal to justice. Among all activities the church needs to do, is to be frontline and seek justice to all especially the oppressed. When people are helped to live a better and dignified lifestyle, their lives may be prolonged as they are productive and able to take care of themselves and their families. Both the New and Old Testament have talked significantly about the need for justice. New Testament has emphasized the need for social justice as we expand the Kingdom of God.

The calling to “love our neighbor as we love ourselves” (Matt. 22:37-39), indicates a great concern and treat to all. It is hard to love a neighbor yet treat them harshly. When we care for other people, we reflect God’s character. Wytmsa writes, “To do justice means to render to each what each is due...It is based on the image of God in every person-The *imago dei*-that grants all people inalienable dignity and infinite worth” (9). Since God created all human beings

in his image and likeness (Gen 1:27), man is expected to portray God's image in all involvement with fellow human beings including the poor.

Africa is known to be the most indebted and most impoverished continent in the world, yet the most religious continent (Mugambi 160). Of course, there could be many reasons behind the continued rate of poverty and the church cannot claim that they have not realized the alarming issue. Although the colonialists are greatly to blame for the rise of poverty in Africa, the church should help the nation to have hope and most importantly not to live in the past. The church should witness with confidence and be guided by the scriptures to act on this challenge and endeavor to make a reality (Mugambi 161; Magesa and Nthamburi 157). Our self-understanding of God must undergo, a drastic metamorphosis so that we can realize that God can be found even where people are hurting and struggling. Once the church gets involved in helping those who are struggling, that means we are on God's side and doing according to His will (Magesa and Nthamburi 158, Craig Robert 128).

Throughout the scripture, God's intervention in liberating the poor and the oppressed is evident (Sider 42). God's power is displayed in the story of Exodus when the slaves were freed (Exod. 3:7-8). When the oppressed called the name of the Lord, the Lord heard their cry and afflictions and brought them out of Egypt (Deut. 26:5-8). Some of the primary purposes of Exodus were to liberate the slaves and to fulfill the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the need to create special people to whom he could reveal himself (Exod. 6:5-7, Sider 43). God's intention was to liberate people so that they can worship and take care of the creation. Helping people to meet their needs is a good biblical practice. However, often it creates dependency. Those who are willing to extend their support should teach empowerment not dependency.

In Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 24, the poor were supposed to “go” in the farms and collect food for themselves. It was not brought to them. They participated in solving their food needs. Those who were wise perhaps, stored some seeds to plant. The poor must be willing to be part of the solution as the Bible warns against being lazy (2 Thess. 3:10). When poor people are given opportunity, their dignity is affirmed (Kioko 20). The Exodus events, therefore, should be understood as God’s intervention on behalf of the poor (Sider 62), but there is more than just freeing them. Freeing a slave, requires proper planning since such people will have basic needs. They must be helped to secure a job or income generating plan. It is important to be careful when empowering or preaching to the poor. Jean Vanier rightly says, “When we talk of the poor, or of announcing the good news to the poor, we should never idealize the poor. Poor people are hurt; they are in pain. They can be very angry, in revolt or in depression (11).” Their dignity should be maintained and respected.

The incarnation story recorded in Luke is an indication that the gospel was for all, particularly to the poor (Sider 46), to release the captives and bring liberation (Luke 4:18-19). The issue of liberating the poor was from (Isa.61 ff 61..) and it is clear that “Jesus was referring to the material, physical problems” (Kantzer and Gundry 124). The aspect of incarnation also acknowledged the true love God had for the poor. Nguuh outlines several passages in Luke which address the issue of the poor. These are: Jesus told the disciples of John to go and tell John that the poor heard the “Good News” (Luke7:18-23); in the form of a parable Jesus tells how the poor are invited when others turns down their invitations (Luke14:13, 21): the poor are blessed (Luke6:20-23); and the poor are seen to be waiting for the “Good News” (Luke1-2) (Nguuh 10). Luke has extensively written about the poor, meaning it was a big concern at the time and today.

Jesus could have come as a great King or emperor, instead he came and lived as a carpenter in a simple town. Jesus as a person was acquainted with poverty and born in a very humble surrounding and in a stable (Luke 2:7). The social class that Jesus was born was low. It is evidenced by the offering that Mary and Joseph gave at the temple, the pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons (Luke.2 :24), was the offering prescribed by the Law for those too poor to afford a lamb (cf. Lev.12:6-8), (Batey 6, Nguuh 6). Jesus had to come as a low-class person to identify with all kinds of people. Jesus' love to minister to the poor, the sick, and the rejected attests the need to care for all. Jesus mission was directly to all, but particularly to the poor as demonstrated by the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of the sight to the blind, set to liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa,61:1-2).

Jesus could have chosen to live among the rich but he instead came with all simplicity and love for the poor. Jesus was anointed to preach the good news to the poor and the oppressed and he reminded them that their time of agony was soon coming to an end. The use of lowly people as "chosen instruments" of God's work is striking evidence of God's concern for the less fortunate people (Sider 52).

The Psalmists have spent a significant portion expressing a God who assists the poor in their distress. Many prayers are offered in Psalms for the poor. They include; Ps.72:12-14; whereby the Psalmist is assuring the poor that the Lord will hear their cry once they speak out. The poor were encouraged not to fear since God will stand beside them and will soon be rescued from the oppressors (Ps.109:31, 140:12), (Bansikiza 62). It therefore means that God has the

heart for the poor and honors them. The poor are also promised a better life from the dunghill and instead to be dining with the princes (Ps 113:7-8).

According to (Larbi 231) the biblical God who showed great love for allowing Jesus to die on the cross to redeem mankind has a great concern for the poor. The children of God (church) are therefore to reflect God's character by taking up the cause of the needy. Larbi challenges the church to be involved in holistic ministry by reflecting the very character of God who "upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry...sets the prisoners free...gives sight to the blind...lifts up those who are bowed down...loves the righteous...watches over the alien...sustains the fatherless and the widow...frustrates the way of the wicked" (Ps.14:6-9; Luk. 4;18;7;22), (Larbi 231). It is important to note that the church may not have a significant impact if they only deal with spiritual needs and ignore all other human needs. Moffit and Teach in their book, *If Jesus was were Mayor*, upholds that the true Church is the:

One that will assist in bringing human beings towards a place of complete reconciliation with God fellow human beings and the environment. To produce that kind of reconciliation, we should teach all aspects of life including discipleship, community health, community development, relief, agriculture, church planting, and worship (Moffit and Tesch 235).

A church that is out to have an impact in the twenty-first century must change its way of doing ministry. It must apply an appropriate strategy that will incorporate the needs of people.

It is evident from the scriptures that Jesus regarded to satisfy human needs both spiritual and material. According to Jesus there was need to satisfy someone's hunger, to deliver the oppressed from the fetters of the devil and to heal the sick. They were all placed over the observance of the Sabbath but they did not understand what it meant. (Jn.5:1-18; Luke 6:11).

However, Jesus condemned the excessive commitment to material goals without a proper concept of life and the eternal nature of the soul (Jn. 6:26) (Larbi 239)

Poverty in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the aspect of physical and spiritual liberation from Egypt are inseparable (Mugambi 39). The people had realized the need of empowering each other and especially after they acknowledged how God liberated them from Egypt (Exod. 2;2). They believed that they would prosper if they obeyed God's word. According to them, helping the needy was obeying and following one of God's instructions. It was God's will for them to prosper and therefore, to be in a state of poverty is contrary to the will of God (Perriman 156).

The God of the Old Testament is compassionate and is demonstrated by rescuing people from slavery in Egypt (Exod. 20:2). Since God saved them from slavery acted justly, they were supposed to practice the same. Knierim has noted out that, "Liberation is not only to be received, but it is also to be granted by the same people. Since it is an element of justice, and since justice is indivisible, liberation cannot divide people into two groups, one that receives it and another that grants. It unites all in both roles, or it is not just (Knierim 114).

People might not be in the same slavery as that in Egypt, but regardless of the extent of suffering, the church has an obligation to rescue the oppressed. It is the duty of the church to make sure that people live at peace with each other and their own families. The people of God have a responsibility of liberating their own people from oppression which might be caused by poverty among other things.

Upon entry into the Promised Land, there were strict instructions given to minimize the mistreatment of the poor. The property needed to be distributed equally depending on the size of the population (Num. 26:54). Theft and covetousness were prohibited (Ex 20:15,22:1-15).

Bribery was not advocated (Ex 23:8; Deut. 16:19), and there was right of the firstborn to inherit (Deut. 21:15-17). There was the requirement of judicial impartiality with regards to both the poor and the rich (Exod.23:2-3; Lev.19:15), (Stott Christian Mission 271, Blomberg 40). The land and the property were reckoned to belong to the Lord (Lev. 19:9-10, Deut. 24:19-22, Perriman 160). The rules governed the property to avoid humiliation and oppression. To show the seriousness and the concern of the poor, “anyone who denied the poor from collecting the gleanings was deemed a robber of the poor” (Loewenberg 95). As mentioned earlier, the poor were allowed to go to the field to collect food for themselves.

The Year of Jubilee

The establishment of the year of jubilee shows how vital the basic equality in opportunities was to God. It was also an indication that all members of the community of Israel had equal access to the fruit of the land (Sider 49, Padilla 21). The land was supposed to be returned to the original owner (Lev. 25). According to Sider, God intended to equalize all people and avoid extreme poverty and wealth. Since God values everyone including the poor, the return of the land was a guarantee that no one would lose their land. Instead, they would have enough to live as dignified people (Lev. 25:10-24) (Sider 49). To avoid exploitation, God commanded the return of the land which was leased to avert poverty to the owners (Perriman 160). The rules were put into place, and no one was more special than the rest. The people were aware that the land belonged to the Lord (Lev. 25:23) therefore, they were cautious not to offend their maker.

The restrictions imposed about the land were not meant to minimize human dignity, but to protect the weak from exploitation by the rich people. Those who cultivated the land were only pilgrims passing through the land as aliens (Pidilla 22). God as the landowner had permitted them to use it to enjoy both beauty and the produce but to remember that they were only

stewards. Even though they could buy and sell, the deal was to be clean. To avoid oppression, they were to fear the Lord in not taking advantage of each other (Lev 25:16-17). From Leviticus, the urge is to help those living in improvised poverty to get out of bondage since it brings joy when people are helped to get out of poverty (Lupton 1). The church is called to be agents of hope and eventually will live at peace when they see their fellow human beings supporting themselves. In emphasizing the need for taking care of the poor, Ratti notes, "As committed human beings we must take on our God-given dignity and work in collaboration with God in the adventure of transforming the world. God wants our experience and the tools to help those less fortunate to reach a standard of living befitting their great dignity (Ratti et al. 83). Walking alongside those who are needy is a clear indication of people who want to bring back the lost God-given dignity. When people are oppressed, sick or hungry, their dignity is lost, and they may feel valueless.

The church should balance both spiritual and social ministry since they are both important and inseparable. Kioko states that, "Social ministry and evangelical witness are inseparable. They have always existed side by side in scripture without conflict" (12). According to Kioko, taking care of less fortunate persons is not a new thing. Rather it was practiced in the scriptures. The great commission and the great commandment of love the neighbor have the same significance and therefore should go hand in hand. In sharing the gospel, love comes first, since it is hard to allow somebody to suffer when genuinely loving the person (Stott 29).

Israel as a nation was supposed to live as a family, thus share among themselves what they had. They needed to have strong ties of love and interest, therefore, showing obedience to their God. Just like the early church, Israel lived as a community who worshiped and sanctified

in him (Barker and Kohlenbergger 161). They were required to obey these laws and treat each other as their own.

For the past few years, the Pope Francis has been urging the people in the world to use the millennial jubilee as an opportunity to help the needy. According to him, “Everything we own is merely temporary gifts, on loan from God. They pass our lives as much through a flute, fleeting blessings we are given to enjoy but never to fully possess. The Jubilee can be used to reflect ways to minister to the ailing and perhaps find ways to start their journey to restoration (Mulle 310). Everything that God’s people have belongs to God. It should be used to empower others especially the poor. Once they are guided and helped to start income generating projects, they shall enjoy life and live as God intended. Able people particularly the church should be a blessing and bring liberation to the sick, hungry, oppressed and the needy. The most ideal support is the one which brings long term results. Dependency system of handout and charity should be avoided. Instead, the church should work towards empowerment either through development education and perhaps training in basic marketable skills.

Everything that God’s people have belongs to God. It should be used to empower others especially the poor. Once they are guided and helped to start income generating projects, they shall enjoy life and live as God intended. Able people particularly the church should be a blessing and bring liberation to the sick, hungry, oppressed and the needy. The most ideal support is the one which brings long term results. Dependency system of handout and charity should be avoided. Instead, the church should work towards empowerment either through development education and perhaps training in basic marketable skills. The church should plan objectively when planning to support the needy. Larbi notes, “Empowering the poor to be self-reliant and self-supporting should be the objective of the church’s relief program” (233). Before

the church starts any program, they should do thorough research and invite experts to guide them in the startup and implementation.

The aspects of jubilee were more than just an activity, instead it was to help the family unit from being grabbed. It also ensured the continuation of the covenant from generation to generation (Deut. 6). Since the selling of land was regulated, it benefited everybody especially the poor who could find it hard to get land, and it extracts a higher price from the creditors (Shead 22). The poor people were able to have a place to cultivate, and thus they were able to get an income.

The Sabbatical Year

There were three things which were required every seventh year: First, the land was supposed to lie fallow (Exod.23:10-11; Deut. 24:18,22; Lev. 25:2-7). The purpose was both, “ecological and humanitarian” (Sider 73). The main reason they were not supposed to cultivate was to allow the poor to take whatever will grow (Ex 23:10). Mainly the prohibition to develop the land was God’s concern for the poor. Second, all debts were to be cancelled (Deut.15:1-2). Third, the slaves were to be set free at the end of the sixth year and their masters were supposed to send them with some possessions (Deut. 15:13-14; Exod.21:2-6). Larbi is of the opinion that the purpose of sabbatical year was to, “prevent injustice and oppression and any kind of permanent poverty from taking root among the people of God” (74). God’s intention of the sabbatical practices was to ensure that all people had at least something to eat and survive on. In supporting one another it brought fruitfulness, good exercise of dominion, and building relationship between the people and towards God (Shead 25). It was also a sign that God loves and cares for the poor. Along the same line, Walter argues, “the institution of the sabbatical year existed as a powerful symbol to Israel of God’s concern for the poor and for the justice” (64). God wanted to equalize

all people and avoid oppression. The equality that God wanted to bring was to all people regardless of their social status. Once people attain equal rights, it will be easier for them to access resources and means of production. They shall also be able to produce their own food for personal and family use. The surplus can be sold to bring an income which will enhance peace and bring healthy relationships.

The Ministry of Jesus and the Poor

The four gospels have excellent examples of Jesus Christ and the concern for the poor. This portion attempts to deduce some lessons which can be used in poverty eradication in the twenty-first century. Mathew clearly emphasizes that the *Good News* was meant for all people. According to Mathew, the Good News was to be taken to the whole world. The Great Commission (Mat.28:18-20) clearly defines the church mission. The Great Commission advocacy is to minister in all aspects of human life. Therefore, “One can justifiably say that the Great Commission in Matthew in a sense corresponds to all that the gospel means and leads to” (Gatogo 36).

A clear understanding and implementation of the Great Commission will bring an impact both in the Church and the community. Mulwa asserts,

Its presence in any place ought to make a difference as it endeavors to penetrate every area of human life and activity with Christian principles, values, attitudes and priorities. Christian’s active involvement in life at different levels of: family, professional and social life, business and politics ought to bring about an atmosphere of joy and optimism in spite of poor conditions (Mulwa 100).

The church needs to be transformed and embrace different forms of ministry. More importantly, the church needs to proclaim the Gospel holistically. Jesus met people at their point of need without discrimination. People will embrace the gospel that is all inclusive. Myers asserts that

“people will need to hear about God who created the world, God who want the people to worship and God who wants and will enable them to be productive stewards in creation” (25). Once the Great Commission is well understood it contains all that is needed especially in empowering the poor.

Some people have argued that the Great Commission is no longer relevant today as it was when Jesus commanded the disciples. In challenging the misunderstanding, Herrington et.al state:

The Call of Great Commission is just as relevant and urgent today as it was when Jesus gave it to his disciples. Our assertion is that a healthy church will have a holistic understanding of the Gospel and that it will be reaching people for Christ at the same time, that it is discipling and ministering to its members (Herrington, et al. ix).

In order to have a healthy church, there is need of clear understanding that the gospel is not necessarily preaching or having a Bible study. Instead, in its completeness it involves implementing ways that can enhance a health living to all.

Samuel and Sugden argue that, “the theme of the Kingdom of God provides a fruitful starting point to begin formulating principles of a biblically based theology of church mission aimed at the integration of evangelism and social concern” (113). Jesus mission was to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God (Mark.1:15). Jesus way of proclaiming the Kingdom was through healing the sick, casting out the demons, feeding the hungry, and bringing back the dead to life. The church cannot fulfill the Great Commission nor understand the mission apart from the presence of the Kingdom. “The Mission of the church is an extension of the mission of Jesus. It is the manifestation (though not yet complete) of the Kingdom of God, through proclamation as well as through social service and action.” (Padilla 118)). Being an extension of Jesus mission means the church have a mandate to do both social work and proclamation as they wait for the second return of Jesus Christ. In challenging the church to preach the whole gospel, Darrow

Miller says, “The church preached the gospel of salvation but not the gospel that Jesus preached, the gospel of the Kingdom (Mark 1:15: Luke 4:43; 8:1)” (47). Jesus preached the whole Gospel both eternal and relating to daily endeavors.

Jesus gave the Greatest Commandment stating; “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”. Love for God is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mat 22:37-39). In obeying both commandments, it means having a clear understanding of God’s call. It also, “demonstrated the seamless harmony of obeying both the Great Commission and the Greatest Commandment” (Smith and Greer 37). In fulfilling the Great Commission, evangelism was one of the requirements, but more was expected. Greer and Smith firmly believe that there was more than just doing door to door evangelism. They write,

Jesus had something far greater in mind: to follow everything he taught with his words and with his life. This passage should point believers toward the ministry model of Jesus, who seamlessly integrated proclamation and practice in his ministry to all people, with special attention paid to the poor and downtrodden (Greer and Smith 46).

Just like Jesus, the poor and the hungry need to be fed even before sharing the gospel.

After being helped in their immediate needs, the poor can be trained on how to have self-sustaining and income generating programs.

In “loving the Lord with all our lives and loving the neighbor” it means we not only understand ourselves but also, we identify with those who are suffering. The way Jesus recognized and talked about the poor is a profound message to all Christians. It is a call to examine an individual’s attitude and the way the poor are treated. To identify with the poor therefore requires entering their situations, share their condition and try to understand and feel the intolerability of their situation. Preaching alone is not enough, instead, to sustain the teachings with concrete actions as Jesus did is what is required. Sometimes Jesus, taught, and at

other times he healed the sick, fed the hungry, and met the physical needs of people (Mulwa 105, 106; Smith and Greer 37).

Although Jesus said that there would “always be poor people among us” (Matt. 26:11), that does not justify the inactiveness of the church in fighting poverty. Jesus commanded the selling of stuff and give to the poor (Matt.19:21). The calling of Jesus to sell what people owned did not literally mean selling everything. It should be noted that people are responsible for their needs and for their families, otherwise they would be a burden to other people. Jesus was encouraging people to share what they have with those who were less fortunate.

Telling people about Christ is not enough, rather our involvement in their lives is more important and will bring a greater impact. Empowering people with skills, helping them to start a business or projects and ideas is what the church ought to do.

Some scholars have argued that Mark brings a witness to many diverse ways of understanding and encountering God in the world. Its open, diverse forms of understanding and encountering God in the world contribute to the creative transformation of individual lives (Lull 5). In Mark 5:21–43, Mark presents Jesus as both a healer and raiser of the dead. Jesus’ mission was to help people to return to a normal way of life (Witherington and Haan 62). The Good News that Jesus brought was both to save people’s lives and to transform their lives. Beside other reasons Jesus intention of doing the miracles, was to bring an impact to the physical life of those who were healed and delivered, but ultimately wanted to transform the whole person (Hughes 110: Witherington 62). Just like Jesus intention of transforming the whole person, God’s people should do work towards restoring the lost health, alleviate hunger and flee the oppressed. The holistic ministry of Jesus Christ in Markan work was an example of how the Kingdom of God ought to be. In Challenging the Church to “help bring the Kingdom to people” Reed notes:

The Kingdom of God is not only spiritual – it is intensely practical. The church today must move beyond its traditional role if it is to fulfill its mission truly. It can no longer respond only to spiritual needs and speak only to people's hearts. The church is called to be a force for change in the world, particularly when the needs are greatest: the inner-city neighborhoods where crime, violence, and unemployment are the order of the day (Reed 12).

Jesus realized that the Gospel would not penetrate to people's hearts unless the physical needs were addressed first. The physical needs of people should never be ignored. Instead, emulating Jesus way of doing ministry should be the call of the church today (Greer and Smith 37). More practical spirituality is also needed that will enable the suffering to, "experience a new moment of grace in which God is inviting the whole of humanity to embrace the spirituality that transforms human suffering into a narrative of living hope" (Otieno and McCullum 59). Many people need hope, and the church should be the source of such hope.

Storey argues that the Church is called to engage the world with a Whole Gospel as commanded by Jesus in Matt. 28:19 (Loc. 2353). According to Storey, "we need to go into the world of leisure, economics, and politics, human relationships and conflicts, to be agents of transformation, proclaiming the Gospel (Luke. 4: 18-19), (Storey Loc. 2353). According to Storey the church should end the sterile debate about the Gospel. First, there are those who see the Gospel as an internal and personal only. For such people, the Kingdom reached no further than the conversion of the individual soul. Their God is too small to transform the world. Second, there are those who see the gospel in secular and political terms. For such people, the struggle to transform society is all that matters. Their God is too busy to heal a wounded soul (Storey Loc. 2363).

Scholars have argued that the Kingdom of God necessarily is not only seen when God calls people to repentance but also when justice is exercised, and the intense relationship that belonged to the Kingdom is established in the society. Hence, Jesus announced the Kingdom as

good news to the poor. God's kingdom therefore should be evident in the world that the Lord created (Sider 53). Sider notes, "The world is the arena of God's activity. It is loved by humans destined not for final abandonment but to be transformed into God's Kingdom at the return of Christ in a new heaven and new earth" (Sider 53). The redemption and our involvement in liberating those in need, the oppressed, and the poor should be the role of the church both within and in the wider society. Liberation needs to be followed by implementation to enable the poor to stand on their own or rather be able to meet their basic needs. The body (Church) as Padilla suggests, should be an agent of hope and implement programs which will empower people hence experience the presence of God on earth (Sider 53). It is hard to experience God's presence when one is agonizing.

The Early Church and the Poor

During the early church, there was generous care for those who were unable to support themselves (Nguuh18). Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37; 5:1-11; and 6:1-7 record people who knew their role is supporting those who were unable to care for themselves. There was no personal thing. Instead all that they had belonged to everyone (Act 4:32). They very well practiced the teachings of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:43:47; 4:32-37; 5:1-11; 6:1-7). As a result of sharing, "there was not a needy person among them" (Luke 4:34). Throughout the scripture, the same standard of sharing was recorded in that those who were not able to support themselves received help. The community was obligated to help, so that their needs were met (Sider 61). When many people converted on the day of the Pentecost, they were together and had all things in common (Acts 2:44). Giving to the needy was an order of the day. Their generosity was from within their hearts. Some people like Barnabas sold a field he owned (Acts 4:36-37) to support needy people (Sider 79). Sharing and selling property to help the needy in the early church seems to have worked

well. But it might bring more problems than good in modern times. Some people may decide to be lazy and expect to be supported. Selling the land today, may not be the most ideal thing to do, instead the needy can be hired to work on those farms.

The main reason for creating man was to worship and glorify the creator. Jesus had to die to bring back the lost fellowship and restore joy (*Shalom*, Hiebert 2000). Hiebert puts it well and says, “God’s plan for the world is that all persons should know his saving grace and be delivered from disobedience, disruption, despair, poverty, disease and all that would destroy our whole” (*Shalom*, 2000). The saving grace was not only meant to help the believers to go to heaven but also to have the joy of the Lord on earth. It also helps people to be optimistic and live with hope. When people are empowered to meet their basic needs, their health both mental and physical needs are met, then their wholeness will be restored.

The early Church activities and involvement with each other was evidence of a unified community who had purposed to live as brothers and sisters. They had joy when sharing meals together (Acts 2:46), in oneness (Act 4:32), their one accord enabled praising the Lord as a team, and the Lord added their number daily (Acts 2:46-47). The sharing with those who did not have perhaps encouraged many to attend home fellowships. When people come to church just for physical food, it means that they have not fully committed themselves to follow Christ. Although the early church generosity encouraged more people to come to the Church and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, precaution was put in place to avoid pretenders. Some scholars call it, “the evangelistic impact of their transformed economic relationship” (Sider 80). The church is mandated to preach in and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2), and since the church is, “not a secret society” (Banks 141-142) it should yearn to proclaim the Gospel in all ways possible. The church

therefore must prepare to be a consistent witness to the gospel truths about humanity and God (Storey Loc.297).

The early church met the needs of the poor. Christians were challenged and emulated the example of generosity in the community. For instance the early disciples showed compassion on the following ways. In (Acts 3:6), John and Peter did not have gold and silver. Instead they offered the gift of health. Tabitha (Dorcas) “was always doing good and helping the poor” (Acts 9:36). Paul, who had great concern for the poor, the sick healed the exploited girl (Acts. 16:16-18). Paul worked hard not to be a burden to anyone. More importantly so that they may support the weak, they strongly believed in Jesus words “that it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20-33-35). When it came to the attention that the widows were overlooked in food administration, the church in Jerusalem acted to relieve their need to ensure that repetition would not occur (Acts 6:16). The church also acted immediately when they had the famine during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11;29) (Nguuh 18-19). Their support and relief to the needy brothers and sisters was great. However, it might have not helped for a longer time. Although they immediately needed food, it would have been better if they were guided on how to grow their own food. Perhaps, there were rivers which they could fish both for domestic use and others for commercial purpose. Relief, as mentioned earlier, is a good way of rescuing an immediate need but is not long lasting. For a lasting solution, people should be guided on ways to work towards their liberation.

The early Church was more than a sociological gathering. Instead, “the church was “an entirely new reality whose nature was defined by its intimate communion with God” (M.Kelly 27) The human individuals have a share in the life of God and with one another. Their unity was believed to be from the Holy Spirit, and therefore the Church was considered a place of salvation

(M.Kelly 27). The sharing should be the central mission of the church to the entire world.

However, sharing should be a short-term measure, otherwise many people would turn out to be beggars and dependency syndrome would persist.

Theological Foundations of Poverty Eradication

The Bible is the standard and authoritative source of faith for Christians. The Bible which is the word of God must be used to direct any action or practice within the Christian circles. Everything must be referenced from the Bible (Gilliland 25). Poverty eradication and concern for the poor is theologically justified by the scriptures with many passages, narratives, and examples of people who embraced and supported the needy. The church is called to be involved in both spiritual and social engagement while serving all humanity. Thompson reminds the church that:

The life and the words of Jesus and the teachings of his Church call us to serve those in need and work actively for social and economic justice. As community of believers, we know that our faith is tested by the quality of justice amongst us, that we can best measure our life together by how the poor and vulnerable are treated. (1)

Jesus words and practice must be emulated in the churches today. Christians should practice what they believe is serving the poor, act justly and empower people to get out of their economic injustice. While the faith of believers will be tested with how they loved the Lord, it will also be tested by how well they exercised justice to all.

The scriptures recognize that poor people will continue to be with us (John 12:8). Therefore, it is a reality that must be dealt with in all stages of human development. As the scripture urges, those who are able should open their hands and welcome and feed the poor (Deut. 15:11). The presence of the poor among us is not to justify the in-activeness of the church in helping the needy. According to Pilgrim, “it should never be understood as an expression of resigned despair or as a word of indifference toward the poor. As the father is kind and merciful to the ungrateful and selfish, so should the sons of the Father act” (Luke 6:35- 36), (Pilgrim 65).

Poverty is visible in our society and therefore needs an urgent action. In every society has the poor and the oppressed, and since they are concrete people created with a purpose, they should be treated with dignity and as concrete people (Walton 147).

Poverty eradication has been a long struggle as is recorded in biblical history. The prophets were faced with similar challenges, and we also, in our time, should continue with the same fight and join the prophetic movement against marginalization. The prophets spoke against anything anything which could affect fellow human beings especially the poor such as fraudulent trade (Amos 8:4-5, theft of land (Mic. 2:1-2), violence against the poor (Ezek. 16:48), wasteful affluence amid poverty (Amos. 4:1, 6:4ff) Pilgrim 25). Just like how the prophets challenged the people who acted offensively and affected the powerless, the church can do the same. The poor people are found in churches, homes, schools and in the entire community. Unless one is ignorant, it is hard not to encounter with poor people.

While many people would not like to be associated with the poverty-stricken, God identifies with the poor. The Psalmist describes God as, “A father of the fatherless, defender of the widows, is God in His Holy habitation” (Ps. 68:2). God is concerned and has a heart for the oppressed, widows and all that are humiliated. God is good to all (Ps. 145:9). To identify with the poor in today’s context means understanding their needs and looking for ways they can be helped to be self-supportive. Once the church identifies with the poor, it will be easier to connect them with relevant bodies which might be of great help and have no choice but to demonstrate solidarity with the poor (Bosch 436).

The Psalmist present God as the deliverer of the poor, “All my bones shall say lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him, yes the poor and the needy from him who plunders him” (Ps. 35:10). God is present to rescue the oppressed. The church as

the body of Christ should walk with the disadvantaged and deliver them from their afflictions. The sick can be helped to have access to health facilities, the jobless can be provided with manual jobs and tools needed for their daily use. God's action in raising the poor from the dust and lifts the needy out of the ash heap and seats them with the princes (Ps. 113:7-8) is a great example of a God who delivers the oppressed. The poor should not be sidelined rather be welcomed and taken out of the indecent condition and situation. When guided, such people can be productive and change their lifestyle.

In the scriptures, God does not hate wealth. The possession in the Old Testament "was a sign of God's blessings" (Pilgrim 19). "...He is who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:18). After deliverance from slavery, the Israelites were promised to prosper and be wealthy. Pilgrim continues to uphold that giving them wealth was fulfilling the promise he had promised to their ancestors. "This is true already in the patriarchal narratives of Genesis, which describe, often in detail, the considerable wealth of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or Joseph in Egypt (Gen 13:2; 26:13; 30:43; 40:41)" (Pilgrim 19). The scripture does not record God hating wealth and prosperity, rather God hates the oppression of the poor or using the poor to accumulate wealth. A great example of God who loves wealth and restoration of the lost dignity and possession is recorded in (Job 42:10-16). After Job's fortune and suffering, God blessed Job more than in the beginning...vs 12. Job's story is an evidence that upholds God as source of wealth, possessions and abundance.

The issue of poverty is discussed in length both in the Old and New Testament. God made himself known to the poor, for their sake, was the God of Moses and all human beings. Revealing of God to the poor enabled people to identify themselves with a caring Divine (Dussel

130). Jesus ministry on earth brings the theme of building the Kingdom of God. The Gospels have indicated that among many other reasons, Jesus came to preach about the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).

God is the creator and owner of everything, and all the activities that man undertakes. Human beings were entrusted to take care of the earth and be good stewards. A severe limitation was put on private ownership and any personal accumulation of wealth, properties and land (Alela 66; Snyder 140). Once we recognize that each person has a moral, ecological and economic significance and that our lives are interdependent, we shall pay attention to the poor and less fortunate in the society (Snyder 141). Saint Gregory of Nyssa (ca 330-ca 395) argues that there was nothing else created in the image and likeness of God and therefore human being must treat each other with dignity. Since, Once we understand our purpose of existence in building the kingdom of God, then taking care of the poor should be part of our mission.

The message of the kingdom of God was evident in the Old Testament as well. The creation story in Genesis is a clear indication of God who is the creator of heaven and earth which was perfect (Gen 1:31). But after the fall (Gen 3), the relationship was broken. Nevertheless, man is still in God's likeness (Jam.3:9). However, since man had rebelled and sinned, he was not "fully like God" as he was before because some parts of that image were distorted and lost (Grudem 444). To bring back the lost image and likeness, God had to allow Jesus to die to redeem mankind so that man can be, "like his son" (Rom. 8:29). God had good plans to redeem humankind, to bring back the image and establish his kingdom. God's love for the world is phenomenal (John 3:16). To create a Kingdom to people, God had to purify people to be holy through the suffering servant and the redeeming of his people (Abernethy 187).

Jesus ministry is full of examples where he was moved to compassion. One example is found in Matthew 15:32 when the people were hungry, but Jesus did not want them to go home hungry. He did not want them to faint on their way home. Another example is Matthes 8:3. After Jesus touched the man, his leprosy was healed. Jesus was compassionate and healed demon-possessed people in Mathew. 8:16-17. Jesus saw oppressed and bullied sheep without a shepherd (Barker, and Kohlenberger 89). Most people who are sick and downtrodden are voiceless and unable to express themselves. They are also powerless (Elliston 70). Gustavo Gutierrez, a great Theologian, describes being poor as a form of “death.” He states:

Poverty means death. It means death due to hunger and sickness, or to repressive methods used by those who see their privileged position being endangered by any efforts to liberate the oppressed. It means the physical death to which is added cultural death, inasmuch as those in power seek to do away with everything that gives unity and strength to the dispossessed of this world. In this way those in power hope to make the dispossessed an easier prey for the machinery of oppression (Gutierrez 10).

To be poor as Gutierrez suggests is like being dead, in that things seem not to work.

When people are financially broke, sick or oppressed they have nothing on their own and do not know their rights. The intended plan of Jesus and is that the church is to proclaim the Gospel and work as agents of restoring hope to the sick and the oppressed.

Alela argues that the central mission of the church is to raise signs of the kingdom as a demonstration of how the Kingdom will look like when the time comes (68). To qualify to enter the kingdom faith and obedience are essential and needed (Mark 1:15; Matt. 3:1; 4:7). Before the kingdom extends to every area of life, it must start with the heart since “Evangelism is proclaiming of God’s kingdom so that people may respond in faith and obedience” (Snyder 150). When people are empowered, it might be easier to have faith in the Lord, thus become obedient to the word of God. In return, become good stewards and later uplifts the lives of others.

The way of the kingdom is illustrated in the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5:1-7). All are called to live in harmony with everyone and be peacemakers. The heart of the message of the Gospel was living in peaceful and rightful relations with each other (Elliston 68). If indeed people are real Christians as they claim, they must live as Jesus did (1 John. 2:6). To follow Jesus examples of building the kingdom, the church needs to exercise harmony, preach the gospel of peace and act justly to those who are oppressed. In so doing, it will be a clear indication that it is truly God who works in them in fulfilling God's purpose (Phil. 2:13).

Elliston sees shalom as the presence of having good health, wholeness, prosperity, justice and generally the wellbeing of human beings (67). According to Wolterstorff shalom is, "the human dwelling at peace in all his or her relationships: with God, with self, with fellows, and with nature" (71). In the time of creation there was no sin, but because sin entered the Garden of Eden, "we are all exiles from the city of God. We all desire to rest and come home" (Moore 21). We all desire shalom like the one Isaiah talks about (Isa. 11:6-8) where "the wolf and the lamb will live together." Although nature has not returned to its intended balance and harmony (Rom 8:9-22), we are His children, and therefore should share His treasures, for everything God gives to His son, Christ, is ours, too" (8:17).

Leviticus clearly states that the land belonged to the Lord and was not supposed to be sold, instead it was to be used by all people (Lev. 25:23). Since we all long for a peaceful moment in life, we should act as an instrument of peace to all and especially to those who are needy. In assuring us that he intends to grant us peaceful lives, God sent the prophet Jeremiah to affirm that he has excellent plans upon our lives (Jer. 29:11). We, "all yearn for the Garden of Eden and live the kingdom of God on earth because Jesus told us to" (Moore 21). Even though God has great plans for humankind, people have a responsibility to work towards achieving what

God intended. It is the responsibility of the church to walk alongside the needy to experience God's presence.

The Bible speaks in many ways on how shalom was exercised regarding the needy. Alela outlines some of them. The rich were mandated to be generous to the poor, otherwise they might be guilty of sin if they refuse to help (Deut.15:7-11). Once they harvested their fields, they were supposed to leave some food since the poor had the right to glean the fields (Lev. 19:9,10;23:22, Deut. 24:19). In the sabbatical year, the poor were given their share of the produce of the field (Lev 25:25-30). The worshipping community was obligated to provide a share for the poor during the festivals (Deut. 16:11,14; Neh. 8:10 as an "outside act of benevolence" (Alela 59). All the wages of the poor were supposed to be paid without delay (Lev.19:13; Deut.24:14ff) and their pledged garment was to be returned before sunset (Ex 22:25-27; Deut. 24:10-13, and their rights rigorously defended (Ex 23:3,6 cf. Prov. 31:9) (Alela 59).

The above passages clearly indicate that the welfare of the poor was well stipulated, and they should be one of the ultimate mission of the church in our times. Nevertheless, benevolence should be well planned otherwise it can result in many problems both to the giver and receiver. In most cases, handout and charity leave people poorer. Speaking against charity, Dambisa Moyo asserts: "The reality is aid has helped make the poor poorer and growth slower. Aid has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world" (Dambisa 109). Giving to the poor should be well planned and be careful as some people may decide never to work and take advantage. While the church needs to act justly and show mercy (Micah. 6:8) it should be done with care. Lupton says, "Mercy without justice degenerates into dependency and entitlement, preserving the power of the giver over the receipt. Justice without mercy is cold and impersonal, more concerned about rights than

relationship” (41). To have a long-lasting development, and impact, mercy and justice must be brought together. Lupton continues to argue that, “Mercy is a door, an opening, an invitation to touch a life, to make a difference, but it is not a destination.” Having mercy itself does not help, instead implementation is needed (Lupton 42).

The church as the body of Christ should imitate Christ in the mission of reconciling the world to him (Blackaby and Willis 57). Genuine reconciliation can only happen when people minister holistically. To do so, the New Testament writers have urged the church to learn how to share what they have with the poor (Luke.3:11, Acts 6:1). The rich should be concerned with the poor and invite them to the banquet (Luke14:13). The Galatians were reminded not to forget the poor (Gal. 2:10), and the rich must meet the needs of the poor (Jas 2:15-16) (Alela 60). The best way to help the poor is to empower them through employment, lending and guiding them in ways they can invest. They can be taught how to start saving. Once they know how to be responsible and accountable, they can sparingly be given grants. In order to succeed, the church has a responsibility to teach a business plan. Lupton says, “To invest well with those who have limited access to capital requires a sound business plan, reasoned risk/reward ratio, adequate controls, and accountability” (131). A good training in business and accounts will enhance good business, and thus bring success.

All human beings share equally in God’s loving concern, and the reign of God in the creation and human communities leads to peace, justice and truly fulfilled lives (Hiebert 868). One of the attributes of shalom is *agape*, and it shows the worthiness of the one loved. This kind of love brings the oneness and cultivates brotherly love among Christians (Douglas and Merrill 20). Alela continues to argue that, the right shalom initiates action, bears suffering and always hopes for the best and the right relationship with God will always bring true shalom (Isa.60:17)

(Alela 61). Involving the congregants in eradicating spiritual and physical poverty will bring great impact both in the church and in the lives of the members and the community. There are many resourceful people in any given congregation. It is therefore the role of the pastor and the leadership to tap the gifts and utilize them in teaching the rest of parishioners.

True shalom brings *peace*. According to Alela, peace comes after seeking a harmonious edifying relationship in the community life. Shalom also brings health to the community (Alela 62). When people are not hungry, sick and have freedom, their minds are likely to be settled and peaceful. They will be able to seek jobs and be engaged in income generating projects.

Borrowing Hiebert's words, shalom communicates the sense of human well-being in which physical, emotional, mental, moral, and spiritual health are inextricably intertwined (Hiebert 868). Since they are not separable, all efforts should be put into place to minister in all areas of one's life. A healthy person both mentally and physically is able to work towards personal and community development.

Alela continues to say that part of God's salvation plan is shalom. God yearns to restore the harmony which was broken by the fall of man. God intended to restore the broken relationship between the creator and man (Num. 25:12; Isa.54:7-8, Ezek. 34:5) and shalom and righteousness will reign in Zion (Isa. 60:17). It is worth noting that God's plan to the entire world is that all persons should know his saving grace and be free from all calamities, despair, oppression and poverty and anything which might destroy their wholeness (Hierbert 869). People ought to be helped to implement ways to eradicate poverty which snatches their shalom.

The church mandate is to implement what the Great Commission commands us to do (Matt. 28:18-20). Going all over the world and teaching as Jesus did, calls us to minister in all aspects of life. Jesus met people at their point of need (Mat.15:29-31). The duty of the church in

fulfilling the Great Commission is to show love and social concern to the neighbor, their health and wellbeing. Evangelism and social actions are paramount to everyone's life, and they are inseparable. The ultimate duty of a Christian, therefore, is to be Christlike and practice Jesus lessons of loving all (Malone 87). Some scholars argue that the "Gospel is the root while evangelism and social responsibility are the fruit" (Moffit and Tesch 115). Real evangelism and social responsibility come as a result of a holistic gospel. When people's needs are met, it is easy for them to respond to transformation and eventually help others to come live as God intended.

Background to the Study of Church in Poverty Eradication

Richard K. Taylor states that, "Fighting poverty has moved back into the center of the international agenda after having been over-shadowed for some time by a primary emphasis on policies of structural adjustment and incentives for growth" (xi). According to Taylor, the war against poverty is not new but the implementation was not well managed. One of the historical facts that happened in Kenya since independence was that the political elites divided resources largely among themselves. They left the rest of Kenyans to struggle. On the other hand, the departure of colonial masters created economic apartheid in the country. The leadership of industries and agricultural farms were taken over by the African elites who took advantage of rural-urban migration thus oppressed them and paid low salaries (Mayabi 13, 14).

Poverty eradication started with the early church fathers and mothers. Chrysostom and Augustine are great examples of people who uniquely supported the needy (Weaver et al. 105; Holman 75-76). When Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire, there were many efforts which were needed to attract pagans to Christianity. Among other ways the church involvement with the wretched and building almshouses played a prominent role in reaching out to the poor (Kreider 56). People like Chrysostom advocated the need of supporting the poor.

According to Chrysostom, people who never helped the poor are like robbers and they shall experience a terrible (Karras 51; Avila 84). While it is important to support the needy, I do not think people will be judged, for not helping as advocated by Chrysostom. While God may not be pleased by not supporting the needy and especially if their current situation is self-imposed like alcoholism and poor planning, calling them “robbers” is being too harsh. If anything, there must be evidence that what they possess belongs to their fellow servants.

The early Church fathers and mothers’ ways of dealing with the poor is a good example of people who care about the welfare of the needy. But the giver should be careful to avoid people who may take advantage of their generosity. Poverty is no longer an individual endeavor rather “a multidimensional concept encompassing political, social, and economic... dimensions” (Sakwa 106). It requires a combined effort and everybody should take part. The early fathers and mothers’ practice of supporting the needy is a great example of holistic ministry which should be taught to the community by church leaders at various levels. The early fathers and mothers response to social problems acted as a reflection of their theological beliefs (Balswick and Morland 42). For the gospel to have a greater impact in the society, a responsible action is required by the church.

Poverty eradication programs have increased over the past few years in America. Some churches and non-governmental organizations have tried to contribute towards the denominations which are directly involved in helping the needy. Over the past half century, charitable gifts have increased. According to John A. List in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, charitable giving has increased and almost doubled since 1990. The number of non-profit organizations registered with the IRS grew by nearly sixty percent from 1995 to 2005 (John A. List 157). It is estimated that \$390.05 billion was contributed to charities in 2006. They were given by individuals, estates,

foundations, and corporations (Giving USA 2017 1). Aggie, Sweeney the chairman of Giving U.S.A., applauded that, “despite being punctuated by economics and political uncertainty,” Americans remained generous in 2016 (Giving USA 2017 1). While charity is important, this project advocates for both spiritual and economic empowerment as the people are helped. This reduces the cycle of dependency common in many societies especially in the developing countries.

Another major reason contributing to the increase of poverty eradication programs especially among the North American is integration (Russell 84). Their model of doing ministry was unique thus encouraged more followers to support one another. Greer argues, “If an integrated approach to making disciples is a scriptural imperative, followers of Christ are not at liberty to choose between proclaiming Christ or serving the needs of the world” (Greer and Smith 46). Their capability to meet both spiritual and physical needs among the Christians perhaps encourage many Churches to emulate.

As Africa entered the twenty-first Century, poverty became a burning issue both to the state and the church (Otieno and McCullum 38). In emphasizing the same, Kobia noted, “For Africans, our goal should be to eradicate poverty because this goal is noble, and it is the right course to chart and pursue...it is also possible” (89). Therefore, our oneness should be experienced when we live at peace with people and in supporting each other.

Notable factors have contributed to the rise of poverty eradication programs in Africa. Some of the factors are religious while others are secular in nature. The religious moves in the modern times have increasingly become more realistic. In addition, more interaction with religious leaders from different countries and regions has occurred and played a role in helping people to think differently. The involvement with missionaries with different skills and business

ideas has brought a better understanding of the need to support oneself and the poor. The interactions give the locals some useful models which they can easily understand and replicate. The availability of free literature and seminars, which allows ease in attending the trainings within the region and beyond (Greer and Smith 216,216; Tunehag et al. 5).

Historically, religion played a great part in development in Africa. It is through the Christian Mission agencies that we have great schools and hospitals across the continent such as; Rift Valley Academy, A.I.C. Kijabe Mission Hospital, and P.C.E.A Tumutumu mission hospital Nyeri. The missionaries concentrated mostly on health and education and did little in fighting poverty. They failed to know that when people are searching for an alternative model of development, they often turn to religion or spiritual leaders for answers (Phiri, et al 10). Therefore, the churches have a responsibility to address the issues of poverty. Phiri further states, “The call to do good that lies at the heart of Christianity demands an individual response” (Phiri 11). There is need to exercise what people claim.

The message which should be preached is the one that addresses different kinds of problems which affect humanity. Some churches, though big have less impact since they concentrate only on spiritual matters and internal maintenance. Since God’s creation was good, the Church should embrace all in it and take care of it without hesitation. The message of salvation that Christian proclaim should be “inclusive” and be based in liberation from all kinds of evil (M’passou 25).

There have been great suggestions to help Africa get out of poverty since early 1980s. Unfortunately, the strategies were mainly based upon the economics of developed countries, rather than on the specialized needs of developing countries (Banglis 88). While the non-governmental organization and the government are busy trying to look for solutions, the church

has not been active in teaching and implementing programs which could combat poverty. While there has been a progress in fighting poverty in other regions, the situation in Kenya warrants more attention. We therefore should not leave anyone behind in developing plans and actions to drastically lower the rate of poverty in our communities (hungerreport.org/207).

The teachings about holistic ministry is very minimal both in churches and in Bible Colleges. Although the churches are aware of the need, they have not done enough to enlighten the people on ways to deal with the poverty. The people of God must therefore do something to rescue Africa from shackles of poverty (O'Donovan 57; Bansikiza 116). When the church gets involved with issues that affect the lives of people, the community leaders become aware of the church's existence. The community is likely to pay attention to the spiritual leaders when they talk. They may also refer other people who have spiritual problems to the church ministers, and some may consider the great claims of Jesus Christ (Moberg 159).

Even though much needs to be done to support the needy, the reality is that there has been some great work done to combat poverty by the Church in Africa. Among the great examples is the Antisiokia valley in Ethiopia. Before the valley was put into good use, many people were dying every day due to starvation. Today the valley is no longer a "death place" rather a "land of honey" as some people worked tirelessly towards development. Many people have come to know the Lord, and a Church has been established to cater for their spiritual needs (Yamori quoted in Njuguna 3). The church in this region fed the people physically first before talking about salvation. When the physical needs were met, they were able to listen to the Good News. When the needs of people and necessary measures are put in place, great results happen in people's lives. Since people come to church voluntarily, the church can be among the best institutions that can successfully implement ways to help the poor to be self-sustaining. The church therefore

should not be a spectator on the process of poverty alleviation, rather it should be actively involved in eradicating poverty (Sakwa 41).

According to Larbi, the biblical God who revealed his love for mankind in Jesus Christ is the same God who shows a great concern to the poor. His children are therefore to reflect His character by taking up the cause of the needy (Larbi 231). Working towards the development of the members both spiritual and physical should be the goal of the church. The church is well respected in Africa, therefore, starting programs and classes on economic empowerment would be relevant to the mandate of the church.

Although empowering the poor is not a new thing in Kenya, the church was not trained well on how to support each other right from the beginning. The members are expected to give towards “ministry” and not necessarily to individuals who are needy. The missionaries who brought the gospel are somehow to blame. They introduced the model that assumes the donations to finance ministry progressively became the responsibility of the church (Befus, 16). When the missionaries left, the Kenyan church took a long time to learn how to be self-sustaining. The teachings of the missionaries made some Christians in Kenya to live as people in transit. The transition mindset among some Christians created a feeling of temporariness that made them believe that they were on transit to God’s Kingdom in heaven (Mungai 5). There was no urgency on personal or communal economic development since we do not belong to this world, and soon Jesus is coming for us (John 14:1-4).

Even though the ecumenical community of churches in Kenya have become more and more involved in the development debate, they have been reluctant to address the ethical and spiritual issues related to wealth. The poor are often left to blame with the implication that they are to blame for their poverty (Taylor ix). The issue of poverty has been taken seriously by the

government since independence in 1963. The prime minister then, Jomo Kenyatta, “identified poverty, illiteracy, and disease” as Kenya’s main development challenges. Unfortunately, those challenges remain the same more than 50 years later (Wairire et al. 22). The government in recent times has spearheaded more efforts towards combating poverty. Such programs are The Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) in 2007, Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) in 2007, and the major economic development plan- Kenya Vision 2030, in 2008. The government later outlined some projects that should be implemented to help Kenya become a middle-income economy by 2030. The Kenya Constitution (2010) has acknowledged certain provisions to fight poverty (Wairire et al. 25).

Africa Inland Church is among the major Christian denominations in Kenya. The church was founded in 1895. The church has many departments with the main one being Christian Education Department which was established in 1963. Even though the Africa Inland church has established many schools and hospitals, their main emphasis is fulfilling the Great Commission and bringing its members into maturity in Christ. The Christian education department also develops curriculum materials for its congregations for; Sunday School, Christian Service Cadettes, Christian Service Battalion, Christian Youth in Action, Christian Women Fellowship and other Bible materials (Olla 1). While these materials are good, they only cater for the spiritual dimensions. The mission of the department is to, “produce educational materials for the pupil and teachers to achieve the educational objective of the church: teaching everyone to mature and perfect in Christ” (Olla 2)

Evidently, the church seems to be consumed too much with issues of going to heaven and somehow detached from the day-to-day lives of the communities they minister to. However, many people who love the Lord and are active members of Africa Inland Church, live in extreme

poverty. The denomination emphasizes after-life messages and ignores the physical needs of the members. The church instead should be able to apply the gospel to the whole life and try not to limit the gospel to spiritual perspectives ((Njuguna 2; Kinoti 62; Reed12).

Addressing the holistic needs of people brings more meaning to members, and many will come to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord (Okullu 2). The Church on the other hand, must be able to, “translate biblical faith and principles into social and material aspects of life (Maribei 4). When people are guided on how to apply their faith, the church will have an impact in the community.

Benefits of Poverty Eradication Programs

The scriptures have justified the need for taking care of the poor and improving their living standards. It has also given remarkable examples of people, and nations who tirelessly came to the aid of the poor. However, many religious leaders in Kenya are divided about whether there is need of being involved in fighting poverty and if there are benefits of poverty eradication programs. In this section I intend to discuss the benefits of poverty eradication programs.

Poverty alleviation helps the church and the community to be economically independent (Snyder and Tadesse 183). When people are empowered and given a chance to go to school, they have an opportunity to improve their livelihood, and thus support both their families and the church. Many women will no longer be dependent on men for survival since they can support their families. When people are economically independent, they shall understand their rights. Snyder and Tadesse says, “Women don’t have to shout for their rights or their empowerment when they are able to be economically independent, then these comes automatically” Snyder and Tadesse 183-184). Once they understand their rights, they use their

resources the way they want without manipulation. This encourages them to give towards the church projects, and thus improve the standard of the church.

Another benefit of poverty alleviation program is that those who are empowered catch the vision of the church and support its programs (Ndaka 11). Sometimes it is hard to catch the church's vision especially if people are struggling. When people are holistically empowered, they see the sense of owning the vision and thus support the idea and be part of the implementation. The scripture clearly states that where there is no vision people perish (Prov. 29:18). Once the church and people have no vision, "They cannot focus, cannot reach their goal and cannot follow their dream... they actually lose the vitality that makes them feel alive" (Hybels 33). Once people are empowered and are stable, they not only own the vision, but they also decide to be part of the implementation process. The empowerment should be to all including the young people. The church has a great obligation to support the young people to be self-sustaining and be part of the vision. Simply, because, "the future leadership of the church in all aspects depends on how the present young men are prepared for it" (Ndaka 10). The young people need to be empowered, guided, and prepared to take the church to the next level and learn to own the vision. Since most people have no experience nor capital to start off, they need to be boosted to stand on their own rather than be given empty hopes. Osei-Mensah writes;

Young people do not just want to be flattered that they are the leaders of tomorrow. They have abundant energy to give to the Lord for service in his church today. We are not to stand in their way. Rather we have a great responsibility to disciple them and encourage them (Osei-Mensah 55).

Supporting and enriching the people will encourage more people especially the young to be part of advancement of the church and implement income generating activities. When people especially the young generation are empowered and helped to understand the vision, "they take responsibility for continuous improvement in the church" (Kouzes 2).

Poverty eradication and empowerment help people see and experience God's goodness (Marai 59). The people who have been helped to come out of poverty confess that they have experienced the presence and goodness of their maker. When people are empowered to meet their daily needs, they are likely to encourage more people to know the Lord, who has provided for them. A well-planned empowerment program can attract many to come to the Lord. God intended human beings to have the fullness of His creation in all ways (Gen. 1:31). People have been, "destined here on earth to enjoy the goodness of the Lord—and poverty is not in that equation—and that the best is yet to come" (Marai 59). Working towards helping those in need will enhance many people to not only experience the goodness of God but also be a source of hope to the hopeless. The church should know that, "it is called upon to be faithful stewards of God's creation and everything in it as God intended" (Kiiru 33). According to Kiiru, "Stewardship is the realization of God's goodness in creating the earth and all that is in it and giving humans the responsibility to make use of all that he has created" (33). When people experience the goodness of God, they serve whole-heartedly.

Minimizing poverty benefits all. When people are empowered and have a steady source of income, it is not just for themselves rather for the entire community. In Kenya people live as a community, and when they seek for a solution it is not for the individual rather for the entire community. So, when an individual is empowered, the entire community reaps many benefits. In most cases, "people try to find activities and strategies by themselves to develop a co-operative way of improving their community" (Pradervand 1989). When certain people or families are supported, the community benefits since they live as brothers and sisters. The oneness and the community way of lifestyle enhances the upgrading of many people. Since, "the decisions are made to benefit communities rather than individuals" (Lugones 754), many people's lives will be

supported and thus improve their living standards. Through communal living, many people try hard for the well-being of other people, and that concern positively affects many people's lives (Jeffs and Smith 95-96). Takayanagi asserts that, "effective development programs implemented in Africa require the integration of traditional knowledge and community-based management systems" (Takayanagi, 676-77). So, empowering a person will be a great boost to us all.

When appropriate empowerment activities are organized to help the poor, positive things happen which leads to social, economic and personal change (Bown 39). According to LeVine Robert 465), there is a great connection between poverty and health. For example, when illiterate people visit a hospital or medicine is prescribed, it is difficult to administer the medicine as prescribed by the physician. When people are empowered and become educated, their literacy will play a great role both in their lives and for their children. Vavrus Frances, who supports the view of educating people and especially the women, says, "An educated woman takes an active role in controlling her fertility, practicing safe sex, and protecting the environment" (41). Educated women will not be manipulated. Rather they will be able to make their own decisions whether they want to be married, when and perhaps how many children they want to have. Empowerment through education is crucial in one's life since "it is the capacity to make effective decisions and to convert them into desired outcomes" (Alsop and Heinsohn 4). This kind of empowerment will happen if the church facilitates training in business courses and investing in students with affordable student loans. Children from poor homes will appreciate and benefit from programs that are run by the church and improve their living standards since they will get better paying jobs. Individual prosperity and stability will be enhanced through literacy education. It will also have an impact on improving child nutrition schooling thus reduce mortality rate (Bown and Street quoted in (Takayanagi 73-674).

Poverty eradication programs show Christ's love (2 Cor. 13:5). We shall be exercising a similar love that Christ portrayed that when we were still sinners Jesus died for us (Rom 5:8). The example of Jesus Christ's act on the cross is a great example and a call for all people, particularly Christians to emulate (Haring 59). Emulating Jesus' example and concern for the physical needs may encourage some people to start thinking of ways to help. The ministry of giving and walking with those who are hurting does not require any credentials other than a willing heart. For such a difference to happen, a holistic approach is required. The church must remember that their fruits will make them known (Matt. 7:15-20). Recognizing the ministry of Jesus Christ will not only enhance the involvement of holistic ministry, but also will act as an example to the community.

Participating in helping those in need brings hope and reconciliation. A great example is, "the feeding of the five thousand people" (John 6:1-5). When people are hungry, they are unsettled, restless and hopeless. David H. Kodia notes that "this passage depicts a situation when resources are scarce, and seemingly there is a state of hopelessness. Three things are likely to occur when resources are limited: Jealousy, selfishness, and conflicts" (Kodia 40). When such people are fed as Jesus did, they shall be calm and be attentive to the teachings. Jesus was more concerned with what people should eat. On contrary, "his disciples were more concerned about what they had in their wallet. Even though their argument bordered on a rational philosophy of numbers and figures, they seemed to have forgotten the emotional aspect of their responsibility to the hungry" (Kodia 41). It is evident that Jesus realized that people needed food otherwise they will not listen. It is worth noting that "When people are hungry, they do not need lectures on the state of economy or policy paper projections. The practical thing they need is food" (Kodia 41). Transformational development is crucial since it promotes the restoration of right relationship as

initially intended by God since God's plan is to unite and reconcile all things in Jesus Christ (Eph.1:10; Col 1:20;2; Cor 5:19) (Alela 79). When the needy are helped and their basic needs are met, they have hope and strength to wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. In return they become a blessing to others who are in need, thus reducing the number of people who are suffering and bringing hope and reconciliation.

A poverty eradication program brings true worship. When physical needs are not met, there will be no true worship. When we worship in *Spirit* and *truth*, our minds must be settled. In worship, the believers celebrate and experience the present reality of the kingdom in their fellowship (Snyder 145). Once the needy are helped, their minds become settled, and thus they have a peaceful moment in worship. The day-to-day needs cannot be ignored in worship. Therefore, the church should be concerned with the daily challenges of the community, if they want worship to have a meaning (Snyder 146). Once the people are supported to stand on their own, they worship genuinely to a super being who cares and comes to their aid. The gospel is relevant when incorporated with development. Myers affirmed and states,

To link the gospel to the process of development, the people need to hear about the God who created the world and their culture; the God who wants human beings to worship God and love their neighbor; and the God who wants and will enable them to be productive stewards in creation (Myers 215).

When people are helped to deal with their own challenges and needs, perhaps they are more likely to yearn to know God better and worship in spirit and truth.

Helping and walking with the poor can be a way of witnessing. There is a need to acknowledge that the good news may have different meanings depending on the circumstance. Good news to a hungry man might be food. Mahatma Gandhi had the same observation and said: "There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of a bread" (Sinclair 26). Sinclair Donna. *The Spirituality of Bread*. Wood Lake

Publishing, Kelowna, British Columbia, 2007. Although salvation is not earned through good works (Eph. 2:8-9), our action and involvement with the needy may encourage people to listen and respond to God's message. The sharing with the needy may act as a way of witnessing.

McPhee asserts,

It is easy to talk about the Love of God, but what convinces people of its reality is not your words alone, but also your way. If you demonstrate by the way you live and relate to others that the love of God has become a reality in your own experience, then you have something that is hard for people to walk away from (McPhee 61).

People who receive help to minimize their sufferings and agony are more likely to follow the teachings and become followers of Christ. Pointing people to Christ is not primarily about what we say. Rather, it is about who we are and how we relate to the rest of the community (George 186). A well-fed person may follow Christ more easily than a hungry person. Showing love and redeemed life plays a big role in witnessing and leading people to believe in their redeemer. Christians' mere words of love are not enough. Instead their words must be backed by the non-verbal witness since their lives and behavior are the only Bible that some people will ever read (George 186-187). Evangelism should be both by announcement and demonstration.

Ministering to the poor with the whole Gospel indicates a good understanding of Jesus call of servanthood to all. For Jesus, "Servanthood is the authentic expression of Kingdom living" (Storey Loc. 2372). Jesus aspect of servanthood was evident in his entire earthly mission. Serving all humanity with the whole Gospel shows the essence of, "embracing the servant lifestyle of Jesus" (2372). Jesus did not come to be served instead to serve (Matt. 20:28; Mark.10:45). Jesus's service was not to a particular area, but rather to all sorts of human life. Serving all humanity with the whole Gospel as Jesus did, would indicate that the church understands the servanthood aspect as taught by Jesus.

Challenges in Poverty Eradication Programs.

Although there are many benefits to doing holistic ministry and helping the needy in building God's kingdom, several challenges emerge in the process. Some are because of a lack of enough knowledge about how to deal with the situation. Other shortcomings come from ignorance of the whole process and the inability to follow the right procedure. One of the key setbacks in dealing with poverty eradication is that some people who come to help do not know what to give (Lupton 33). Sometimes the donors bring things without understanding the cultural background of those in need. Free aids are good when given with care and the right strategy. Dambisa Moyo, in his book, *Dead Aid*, lamented, "The reality is that aid has helped make the poor poorer and growth slower. Aid has been and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world" (Moyo 49). Lack of understanding often brings more harm than good. If not well planned, "it affects the spirit of self-help and increases the desire for handouts" (Kodia 47). Instead of being empowered, people may become lazy in the hope of getting a handout.

The conditions and the strings attached to the aid is another primary source of setback. Those who are offering the support have a composition of rules and regulations under which the aid is disbursed. The recipient is required to adhere to the tight regulations imposed by the donor. Sometimes the assistance does not help much. Sometimes they employ staff who are highly paid and leave the locals with no job. At other times, they bring their raw material from their countries or region. Such restrictions have brought significant failures because the aid does not meet the intended need (Moyo 39). Jacques Ellul, a French philosopher, and Lay theologian reports the miserable state that the recipient of aid is left in:

It is important that giving be truly free. It must never degenerate into charity, in the pejorative sense. Almsgiving is Mammon's perversion of giving. It affirms the superiority of the giver, who thus gains a point on the recipient, binds him, demands gratitude, humiliates him and reduces him to a lower state than he had before (Ellul 112).

Such a situation could not only destroy the integrity of the person helped but also make the person become a slave. Further, it may cause resistance to any other form of aid. Foreign aid and any help should bring empowerment to those who are helped and not a form of humiliation and slavery.

Lack of vision and good strategy is yet another challenge on the side of the church. To succeed a poverty eradication program requires a clear vision. Any church or organization that intends to have an impact in helping the needy must have a holistic vision since, "a church without a vision does a little more than maintain a status quo" (Moffitt193). Many people who try to start empowering programs fail to succeed because they do not have a clear vision of what they want to do. For any program to bear fruit, it must have a clear vision and guidelines. Lack of vision brings destruction (Prov. 29:18). When people lack vision it is hard to be committed, and thus they do not accomplish much.

Poor perceptions about the needy is another challenge in poverty eradication efforts. Those who have attempted to address the needs of our community have made a mistake of viewing the needy as hopeless. When the poor are perceived as hopeless, then giving can rob their dignity and self-worth (Greer and Smith 53). Once their self-esteem is gone, they can become reluctant and withdrawn and eventually refuse to be responsible. The horrible treatment by the sponsors and supporters have affected their morale and self-esteem, and thus they feel hopeless. Sometimes the poor misunderstand and think that accepting aid makes them appear to be helpless to their benefactors who see them as objects of charity and not equals. (Wickre). Some people may never get out of their problems since they must "look" needy to continue

receiving help. Lupton warns the helper never to do for the poor what they can do for themselves since doing what they have the capacity to do for themselves is to disempower them (Lupton 129). While supporting those in need, the concerned people should change their perception and the method they use to help.

To succeed in any endeavor, one needs to spend enough time to prepare. Most people and organizations fail for lack of preparation. They do not spend enough time to understand the context, culture, the needs, and what has been done in the past. People who are willing to venture into poverty eradication programs need, “preparation that will make them “marketable for business.” (Elliston 302). Without proper preparation and strategic planning, the program will not bear much fruit. The church can use their educated members to help develop a strategic plan about how they can effectively put into place realistic programs to support the needy.

Another major challenge of poverty eradication is lack of resources. People might be willing to start programs to fight poverty, but they lack resources to support themselves let alone other people. Most churches, and especially A.I.C, do not have any funds meant for the poor. The few who have benevolence boxes rarely get anyone to give towards it since many people have no clear understanding of the need of the box. They have not defined clearly who the beneficiaries are, and so not many people understand why they need to give.

Lack of understanding and knowledge about generosity have played a big role in the setback of poverty eradication programs. Many churches emphasize the needs of giving towards the church and fail to address the need of supporting the individuals who are struggling in the church and the community. They also do not have a well-structured program or materials to teach about empowerment. Some churches face opposition from people who think that the issues of poverty should be addressed by “other” people and institutions. They fail to understand that,

“everything belongs to God and that giving is a Sacred act,” (Rodin 21, affects people’s attitude about supporting the poor. When people are not guided, it will be hard for them to give to those in dire need.

To conclude the discussion about the benefits and shortcomings of poverty eradication programs, it is worth noting that a holistic approach to poverty eradication, if well managed and planned, can bear good fruit. The plans can be costly, time-consuming and involving, but eventually they succeed. However, when enough time and resources are used, the program can improve the health and lifespan of people. It is good to note that when people are needy, they are limited to good health care. When people are healthy, they will be able to work and support one another thus boost the economic growth. Therefore, there is a need for investing in such programs as they will help in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and boost the lives of people (Wagstaff,467; Sachs, 2008. To succeed in helping those who live in impoverished poverty, requires full participation of the church as the body of Christ. Poverty eradication can be a simple process if all believers, especially those who are well to do, would be helped to understand the need of being part of the solution and more importantly, to change their worldview towards the poor and to adopt a new story (Myers 236). Since we are God’s mouthpiece (Alela 213), we ought to help people understand God’s plans to everyone (Jer. 29:11). When the members are helped, they can be part of the solution to work hard and embrace the implementation in empowering those who need help.

Africa Inland Church and Social Action

The mission of Africa Inland Church is to fulfill the Great Commission (Mt.28:18-20), (Constitution 4. The going is very crucial, but the church should first do self-propagation. Many churches in the denomination emphasize missions and support at least one missionary.

Unfortunately, the church does little to help people holistically. The main Africa Inland Church departments include; education, Christian Youth in Action (CYA), Women's and Men's Fellowships, Sunday School, Battalion, Star Cadette, and Health Ministry. The health ministry was the one ministry that was supposed to be involved in social issues. While the department did tremendous work in fighting the spread of HIV/aids virus, they failed to address issues of poverty. Mr. Francis Mulwa the Coordinator for African Development Education Net Work (ADEN) firmly believes that the broad mission of the Church is to venture into all areas of human life. In particular, he believes that;

Its presence in any place ought to make a difference as it endeavors to penetrate every area of human life and activity with Christian principles, values, attitudes and priorities. Christian's active involvement in life at different levels of: family, professional and social life, business and politics ought to bring about an atmosphere of joy and optimism in spite of poor conditions (Mulwa 100).

The "going" as emphasized by the church is important. However, what people are going out to do should be clear. The "going out" should be to extend the love of God and it should not just be preaching, but rather serving people holistically. The church needs to help the members, "develop an ability to better respond to others with God's love" (Moffit 255), and share even material needs.

The Africa Inland church, however, has built and sponsored schools such as Moffat Bible College, Kijabe Boys, Rift Valley Academy, Guthairira Vocational Training Center and Kijabe Girls and Boys High school. They also have hospitals like Githumu, A.I.C. Cure International Hospital and the biggest is A.I.C. Mission Hospital in Kijabe. These institutions do an excellent job of enlightening people and catering for their physical needs. The intention of starting them was to cater to the community with a subsidized cost. Unfortunately, they have become a rich man's endeavor. Some hospitals like Kijabe hospital requires one to pay a huge deposit before

they are admitted to the wards .Although their mission is to glory God in all they do, sometimes it is hard to experience the mission. They have qualified personnel and the services are excellent but, it is hard for a poor man to access the services.

Most people from Kijabe where many of these institutions are located do not benefit from them. Due to dependency syndrome, many people do not have the qualifications required to secure a job. Their lives are horrible as they keep waiting to be hired by the missionaries to do manual jobs. They do not get enough resources to send their children to high school and colleges. People are robbed of their peace and dignity and, eventually they become voiceless and are left without their sense of self. (Bansikiza 15). The denomination should have a plan about how to show the loving heart of God to those who are jobless, broken and the poor (Miller 97). While this research does not argue that unqualified people should be given jobs just for the sake of having something to do, there is need to be agents of justice to the poor and the untrained and give them work that does not require a college degree. Since the church is a representative of God, it should follow God's instruction and help the poor to secure jobs in the institutions. Timothy Keller challenges the church to see the poor in God's perspective and says, "If you are trying to live a life by the Bible, the concept and call to justice are inescapable. We do justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God" (Keller 15).

Strategies towards Poverty Eradication

As mentioned earlier, poverty is a reality, but that does not justify our inactiveness in dealing with the menace. "Since the poor are found everywhere in the world, then it means if we are to reduce it, it requires a direct frontal attack at its very root cause" (Bansikiza 116). While we cannot eliminate poverty, we can minimise the rate of its existence. To do so, we need to

change and obey the one we worship and follow his example in dealing with the poor (Sider 271). To fight poverty, “The church needs to revisit the economic and social paradigms in view of the changing social conditions and expectations” (Kodia 62). The church has an obligation to empower the poor. For the church in Kenya to remain relevant and true to its mission, it must holistically share their blessing and afflictions together as one family of God” (Kodia 72).

For the church to win the fight against poverty they need to lay specific strategies to help people come out of dependency to self-reliance. First, people need to be helped to increase their spiritual strength through a change of attitude, an increase in their faith and more importantly, greater reliance on God (Kiiru 236. When people understand God’s intention in creating humans, they will become active in helping their fellow human beings, especially the poor. Training in spiritual and development matters enhances people’s understanding. Once people are trained, they can take charge on their own context and help their neighbors without waiting for other people to come and help them (Kiiru 36; Downes 12).

Second, people must be taught about their lifestyles (Kiiru 238). Most people in Kenya prefer importing things rather than using the locally made and available goods. Others live beyond their means and live with huge debts. If people would be trained about financial stability and be encouraged to change their lifestyles, they would have something to save and be self-reliant. Many people have not been trained about investment and saving. If the church can plan for basic training about changing one’s lifestyle, improving one’s skills, changing of jobs, saving and starting a business, many people’s lives would improve and their lives would change (Adei 69, 70).

The church has a great responsibility to correct the distorted information about theology of work by the missionaries and a health and wealth gospel. In Kenya, there is a misconception

that once we become Christians, we shall become rich and will not need to work since “God will supply our needs according to His riches in glory” (Phil 4:19). While it is true God is our provider, we have a responsibility to work and God will bless the work of our hands (Deutr. 28:12). On the other hand, the Africa Inland Missions emphasis on the issue of heaven have left many Christians ignorant about earthly lives and its needs. People should be taught to be active and emulate the Apostle Paul who worked hard both for his own upkeep and to support the mission work and the weak (Acts. 20:35). Just like Paul the parishioners need to be guided on how to be active in their farms, industry and in any project, which might bring an income. The church should organize seminars and workshops and correct the distorted information about work. For those who perceive that work is a curse, they should be guided to understand that God cursed the ground not work (Gen. 3:17-19). When people work they will be independent be self-supporting and free to make their own decisions” (Kiiru 241).

Once people undergo financial and basic business training, they can be guided on how to access microfinance. Many people may be willing to start some projects, but lack of capital may hinder them from starting. Given access to such funds will boost their capability of starting a project. Microfinance is known to be among the best ways to fight poverty since, “it works for one simple and indisputable reason-the vast majority of the poor are willing and able to lift themselves from poverty if given an opportunity” (Greer and Smith 101). When small and poor entrepreneurs have undergone good training and have been guided to take and pay back small loans, their income is likely to increase and thus their living standard improves.

The church through the leaders should engage their members in starting savings and credit associations. The main task of the leaders should be to mobilize both the church and the community to join the organization as a way of fighting poverty. From the savings, people can

get money to offset emergency bills, pay school fees or boost a business. People should be able to develop themselves using the savings and to deepen the relationship between families and the community. Once people have enough to feed their families, they can be peaceful and settled and thus serve humanity (Greer and Smith 167).

The church is supposed to spearhead the fight against gender inequality. In Kenya, women are not given equal opportunity to men and this leaves the women struggling. Although it is changing, the tradition has been not to “waste” resources educating girls since they will eventually get married. Due to gender inequality, many women have limited opportunities to secure well-paying jobs. Eventually, such women end up with meager income and with little money to support themselves and their families. When women are empowered, they are able to organize ways of enlightening themselves through training, and they are able to educate each other about how to become useful citizens for the development of their lives and families (Tadesse and Snyder 25).

Teaching is paramount in the fight against poverty. When people are taught and helped to understand their situation, they are more likely to own their problem and start to implementation change. The rate of poverty can be reduced by working as a family and following wherever scripture leads (Sider 272). Relying on the Holy Spirit to teach the poor enhances smooth learning and eventually change the perspective of the people about their problems. Doug and Stoner believe that to be helped, the poor need to be guided about how to change their perception about their bondage. They write;

One of the first obstacles of breaking the cycle of poverty is in the mind. Before the exodus out of economic bondage can begin, a powerful cultural lie needs to be exposed and renounced: that it is God’s will for the poor to be poor. That lie crushes the hope that sparks initiative, encourages risk, and allows people to move from survival to prosperity. Mental poverty helps ensure economic poverty (Doug and Stoner 17).

When people have a perception that they were born poor or they belong to a poor genealogy, it will be hard for them to work towards getting out of the bondage. Sometimes the words of Jesus that, “we shall always have poor people” ((Mathew 26:11) have been taken out of context, and somehow used to justify poverty. The words also have influenced the church to be inactive in dealing with poverty. Therefore, there should be vigorous training about how people can change their perception first from their mind and later to implement what they have been taught.

The church should remain true to its calling and be the salt and light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16; Mark 9:48-50). To be salt and light of the world means that Christians are called to be different in all they do in their daily endeavors. The church is a “gathering of the chosen ones who should be different from people of this world and ready to form a true *ecclesia*” (Kim et. al 28). To form a true *ecclesia* calls the church to rely on the Holy Spirit and work towards meeting the needs of people holistically.

Among the most neglected area of development in Kenya and Kijabe is education. Education is essential in one’s life, and therefore the church should combine efforts to campaign to the community’s the need of education. In Kijabe the number of parents who withdraw their children from school due to an inability to provide for them is on the rise. Schools in Kijabe still lack essentials, and the pupils live in pathetic situations despite the government offering free education. Strangely, the church sponsors many schools in Kijabe, yet the church leadership does not follow closely what is happening in those schools. The church as the sponsor should work well with the schools and perhaps introduce income generating activities. They can share their facilities and personnel to fight poverty in the community (Alela 211). Some teachers may have great business ideas which can be shared and implemented thus benefit the two parties.

Research Design Literature

The study uses a pre-intervention method. I examined the literature available to enhance poverty eradication methods and holistic approach in the Africa Inland Church Kijabe Region. The study also sought to explore the main contributing factors of the inactiveness of the church in combating poverty in Kijabe region. The potential challenges for those who are doing holistic ministry were interrogated as we sought to know what could be done to succeed in such endeavors. A mixed method of data collection and analysis was employed. The concept of poverty is complex with many contributing factors. To get the information required using mixed methods brought excellent insights (Glesne 14) needed for this research and increased the understanding of the study of the problem under consideration (Creswell 203).

The research used purposive sampling of specific regional chairpersons. In purposive sampling, the researcher, “purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study” (Kombo 82). Mugenda further asserts,

Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information concerning the objectives of his or her study. Cases of the subject are therefore handpicked because they are informative about the process the required characteristics (Mugenda 50).

In this study, purposive sampling was used selecting the regional chairmen and leaders who either advocate for poverty eradication discussion or have shown interest in doing so.

Since the regional chairmen are only ten, the data recording used qualitative method. Glense advocates the use of qualitative research if the population is not big since sampling may not be meaningful in such a small number (44). In qualitative analysis there is a lot of detailed information, and the researcher needs to analyze data in a systematic way in order to come up with recommendations and useful conclusions (Mugenda and Mugenda 117). Therefore,

qualitative data analysis was appropriate for analyzing the data obtained from the regional chairmen.

There are around 150 pastors and leaders in Kijabe region. Each of them was eligible to be selected (Chandran 90; Kombo 79). The study therefore, used random sampling to fill in the survey of 100 pastors and church leaders within Kijabe region. In random sampling, it ensures that the probability of selection remains constant in successive selections and effective in a large population (Chandran 93).

The data collected from leaders in Kijabe region used quantitative analysis to study the data collected from the church leaders in the Kijabe region, but qualitative analysis to study the data collected from the regional chairpersons. The qualitative researcher gets more in-depth information that requires intensive interviews (Mugenda and Mugenda 202-203).

Data collected from the readings, field research, and interviews can be voluminous and sometimes overwhelming. Therefore, the information needs to be well understood and later used to generate themes and categorized using codes (Mugenda, Mugenda 203). The data is summarized using measures such as percentage and mean and standard deviation (Chadran 169).

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter reviewed the literature available for the study. The focus of the research was the role of the church in poverty eradication in Africa Inland Church, Kijabe region. The chapter started with analyzing some concepts of poverty eradication and concern from the Church Fathers. The Antisiokia in Ethiopia as used as an example of a successful holistic program. The biblical and theological foundations of poverty and the poor were discussed at length in the chapter. Specific examples of care to the poor and the destitute were discussed from both the New and the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the Jubilee and Sabbatical Years were

analyzed in relation to caring for the poor. This section demonstrated that helping the poor is a common theme in biblical teachings. They are well represented in Pauline writings and the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament.

The few poverty eradication programs existing in the region were found to have shortcomings. The lack of a clear vision and mission have left the needy hurting even more. Such experiences have made many people desperate, feeling hopeless and dependent. Despite the challenges and shortcomings, it was evident that if well planned, poverty eradication can both benefit the church and the community thus build the Kingdom of God.

The last portion of the literature review examined the Africa Inland Church and its social action. The church has done some significant work in establishing hospitals, schools and some orphanages. However, due to high costs which are charged in those institutions the services do not directly benefit those it was intended to help especially the poor. Institutions like A.I.C. Mission Hospital, Moffat Bible College and Guthairiria Vocational School were established to help the locals. When they started, the charges were low and they served all classes of people including the poor. Unfortunately, as years passed, things keep changing and the institutions longer serve the needy because the charges for the services are beyond reach of the poor.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter outlines the methodological procedure for the study. It addresses the steps used to answer the research questions listed in chapter one. The other portion of the chapter provides the nature, purpose of the project, instrumentation to be used to answer each of the research question and the description of the research study and the criteria used to select the participants. The chapter also outlines the ethical issues that were observed while dealing with the human subjects. One of the sections shows how validity and reliability were ensured. The last part of the chapter give the details of data collection and describes the techniques used to analyze both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Nature and Purpose of the Project

The project evaluated poverty eradication programs for Africa Inland Church, Kijabe Region. The research was provoked by the rate of poverty among Christians in the area. Even though the A.I.C. is among the biggest denomination in Kenya, the number of people living in extreme poverty is on the increase. The A.I.C. stated mission is to fulfill the Great Commission. The main purpose of the project was to identify the levels of knowledge, training and practice exhibited by the leaders in poverty eradication in A.I.C., Kijabe Region, in order to discern best practices for poverty eradication among Christians and residents.

Research Questions

This section takes an in-depth look at the three questions this research sought to answer. It describes the research instruments that were used to discover answers to the questions.

Research Question #1. What level of knowledge, training and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C. Kijabe Region?

The question was core to the research and laid a strong foundation for understanding the leaders' knowledge and understanding for the need of addressing issues of poverty. It helped the researcher understand more clearly why the leaders may not be doing enough to combat poverty. The question was answered in questions 1-4 in the regional chairmen's interview. The answers revealed whether there is any involvement in helping the needy. It was also answered in questions 6, 7, and 8 in the survey done by leaders in the region.

Research Question #2. What challenges have A.I.C. leaders experienced in poverty eradication in Kijabe region?

The survey administered to church leaders addressed this question. Questions 9-10 in the survey designated for local church pastors and leaders within the region answered this question. The purpose of the questions was to investigate the challenges leaders have faced when trying to help people fight poverty. It also helped to bring into light the extent to which they are involved in helping the poor.

Research Question #3. What practical steps need to be taken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing the problem of poverty in Kijabe Region?

Interview items 2-3 answered the question. The aim was to enquire what can be done by the region in combating poverty. This question was instrumental to this research since it aimed to discern the best steps and procedures that can be followed to set up a holistic program and reduce

the rate of poverty. In the interview with the district chairmen items 4-5 tackled research question three. These were the senior leaders and they are vocal in the region. Therefore, the views of these leaders are crucial to implementing a program in the region. To get their sincere views, the participants were given enough time to emphasize what they considered important. Since the pastors and leaders are with the congregants on the ground, their views and suggestions of what should be done in combating poverty in the church and the community was very important. Item 10 in the survey addressed research question three.

Ministry Context

Africa Inland Church Kijabe region is in the central part of Kenya. The region under the study comprises both rural and urban. Two primary forests, Kinale and Kijabe, occupy a significant portion of the region. Some churches are in the interior in rural areas while others are in urban settings. Others like A.I.C. Kijabe mission are located where the missionaries established their first church, hospital and Bible institute when they first arrived in Kijabe in 1903 (Gehman 83). The area attracts all sorts of people both locally and internationally. The city has people from all over the world, and this gives Kijabe a diverse population.

Almost every tribe is represented in the region under study. However, being in central Kenya, the Kikuyus are the majority, as they form about 22% of the country's population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2009). There are several industries and tea and coffee plantations which have attracted people from other ethnic groups.

The Africa Inland church started in Kijabe in 1903, under the leadership of Hurburt. People begun to embrace the gospel and slowly by slowly many became Christians. Eventually, they influenced many other people in the community to follow Christ. The first new converts had an opportunity to build their houses within the mission station so that they would have regular

access to the teachings of the missionaries which enhanced the growth of the church (Gehman 83).

The Africa Inland church continued to grow, and as a result, different institutions emerged in the area. Today, Africa Inland Church has many branches all over the country. For many years they only had one Bishop until recently when they changed their constitution and started to have many bishops.

Since Kijabe has had the gospel for a long time, the expectation is that they would be instrumental in empowering people spiritually and economically. Unfortunately, there is very low involvement in holistic ministry. Although Kijabe region is famous because of its best medical services and printing press, there is less involvement in fighting poverty. Kijabe jurisdiction has both adequate resources and enough personnel to implement successful programs, yet many people continue to suffer from poverty.

The existence of Rift Valley Academy (An American School), Kijabe Mission Hospital, Moffat Bible College and many other A.I.C. operated institutions, could have brought a great impact in fighting poverty. The church in Kijabe has enough resources and personnel to start programs which could cater for the poor. Most of the people who work in these great institutions are members of the churches within the region. If well planned, these people can avail themselves to offer finances and skills to run such programs. When well guided by the church leadership, they can start great programs in the region and beyond.

The availability of Africa Inland Missionaries is an excellent advantage to Kijabe region. The missionaries who work in the area if well approached, may be willing to offer their time and resources to support the needy in the area and in the neighborhood. The Americans from the Rift Valley Academy are always ready to be used in empowering the community and giving back to

the community. Some have helped individually, but if well planned by the church more people would benefit. Some rural churches have limited resources which might be a challenge to support their people in the locality. However, they can still involve the able and willing persons within the region and the surrounding areas. The setting and availability of resources and personnel are enough to implement programs that can support the poor.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

This section discusses those who participated in the research. It begins by describing the criteria for selecting the participants and then gives a more detailed description of the participants and then gives a more detailed description of the participants. Finally, it discusses the ethical considerations for the research.

There are three sets of participants. The key informers were the regional chairmen. The rest are local pastors and leaders in Kijabe region. Since the chairmen have great influence (Sensing Loc. 2270), five were selected using purposive sampling. Since the regional chairmen are the policymakers, their involvement and insight are significant in implementing programs. The rest of the pastors and leaders are also essential for the research because they are the people who are connected to the parishioners. They are easily accessible whenever the congregants have a challenge or need clarification about something. The local pastors and leaders in the region were selected randomly and had the freedom to participate in the survey. The leaders in the area have rich experience regarding those who are suffering and need help, so their participation in this study added value and credibility.

One hundred people were selected to participate in the survey. To allow views from diverse people (Sensing Loc. 2287). The following criteria were considered: marital status, time

of service, age, level of theological training, gender, position in the church, and the level of poverty in the local church.

Description of Participants

Bishop Paul Manyara has been the regional chairman for the last six years. Before his installation on June 30th 2018 as a Bishop, he was both the regional chairman and also the senior pastor in Riruta local church near Nairobi. He is the spiritual father and the highest administrator of Kijabe Area and. He is aged about 53 years, most influential, and his insight was of great use in the research. Codes were used to avoid revealing his name and views relating to poverty issues.

The other participants and informants are the leaders and pastors of local churches in Limuru, Kijabe, Bibirioni, Kiambu, and Kikuyu Districts. All the pastors have been in charge of their congregations for several years. To be a pastor in A.I.C. one must have at least a Diploma from a Theological College recognized by Africa Inland Church Kenya (Constitution 8). The leaders must be in good standing order. They must also be approved by the local church council (Constitution 9). All the participants were aged between 25-65 years.

Ethical Considerations

For ethical considerations, the research undertook to comply with all standards of research on human subject. First, enough time was spent explaining the importance of the study, both for the kingdom of God and to the fellow human beings. The understanding of the significance of the study enhanced the individuals' participation in the research and led them to encourage the parishioners to take part in the implementation of the program. Secondly, participation was voluntary. The informants were asked to sign the consent form to partake in the research. The author ensured the confidentiality of the participants' views. The names of the

participants were not used. Instead pseudonyms and codes were utilized (Mugenda, Mugenda 203). Therefore, no one but the researcher knew what they shared. All the information was kept in a locked drawer.

Instrumentation

The study used two instruments to collect data—interviewed and surveys. The interviews were used only to obtain data from the District chairmen. The interview had five questions which were open-ended in nature and did not need much explanation. The researcher designed a survey with ten questions. The questions both in the interview schedules and the survey were developed with the aim of answering the three research questions.

Reliability and Validity of Project Design

The researcher valued reliability and therefore took enough time to explain what was needed in the study. He clarified where it was not clear and answered any questions related to the interview and the survey. The researcher was the leader and interviewer of the entire project to enhance quality data and enhanced participation.

To ensure quality data, the researcher allowed some breaks with the interviewees and the survey since fatigue can trigger the participant to answer just for the sake of answering (Mugenda and Mugenda 95). For reliability purposes, the informants were asked to take part in the interview and the survey when they felt ready and comfortable in a safe environment. The results of the project can be affected if the participants respond to the interviewer in, “an unexpected or unfavorable way” (Sensing Loc.224).

According to William, “validity is the extent to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well founded and likely to correspond accurately to the real world based on probability” (William 105). The denomination has uniformity in how things are done. In this

regard, if this research is conducted in a different region and area, the results would almost be the same. The numbers may be different, but the results, the challenges and and views would be similar.

Procedure for Data Collection

The results of a project depend on how the data was collected, and therefore the researcher undertook all necessary precautions (Sensing 224). All the instruments and tools required for the study were set before starting to collect the data. If proper precautions had not been taken, the whole process would have fallen into jeopardy (Sensing Loc. 2406).

Before the commencement of the data collection process, I applied for approval by Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Asbury Theological Seminary. After the evaluation of the application, I was cleared by the Institutional Research Board through the Seminary. I also obtained a permit from the National Commission for Science and Innovation (NACOSTI) in Kenya. This is the government office responsible for research conducted in the country that grants a license to those who qualify. They offer two letters, one to be submitted to the Ministry of education in the county and the other to be used by the researcher when collecting data from the field.

The data for this study was collected in selected areas within Kijabe region of Africa Inland church. To obtain the data, interview schedules and surveys were used. The interviews were scheduled and conducted with the regional chairmen. The interview consisted of five questions that were intended to answer the three research questions. The researchers purposely selected five leaders within Kijabe region to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in different places depending on the interviewee's choice, availability, and convenience. Most preferred the interview to be held in an enclosed office with no one else present. Since the

regional chairmen are vital people in implementing programs in the region, their ideas and views were essential and necessary for this research.

The other data for the project was collected by using surveys that were administered to local church pastors and lay leaders who had been randomly selected from Kijabe region. The survey was conducted in different places depending on the participants' availability. The survey had ten questions, which were self-administered. The researcher made himself available to clarify any unclear information or questions asked by the participant (Chandran 118).

Procedure for Data Analysis

The research used a pre-intervention method to know the understanding and the knowledge of leaders dealing with poverty eradication in Africa Inland Church Kijabe region. All the information gathered from literature, books, journals, surveys, and interviews formed part of the collected data. A mixed method of data collection was used. Since there was a lot of data collected, it was hard to interpret the information in the original form, and therefore it was grouped and coded before it was analyzed.

Data analysis required several systematic steps. First, the information needed to be grouped, and recorded in a systematic order (Kombo 110), depending on how the data was collected. Editing was also crucial to avoid recording wrong information but being careful not to change the intended meaning. The data collected was coded with numerals. The study used the following codes for the surveys: R1-LCA-001; R2-LCA-001; R3-LCA-002; R4-LCA-003; R4-LCA-004. The coding was only known by the researcher. The codes were used to present the findings since the real names of the participants were not used. The coding ensured the confidentiality of the informants. The information gathered was grouped according to the

purpose statement and research questions. Both qualitative and quantitative method was used to analyze data. The data collected was presented using charts, tables and graphs.

After processing the data, the next step was data analysis. Data analysis is a process of examining the information from the field and using research instruments to bring meanings. It also involves critically examining the coded data to get the meaning used in the study (Kombo 110). The data from the interview and surveys were analyzed separately and recorded appropriately.

The data from the survey was largely qualitative. Kombo (118) argues that the qualitative data is useful since it offers the exact views and feelings of participants on specific issues which are not always expressible in quantitative forms. The research questions were formulated to give the information. While cleaning up the data, any repeated words and phrases were noted and later helped to formulate the conclusions of the study. The surveys used to collect data provided the researcher with a useful set of information. The questions which allowed responses in a set of agree, disagree, and strongly agree were about the following: Revising region policy about poverty; increasing financial literacy in the area; working closely with the country's government; seeking overseas donors; initiating savings and credit programs; integrating poverty eradication training in the Bible schools; and forming a committee to deal with economic empowerment in the region.

CHAPTER 4

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this study was to identify levels of knowledge training, and practice exhibited by pastors and leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in A.I.C., Kijabe Region, and to discern best practices for poverty eradication. This section presents the findings of the study based on the data analyzed with minimal interpretation. The results were presented in tables and graphs. The analyzed data was arranged under themes that reflect the research objectives and the three research questions which were: (1) What level of knowledge, training and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C. Kijabe Region? (2) What challenges have A.I.C. leaders experienced in dealing with poverty eradication in Kijabe region? (3) What practical steps need to be undertaken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing poverty in Kijabe Region? The demographic information of participants was outlined and included gender, age, theological training, duration in the church, and the position they hold in the church. The last portion is the summary of major findings as presented from the interview schedules and surveys.

Participants

The participants were A.I.C. leaders within Kijabe region. The study used two methods of data collection namely; surveys and interviews. The main informants were five and coded as KRMI-001, KRMI 002, KRMI-003, KRMI-004, and KRMI-005. KRMI was an abbreviation of Kijabe Region Main Informants. The main informants were District chairmen within Kijabe region. They were all men aged 45-60 years and have served for not less than five years as District chairmen. Their views are significant and were incorporated with findings from the surveys. A total of ninety-two surveys out of one hundred were returned.

The survey was the main method used for data collection in this study. The study had a one hundred surveys distributed to pastors and leaders within four Districts of Kijabe region. The study findings presented in Table 1 show that a response rate of 92.0% was achieved in the study. This was considered very adequate as per the assertions of (Kothari 43), that a response rate of 50% and above is considered adequate for a descriptive study. The following table shows the response rate for the study.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	92	92.0
Unreturned	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Demographic Information of the Respondents

The information contained in this section comprised the age, gender, educational level, duration they have been members of A.I.C. and the leadership position they hold in the church.

Gender of Respondents in the Surveys

The study findings as presented in Figure 4.1 showed that a majority of the respondents, 70.7% were male. Although women are not ordained, they are allowed in lay leadership positions though the number is still minimal. This fact is evident from the findings. The pie chart represents the gender of the respondents.

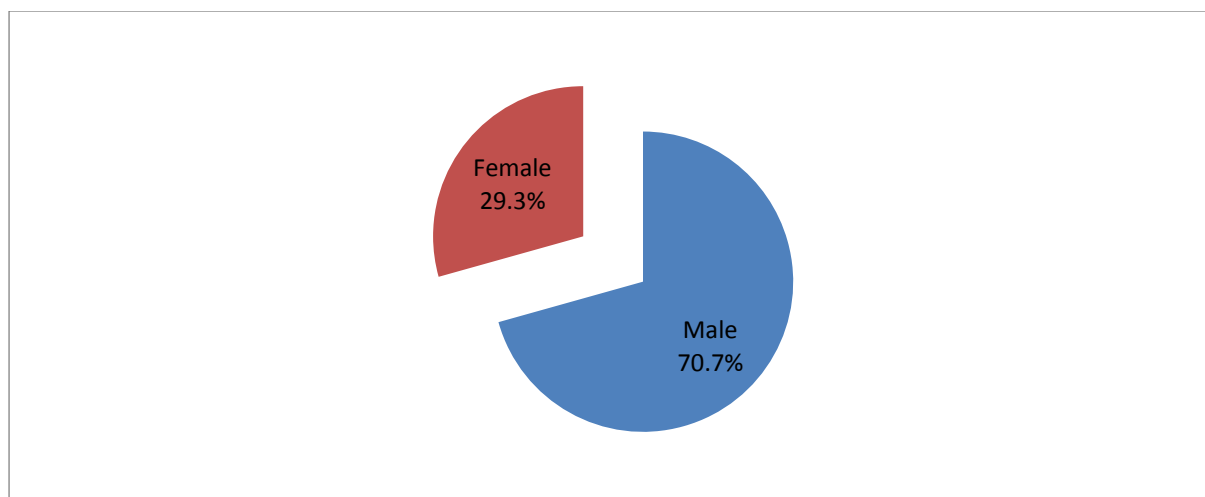


Figure 4.1 Gender of respondents

Age of Respondents

The results as presented in Figure 4.2 show that 41.3% (38) of the respondents were aged between 36 to 45years, 28.3% (26) were aged between 26 to 35years, 16.3% (16) indicated were aged between 46 to 55years, 9.8% were aged between 18 to 25 years while 4.3% (4) of the respondents indicated that they were aged 55years and above. The findings implied that a large number of the leaders/pastors at A.I.C. Kijabe Region were in their middle age.

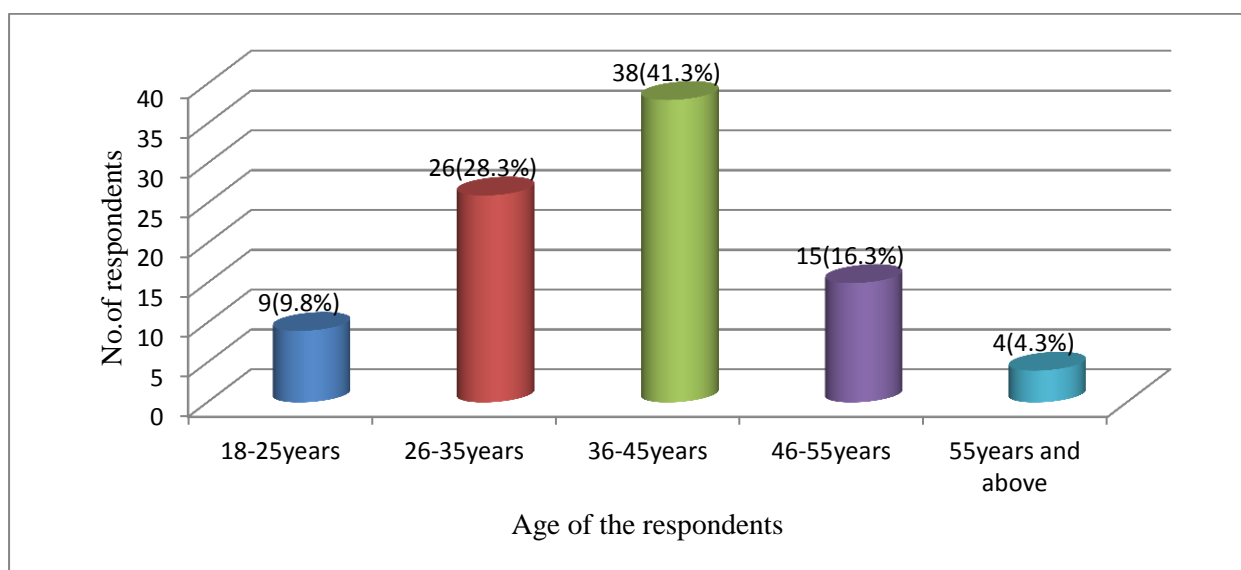


Figure 4.:2 Age of the respondents.

Theological Training

As shown in Figure 4.3, 40.2% (37) of the respondents had no theological training, 5.4% (5) had obtained training up to the certificate level, 40.2% (37) had training up to the diploma level, and 8.7% (8) had training up to the undergraduate level while 5.4% (5) of the respondents had training up to the postgraduate level. The findings implied that a large number of leaders/pastors at A.I.C. Kijabe Region had received some form of theological training and therefore, could comprehend the concepts under study besides being able to provide the required information. The educational level of the participant is presented in the following graph.

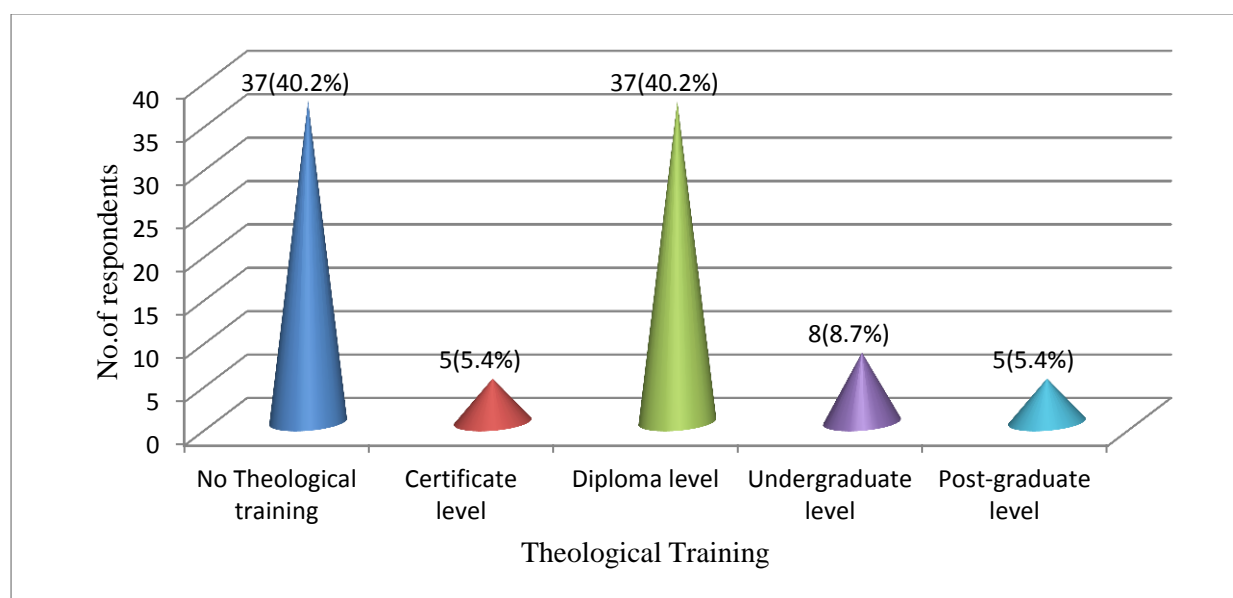


Figure 4.3 Theological training.

Duration in the Local Church

The results displayed in Figure 4.4 shows that 19.6% (18) of the respondents had been attached to their local churches for less than 5 years, 18.5% (17) had been members for 6 to 10 years while 10.9% (10) and 14.1% (13) of the respondents had been in their local churches for 11 to 15 years and 16 to 20 years respectively. Furthermore, 5.4% (5) of the respondents have been members in their local churches for 21 to 25 years, 12.0% (11) have been members for 26 to 30 years while 17.4% (16) of the respondents have been members for more than 30 years. The

findings implied that a large number of the leaders at A.I.C. Kijabe Region have been members in their local churches for a relatively longer period and hence they had rich information regarding the issues under study based on their vast experiences of activities in their churches.

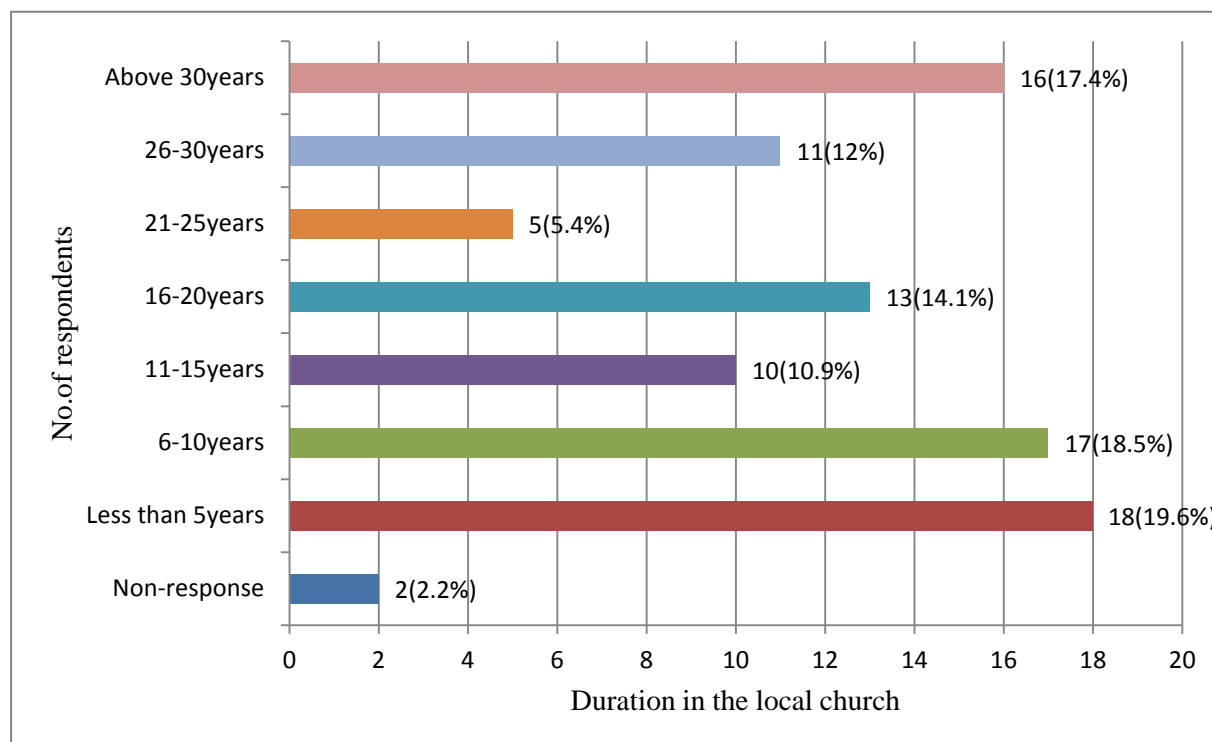


Figure 4.4 Duration in the local church.

Position in the Church

The participants were requested to indicate the position they hold in their respective churches within the district. The results presented in Figure 4.5 show that 33.7% (31) of the respondents served as pastors, 6.5% (6) served as deacons, 15.2% (14) were elders while 29.3% (27) served as departmental leaders and 15.2% (14) did not specify. These findings implied that the researcher was able to get the opinions of individuals serving in various positions in the church which enabled him to collect objective information.

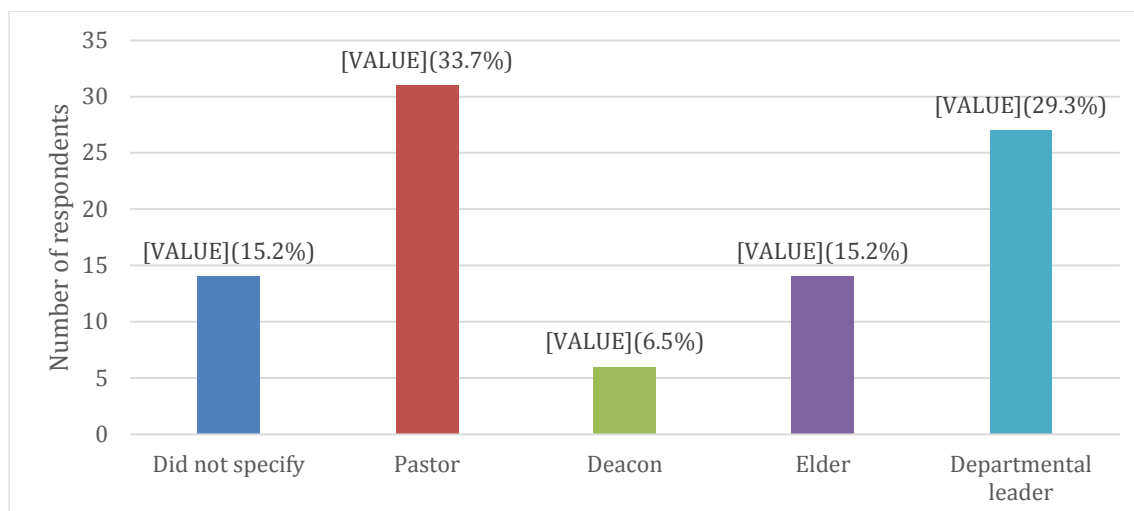


Figure 4.5 Position in the church.

Pastors' Duration of Service

The findings outlined in Figure 4.6 show that 41.9% of the pastors had served in their churches for less than 5 years, 19.4% had served for 5 to 10 years, and 35.5% of the pastors had served in their churches for 11 to 20 years while 3.23% had served for 21 to 30 years. These findings implied that a large number of the pastors had served in their churches for substantial duration of time.

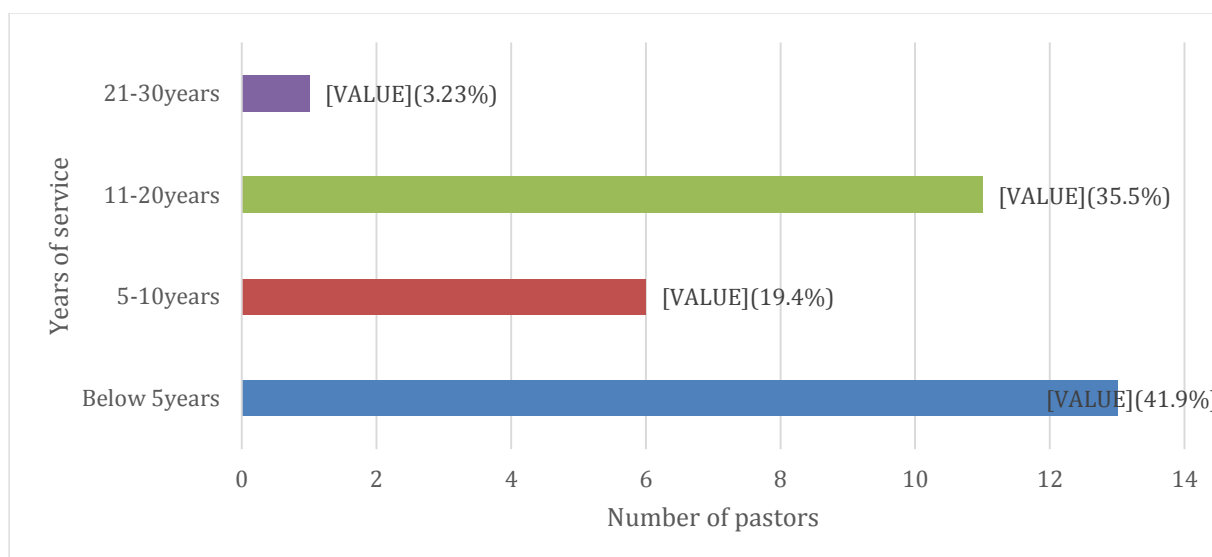


Figure 4.6 Pastors duration of service.

Poverty Levels within the Local Church

An item in the survey required the respondents to give their view on the extent of poverty in their local churches. The study results in Figure 4.7 reveal and shows that 45.7% (42) of the respondents noted that the poverty levels in their local churches was low, 46.7% (43) indicated that the levels were high while 4.3% (4) of the respondents noted that the poverty levels were very high and 3.3% (3) did not specify.

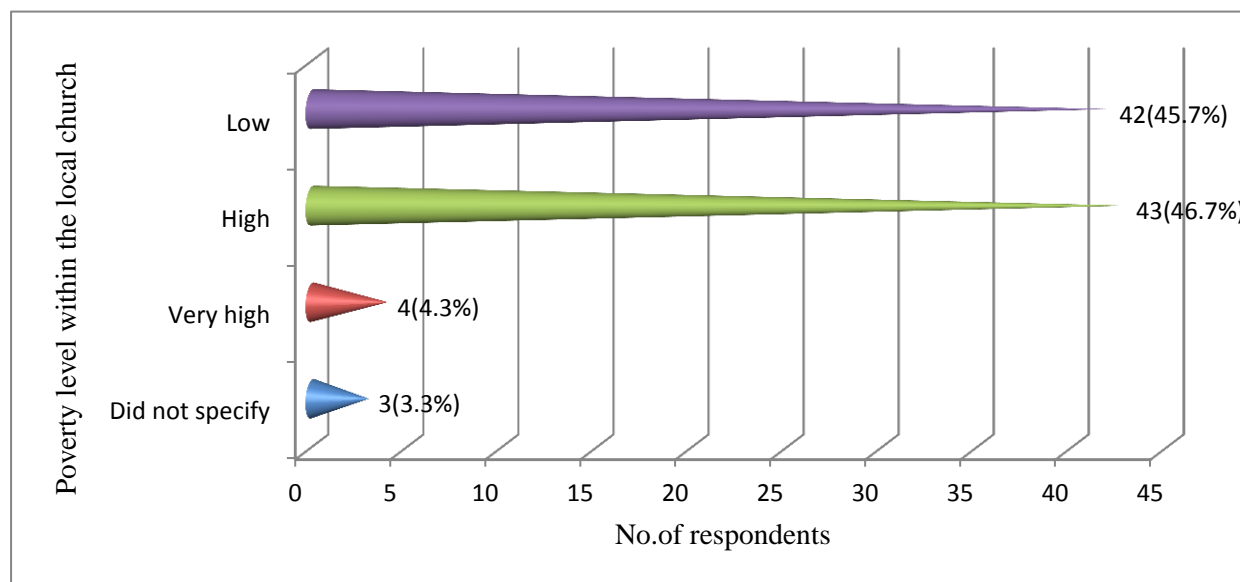


Figure 4.7: Poverty levels within the local church.

Research Question #1: Description of Evidence

Research question #1 asked, “What level of knowledge, training and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C. Kijabe Region?” To get the answers for this question the surveys and interviews were scheduled. The responses are organized into the following sub-headings.

Knowledge on Poverty Eradication Skills

The leaders were asked to gauge their knowledge on poverty eradication skills. The study results presented in Figure 4.8 show that 1.1% (1) of the leaders were unknowledgeable, 31.5% (29) were less knowledgeable, 50.0% (46) of the leaders were knowledgeable while 7.6% (7) of the leaders noted that they were very knowledgeable on poverty eradicating skills. 9.8% (9) of the leaders did not specify their knowledge levels on poverty eradication.

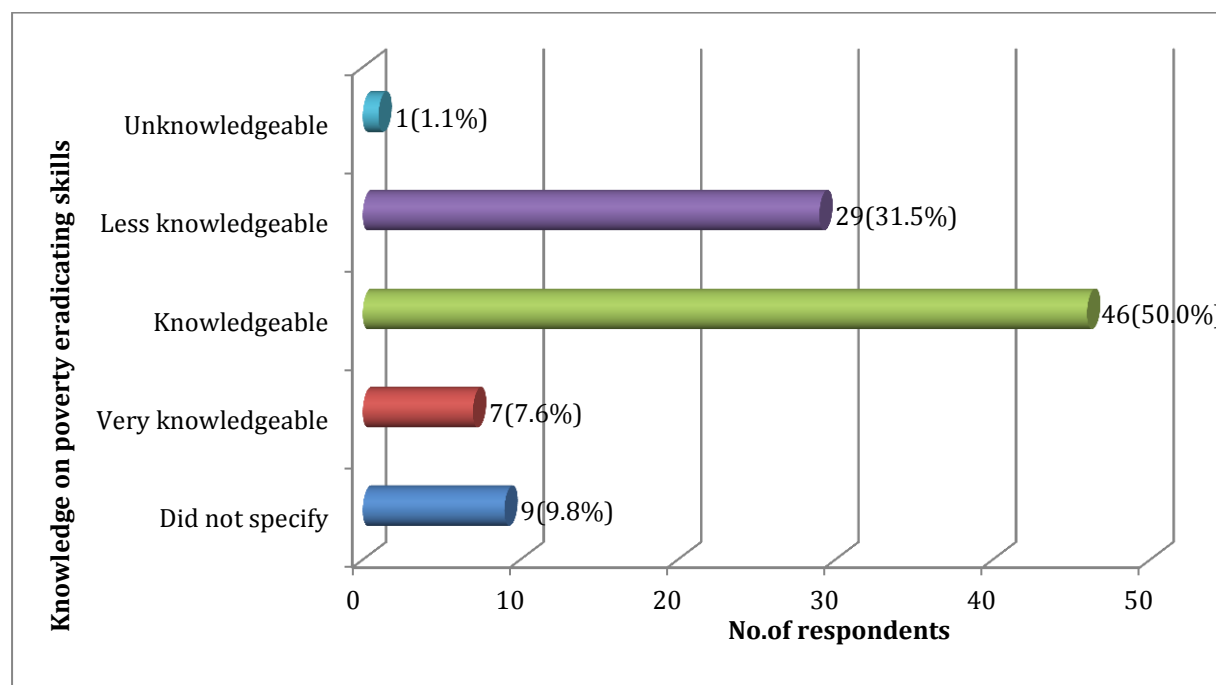


Figure 4. 8 Knowledge on poverty eradication skills.

Training on Poverty Eradication/Economic Empowerment among Pastors

The assessment of the pastors' level of training on poverty eradication in Bible Schools revealed that majority of the pastors had received little training. The findings are as presented in Figure 4.9 shows that, 58.1% (18) had little training, 29.0 (9) had received much training, 3.23 (1) had received quite much and 9.7% (3) never got any training.

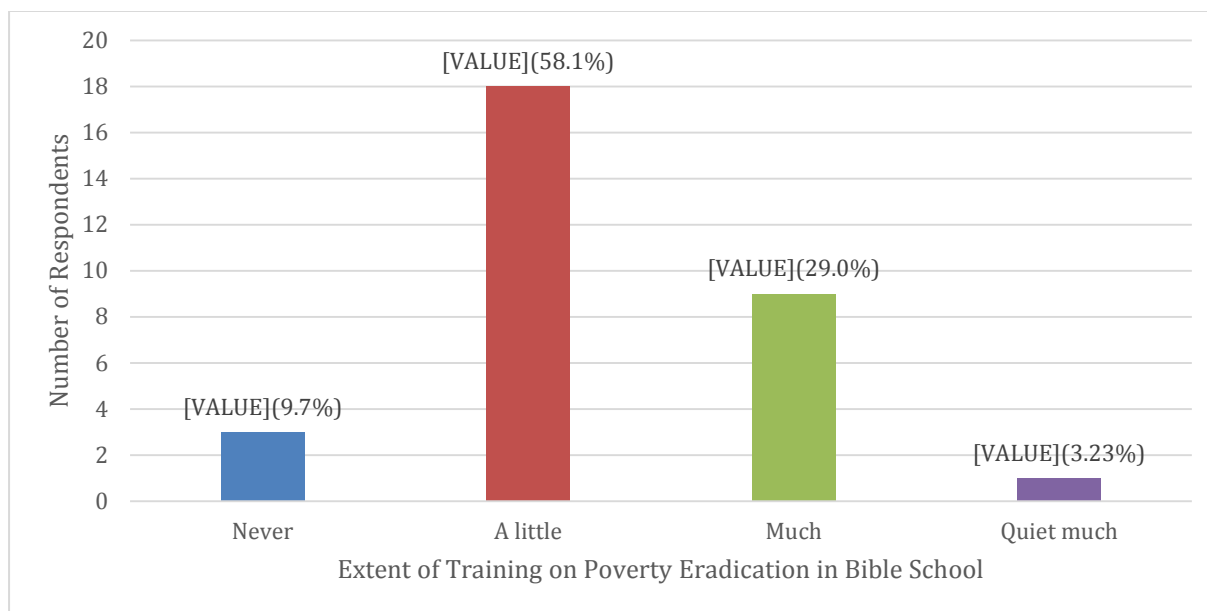


Figure 4.9 Training on poverty eradication/economic empowerment among pastors.

These findings were supported by the views of the KIIs where one of them stated that there were no established courses meant specifically for training pastors on poverty eradication while another noted that poverty eradication had not been integrated in the training offered in these Bible Schools. Another KII added that much of the content offered in these institutions were Bible centered and did not address the issues geared towards poverty eradication. The statistics indicate that poverty training is lacking in most A.I.C. seminaries.

On-job Training/Seminar on Poverty Eradication/Economic Empowerment

The study sought to find out if the leaders had attended any on-job training/seminars organized by their district on poverty eradication in the last two years. As shown in Figure 4.10 a majority of the leaders, 75.0% (69) had not attended any of these training/seminars. 18.5% (17) had attended on job training/seminars and 6.5% (6) did not specify.

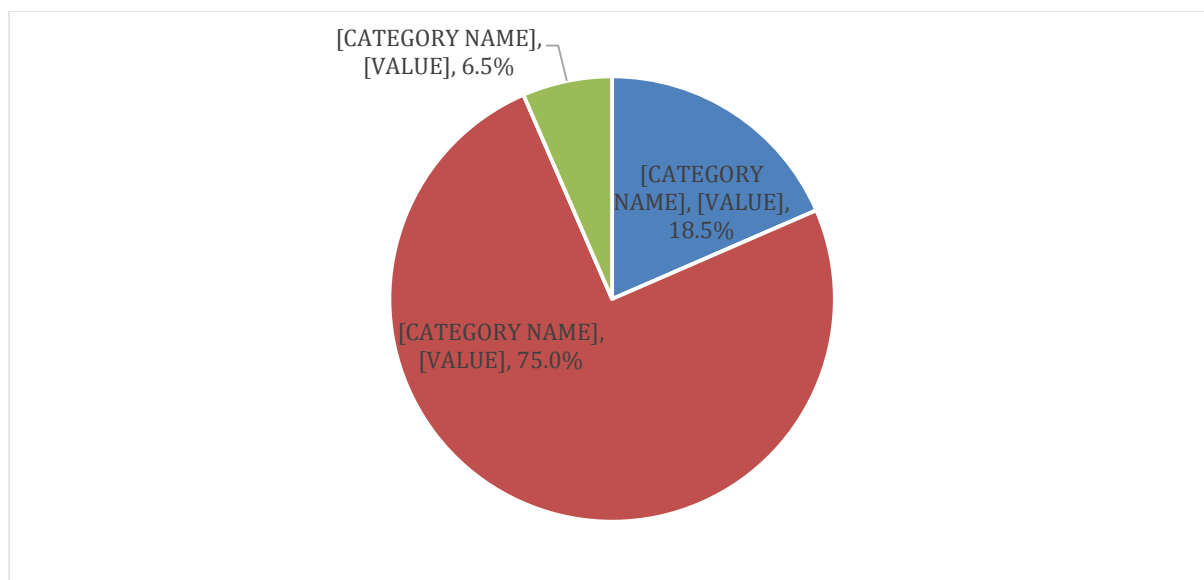


Figure 10: On-job training on poverty eradication/economic empowerment.

Those who had attended training noted that various issues were handled. Among them were credit access, women and youth empowerment, farming, management of finances, income generation activities/opportunities, economic development issues, project start-ups, and sustainable development goals. However they registered their frustrations in that they were not guided on how to implement the great ideas neither were they taught how and where to get the capital.

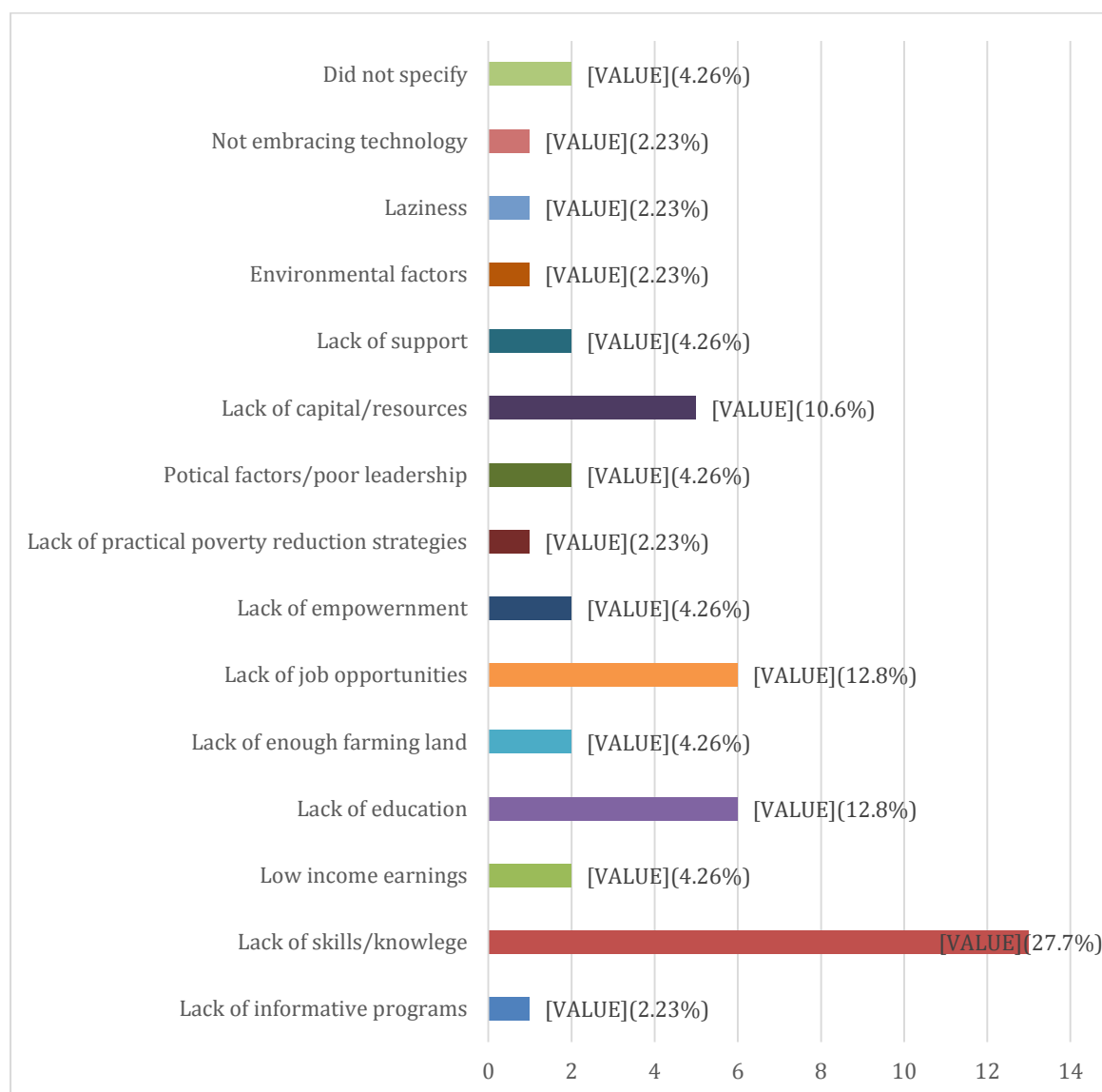
Research Question #2: Description of Evidence

Research question #2 asked, “What were the challenges that A.I.C. leaders experienced in dealing with poverty eradication in Kijabe region?”

Factors Contributing to High Poverty Levels among Congregants

Suggestions given by the respondents pertaining to the factors contributing to high poverty levels among congregants of A.I.C. Kijabe Region are outlined in Figure 4.11. The emerging factors included the lack of informative programs on economic empowerment 2.23%

(1) lack of skills and knowledge, 27.7% (13), low income earnings 4.26% (2), lack of education 12.8% (6), lack of adequate farming land 4.26% (2), lack of job opportunities 12.8% (6), lack of empowerment 4.26% (2), lack of practical poverty reduction strategies 2.23%, (1) political factors/poor leadership/self-centered leaders 4.26% (2), lack of capital/resources for setting up income generating activities 10.6% (5), lack of support 4.26% (2), environmental factors 2.23% (1), laziness 2.23% (1) and failure to embrace technological changes 2.23% (1).



Figure

4.11: Factors contributing to high poverty levels among congregants.

Hearing Messages Aimed at Poverty Eradication

The leaders, other than the pastors were asked to indicate how often they heard messages aimed at poverty eradication in their local churches. The study findings as displayed in Figure 4.12 show that majority of the leaders, 59.8% (55), rarely heard messages about poverty eradication, 14.1% (13) often heard the messages, 10.9% (10) never heard and 12% (11) did not respond.

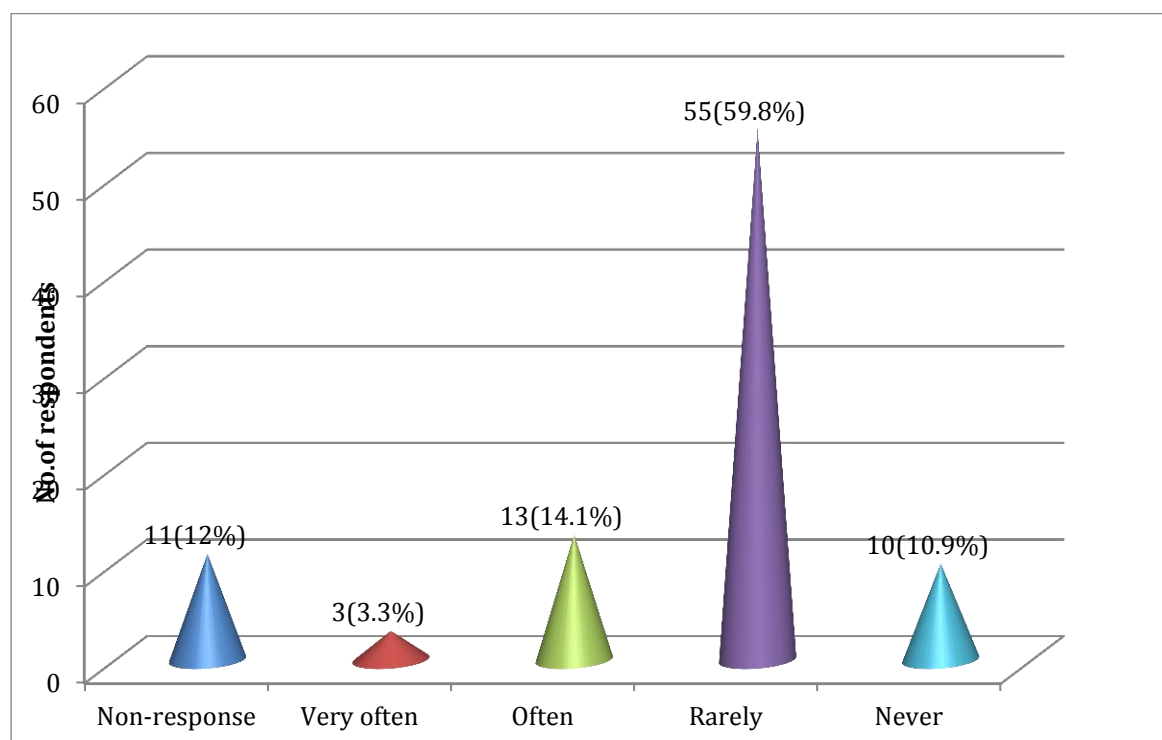


Figure 4.12 Hearing messages aimed at economic empowerment.

Frequency of Pastors Preaching about Poverty Eradication

The pastors were asked to indicate how often they deliver messages related to poverty eradication. As shown in Figure 4.13, majority of the pastors, 74.2% (23) indicated that they rarely preached on poverty eradication, 16.1% (5) often preach on poverty eradication, 3.2% (1) very often preach about poverty eradication and 6.45% (2) have never preached on the subject. The findings are graphically represented below.

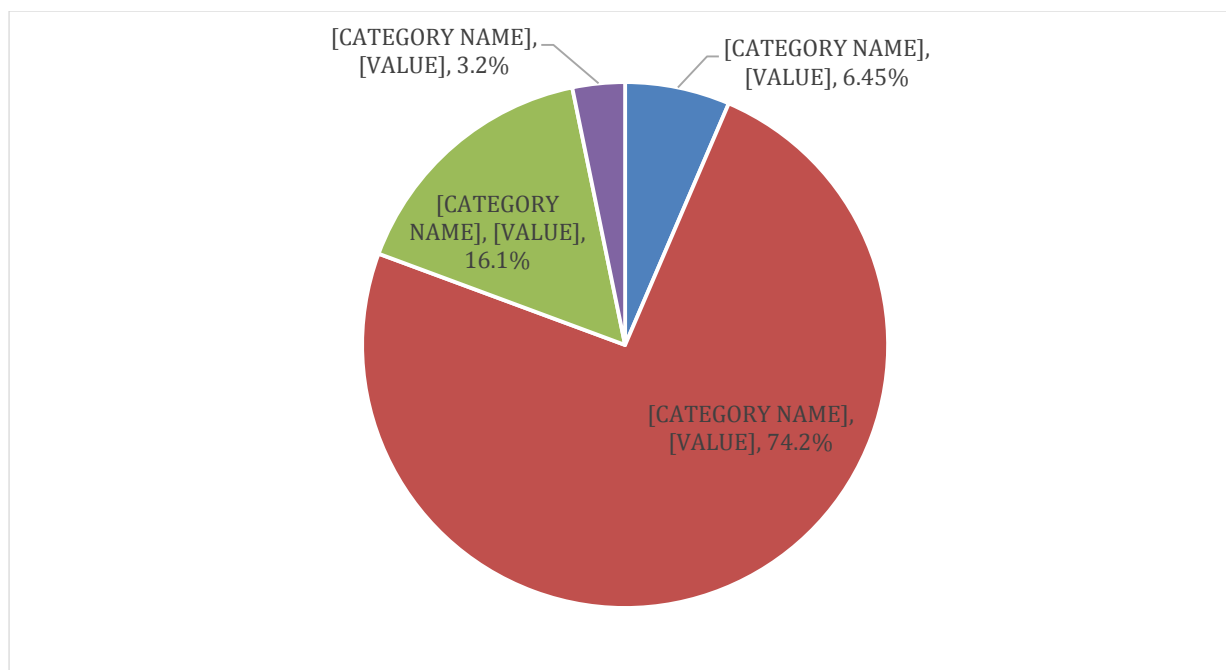


Figure 4.13: How often pastors preached about poverty eradication.

Rarely or never preaching on economic empowerment was linked to existing church setup, lack of interest, greater focus on faith and spiritual growth, lack of capital, low appreciation by congregants, one time preaching, lack of preaching materials, as well as lack of follow up once preached. Those who preached often noted that they focused on feeding programs and empowering the community. Most had invited individuals from outside to offer such messages.

Existence of Economic Empowerment Programs in Local Churches

The findings presented in Figure 4.14 show that majority of the leaders 72.8% (67), stated that their local churches did not run any program towards poverty eradication to the members and the community, 22.8% (21) indicated that their churches had some poverty eradication programs and 4.3% (4) did not specify. The findings are presented in the following pie chart.

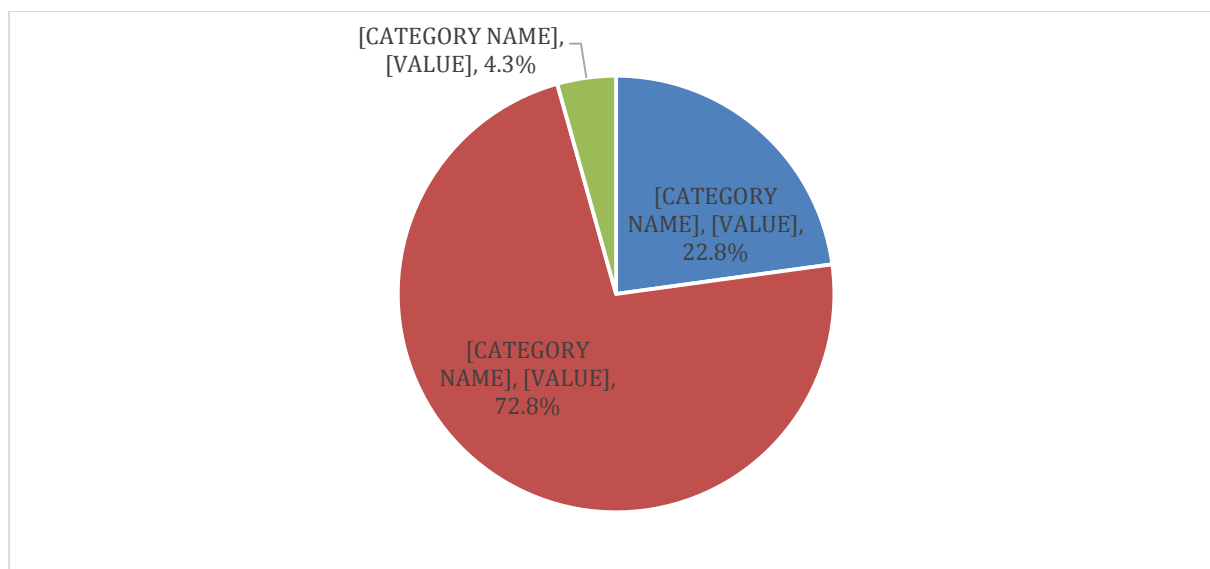


Figure 4.14 Existence of economic empowerment programs in the local churches.

Churches which run such programs carried out initiatives that facilitated the formation of farming group, offered feeding programs, engaged in income generating projects, offered free primary education, employed people to work in their schools, offered catering lessons, reared pig projects, forming of saving and credit cooperative society (sacco), and conducted seminars meant for training farmers.

Existence of Economic Empowerment Programs in the District/Region

The leaders were asked to indicate the existence of poverty eradication programs in their district. The study findings displayed in Figure 4.15 show that 47.8% (44) of the leaders indicated there were no programs for eradicating poverty in their district, 21.7% (20) indicated that there were such programs in their district while 27.2% (25) of the leaders stated that they did not know whether such programs existed in their district. Those who stated that such programs existed in their region outlined a number of programs. These programs included constructing schools to provide education in the community, forming savings and credit cooperative society(sacco) and liaising with banks to give out loans to members, encouraging agricultural

activities especially through group farming, carrying out healthy feeding programs, assisting members to start self-help groups, empowering youth and enabling communities to tap existing government initiatives. It was also noted that the church had partnered with some non-governmental organizations such as Partners Worldwide, Farming God's way and government entities to support various initiatives.

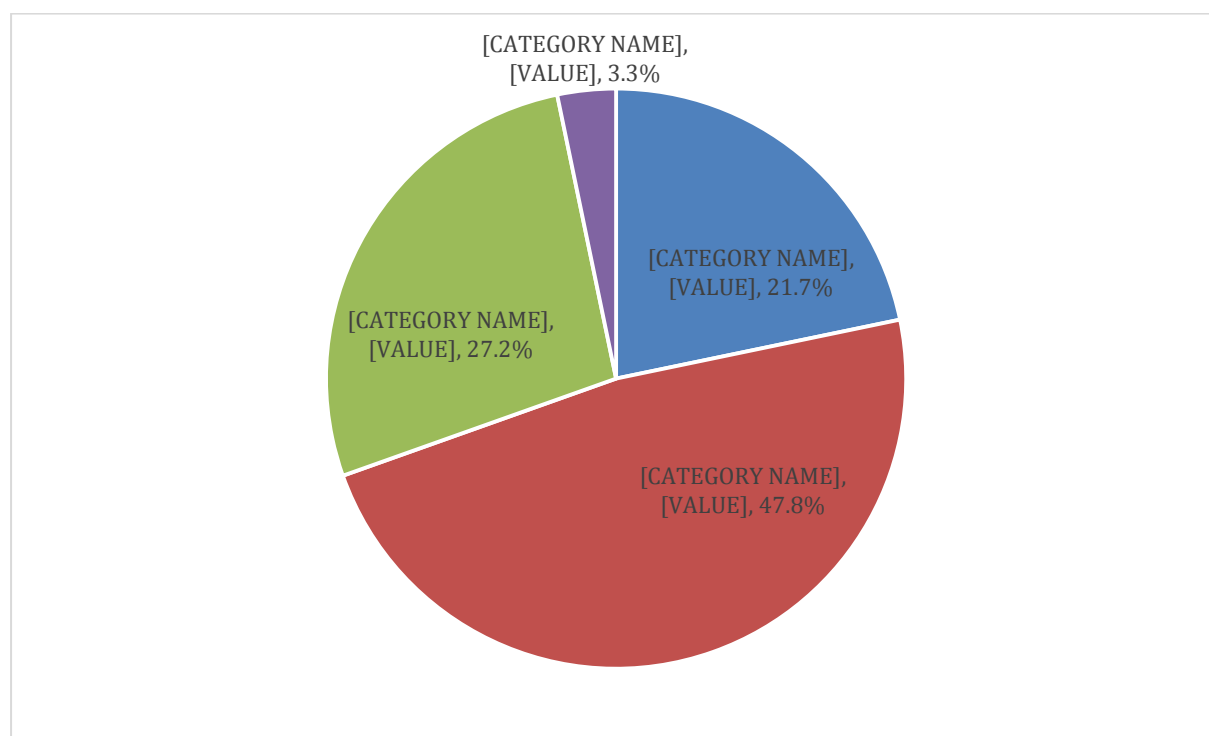


Figure 4.15 Existence of Economic Empowerment Programs in the District/Region

Responses from the KRM1 show that failure to have economic empowerment programs in A.I.C. District/Region for church members and the community was attributed to lack of direct involvement in empowerment programs by the church and that involvement occurred only when a family had a desperate need where the church leadership encouraged the parishioners to participate in supporting these families.

The KRM2 who noted that A.I.C. District had economic empowerment programs highlighted that at the church level, programs meant to encourage church members to have diligence in their manual work and small businesses had been instituted. At the community level, the KRM3 noted that, “We have supported community members working on their farms and have formed micro-finance institutions lending loans to members as well as providing opportunities for members’ savings. Members use the borrowed loans to run their small scale businesses” (KRM3). According to the informants, there is a need of implementing programs which might improve the economic status of the church members and the community.

Research Question #3 Description of Evidence

Research question #3 asked, “What practical steps need to be taken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing the problem of poverty in Kijabe Region? The informants were asked to suggest some of the practical steps which can be undertaken to help deal with poverty in Kijabe region.

The leaders were asked to assess the suitability of a number of steps towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment in A.I.C. Kijabe region. The findings as shown in Table 2 show that majority of the leaders 97.80%, agreed that there should be revision of the region/district’s policy to accommodate poverty eradication initiatives. The study also revealed that majority of the leaders/pastors, 96.50%, agreed that there should be increased financial literacy in the region among leaders and members. The findings also showed that majority of the leaders, 98.90%, agreed that there should be an annual economic empowerment Sunday in the region/District.

The results further showed that the majority of the leaders 93.10%, agreed that the A.I.C. Kijabe Region should work closely with the County Government in poverty eradication in the

community. On the other hand, the majority of the leaders 52.90%, did not agree that the church should aggressively seek overseas donor support in poverty eradication. The study also revealed that the majority of the leaders, 96.60%, agreed that the church should initiate saving and credit programs at various levels (locals church, district and region) for members. Also, the majority of the leaders, 98.80% agreed that there should be integration of poverty eradication training in Bible schools within the region. The study findings further showed that the majority of the leaders 95.20%, agreed that there should be a committee to deal with economic empowerment in the district/region.

The results reveal that the overall mean of responses was 2.397 and a standard deviation of 0.575. The findings implied that on average, leaders agreed with most of the statements pertaining to the outlined steps to be taken towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment at A.I.C. Kijabe Region and their responses were varied. The highest mean of responses score was associated with integrating poverty eradication training in Bible Schools within the region. ($M=2.644$, $SD=0.505$) while the lowest mean score was associated with aggressively seeking overseas donor support in poverty eradication ($M=1.586$, $SD=0.691$).

Table 4.2 Steps to Be Taken towards Poverty Eradication.

Steps to be taken towards Poverty Eradication	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Revise the region/district's policy to accommodate poverty eradication initiatives.	2.30%	36.40%	61.40%	2.591	0.539
Increase financial literacy in the region among leaders and members.	3.40%	42.50%	54.00%	2.506	0.568
Have an annual economic empowerment Sunday in the region/district.	1.10%	55.20%	43.70%	2.425	0.520
Work closely with the county government in poverty eradication in the community.	7.00%	41.90%	51.20%	2.442	0.625
Aggressively seek overseas donor support in poverty eradication.	52.90%	35.60%	11.50%	1.586	0.691
Initiate Saving and Credit programs at various levels (Local Church, District and Region) for members.	3.40%	39.10%	57.50%	2.540	0.567
Integrate poverty eradication training in Bible Schools within the region.	1.10%	33.30%	65.50%	2.644	0.505
Have a committee to deal with economic empowerment in the District/Region	4.80%	46.40%	48.80%	2.440	0.588
Average				2.397	0.575

Leaders' Suggestions about Steps to Taken Towards Poverty Eradication

The leaders were asked to state other important steps towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment in A.I.C. Kijabe region. Some of the steps suggested included increased introduction of income generating activities such as farming of fruits, vegetables and also milk production to create employment opportunities for local residents, increasing civic education, conducting more research on poverty related issues in the area, organizing community open days to promote business activities in the community, encouraging unity among leaders as well as instilling entrepreneurship mindsets early in enough among

congregants. It was also suggested that local churches can engage successful persons in empowering the locals, include such empowerment talks in church meetings, buying land and selling it to members and also sensitizing the community about existing opportunities in the county.

Other suggestions included fundraising and initiating projects meant to improve the living standards of the needy; youth empowerment; diversifying revenue sources to support existing programs; encouraging entrepreneurship; and reducing overdependence on missionaries/donations and instead focusing on viable Income Generating Activities. Other suggestions were that local committees could be created to assess pertinent issues regarding poverty eradication in the region, that there should be a concrete framework for implementing any suggested empowerment initiatives, and that such initiatives should aim at addressing the root causes of poverty in the region.

The leaders also suggested the continuous formation of church based savings and cooperative society (sacco) and self-help groups, engaging other stakeholders such as non-government organizations, encouraging community development projects as well as offering short term training/capacity development courses. Some leaders suggested that locals could be helped in finding markets for their products, that business and entrepreneurial trained leaders who are readily available in the community could be engaged, and that locals needed to be educated on Biblical principles giving guidance on finances, for instance, tithing and supporting the needy. Preaching love for neighbors, advocating for local representation in the local institutions such as hospitals, schools and integration of communities were also suggested as important steps towards poverty eradication in A.I.C. Kijabe region.

Chairpersons' Suggestions and Practical Steps towards Poverty Eradication

Suggestions given by the KIIs included the sensitization of church and community members on how to eradicate poverty in their society, encouraging hard work among members as well as training personnel who would assist members and the community on modern farming methods and venturing in to business. One of the KIIs suggested that A.I.C. Kijabe Region should identify viable groups within the church in order to empower them through fundraising and marketing of their projects and that the region should encourage community members in diaspora to give back to their communities. Another KII suggested that generosity kitties should be introduced for members to be giving each week, that each church should start income generating activities (IGAs) to support the needy besides helping these needy groups to get education so that they can have a better future. One of the KIIs encouraged setting up a specific day for a special collection in each church.

Views on the involvement in Poverty Eradication among church members.

The researcher sought the views of regional Chairperson and the district chairpersons of selected churches in A.I.C. Kijabe Region on the involvement of A.I.C. Kijabe Region in poverty eradication among church members and the community. One of the chairpersons emphasized that:

There should be proper utilization of church resources especially land and expansion of the existing projects in order to create more employment opportunities for church members and the community. Investments on training and workshops on poverty eradication should be undertaken and bureaucracies that hamper the growth of the already existing programs should be avoided. Available sceneries could be utilized as centers for tourist attractions (KRM1).

Another chairperson suggested that the church can facilitate educational sessions on poverty eradication activities or projects. The church can also give individuals seed money to start small scale businesses. It can also link the rich and the poor so that the poor can be

supported to get jobs or contracts that will empower them economically. The church can also start income generating activities and provide employment to the poor in their congregations (KRM2)

Another chairperson suggested that, “The A.I.C. Kijabe Region should bear in mind that it is its responsibility to be all-round in meeting the needs of the society among them making people aware of how to live a better life.” (KRM 4). The above response indicates that A.I.C. Kijabe region needs to implement programs to fight poverty.

Summary of Major Findings

The study’s aim was to identify levels of knowledge, training, and practice exhibited by the pastors and leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in A.I.C., Kijabe Region, and to discern best practices for poverty eradication. If leaders teach, preach and implement programs of poverty eradication within the region, the number of people living with dire need may reduce. To get the required information, the research used three study questions. First, the study sought to understand what level of knowledge, training and practice of poverty eradication is exhibited by leaders in A.I.C. Kijabe Region. Second, the study sought to know what are challenges A.I.C. leaders have experienced in poverty eradication in Kijabe region. Last, the study explored practical steps needed to be taken by leaders to position A.I.C. in addressing the problem of poverty in Kijabe Region. Based on the evidence information given by participants, the study found that:

1. There is little training on poverty eradication in A.I.C. Kijabe region. Many of the respondents indicated that they have not received poverty eradication training in the Bible College. The lack of training has contributed to minimal participation in poverty eradication in the district.

2. The main challenge of not being active in poverty eradication is a lack of such programs in the district. Many of the respondents indicated that there were no operating programs to emulate. The lack of examples limits the possibility of starting a program and makes the churches think that poverty eradication is not part of their mission.
3. Many leaders would like to be involved in programs which can lower the rate of poverty among the church members and the community. Many respondents suggested the need of investing in training and workshops about poverty eradication activities.
4. A poverty eradication committee will enhance smooth learning of the programs in the district. People are passionate about wanting to participate in the fight against poverty within the district. The number of the people willing to be involved is high with only a few not sure how to go about it.
5. Training and starting income generating activities are major steps towards poverty eradication in the district. Leaders of A.I.C. Kijabe region were positive about implementation of programs which can boost their income. To start such programs requires good planning and involving the experts. More practical steps to be followed to start income generating activities include; Economic empowerment education to parishioners, forming poverty eradication committees in the district, partnering with local programs dealing with poverty from the government and non-profit organizations, and earnestly praying for the program.

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

Overview of the Chapter

The goal of this study was to evaluate the experience and approaches of leaders in A.I.C., Kijabe region in addressing poverty eradication. The hope is that we can discern the most effective approaches for eradicating poverty within our specific socioeconomic and cultural context. The focus of this study was inspired by the fact that A.I.C. is among the largest denominations with an overt mission to fulfill the Great Commission, yet the church seems to lag behind in regards to creative poverty eradication programs. The findings reveal that many people would like to be involved in programs which would improve the economic condition of church members who experience poverty if they were effectively trained in theory and practice.

The research in this study was focused largely on the levels of understanding in performing holistic ministry and implementing practices in the Africa Inland Church (A.I.C.) Kijabe region. This chapter focuses on evaluating the study's central findings and how they relate to the researcher's observation, the literature review, and the biblical and theological aspects of the project. The second part of the chapter seeks to explore the limitations of the study, along with the unexpected observations and recommendations for further exploration in regards to the proposed program.

Major Findings

Most Leaders Lack Training on Poverty Eradication.

I have been a member and a pastor of Africa Inland Church for many years in Kijabe region. For more than six years, and I have also been an adjunct professor at A.I.C. Moffat Bible College. During my years of service in these religious and academic institutions, I have not observed many efforts to engage and address poverty eradication. Although the denomination has started some schools and hospitals, they have little regarding holistic ministry. The A.I.C. church is among the biggest denomination in Kenya, and therefore its impact in regard to social work should be felt qualitatively and quantitatively. This should particularly be the case in Kijabe region where missionaries first settled in central Kenya. With deeper roots that should have produced more fruit by this time. The findings reveal that few leaders have attended training on poverty eradication. Moreover, the few who have had some training appear not to have received enough information about economic empowerment.

The findings in the data clearly indicate that the number of leaders who have attended economic empowerment training is very low. The data also reflects the low number of attendees for a seminar addressing poverty eradication. According to surveys completed by attendees, 70% indicated that they have never attended such training. The 18% who did attend emphasized their frustration in not being trained or guided about how to implement what they were learning, such as how to obtain money to start generating programs.

The deficiency in sermons that focus on encouraging people to get involved in holistic ministry is a problem. Interviews and surveys reveal that that very few pastors preach a message aimed at economic empowerment. Seventy-four percent indicated that they have never preached such messages, while 16% said that they have preached such a sermon but not extensively. It is vital for church leaders to address these issues only since congregants, particularly in my

African context, gain knowledge and inspiration from their pastors. If the congregants rarely hear or see examples from their leaders regarding the importance of programs and approaches for fighting poverty, they are less likely to get involved. With that in mind, consistent preaching and training about economic empowerment and eradicating poverty might enlighten and inspire congregants, encouraging them to participate in or start such programs.

In the literature review, I discuss that the church in Africa and Kenya, though increasing numerically, does very little regarding poverty eradication programs. The church in Kenya mainly emphasizes the after life and often forgets to address the physical needs of people in the life now. When the missionaries came to Kenya, they concentrated on heavenly matters and stressed little about empowerment. It is unfortunate that many churches only deal with spiritual matters and assume that all other needs should be addressed by secular organizations. A significant percentage of offerings are for missions and evangelistic campaigns with very little resources going to help impoverished and needy.

Lack of adequate training in Bible colleges about economic empowerment was confirmed by different participants both from the surveys and interviews. Out of 100 surveys conducted, 58.1% indicated that they received very little training in Bible college, while 9.7% responded that they did not have any training, and only 3.23% believed that they had “enough” training. Little or no training was consistent in both the surveys and interviews, which is a major hindrance to approaching poverty eradication programs. All other barriers were connected to lack of enough training since no one would start something they had not learned.

The literature review found many writers advocating the need for including development courses in seminaries and Bible schools. Alela (235) stressed the need for restructuring the curriculum of Bible schools and including relevant courses such as Christian anthropology,

change agent, leading development programs, studies in African realities, business education, agriculture, and environmental stewardship. When church leaders and pastors lack such important knowledge, the church will not have an effect in this needy world. Leaders who do not understand the needs of the church and have no required training will mislead the congregation. The church in Kenya needs trained and competent leaders who can implement God's mission in the world. The twenty-first century church in Africa requires leaders who have been fully prepared in seminaries to "preach the whole gospel to meet the needs of the whole person within the whole community so that we can have healthy relationships (with God, with each other, and with the environment)" (Alela 235).

Historically, the A.I.C. tradition has affected how today's church is conducting its business. The A.I.C. constitution states that the main aim of the early church Africa Inland Mission (A.I.M.) was to fulfill the Great Commission as stated in Mathew 28:19-20. They did not emphasize poverty eradication. The presiding Bishop Silas Yego of Africa Inland church reminded the congregants that the primary priority focus of the denomination is to proclaim the work of God to all humankind in the world. To them Christ is the only solution to their daily problems. While Jesus is the source of help, people should be taught how to be responsible. The task of the church is to teach the congregants on ways to grow holistically. Unfortunately, little is done to implement such teachings both in the seminary and in the churches. To help A.I.C. leaders to preach and teach about poverty eradication, the seminary curriculum must be changed to cater for the needs of people and be applicable in all sectors of life.

The theological and the biblical framework for this study advocated the need of implementing poverty eradication programs both to the church and the community. This was modeled in the Old Testament by the prophets and the law which instructed the people to be

considerate to the poor. The consideration of the poor and the needy in Leviticus 19 in the time of harvest shows a great example of what is required to help those in need. The advocacy of acting justly to the poor perhaps helped the poor to know their rights and ability to work on their own and thus improve the living standard. When supported, the poor may be able to raise their family as God intended. The prophets like Isaiah had a great concern for the oppressed and the poor. In the New Testament Jesus' teachings emphasized the need of taking care of the poor. Jesus reminded people that he had come to proclaim the good news to the poor and set free to the oppressed (Luke 4:18). The church is expected to emulate Jesus's example. Paul on the other hand reminded the Galatians to remember the poor and help them (Gal 2:10). Paul not only preached and encouraged people to give towards the needy but also worked hard to help the poor (Act 20:32-35). The biblical examples can be emulated and practiced by the church today.

Lack of Good Example a Major Hindrance to Full Participation in Poverty Eradication

The lack of examples in poverty eradication in Kijabe District was confirmed by the responses of different categories of participants in the study. Out of 100 surveys, 21.7% of the respondents indicated that there are poverty eradication programs in their district while 47.8% of the participants did not have programs. The lack of existing programs was often mentioned as a major barrier to having poverty eradication programs both in the survey and the interviews. Many other barriers to having poverty eradication programs, including lack of skills, were intertwined with the lack of examples. While the local church might be willing to have an economic program among the congregation, it does not have good examples to follow or adequate instruction. Within an African visual and oral context, people often learn best by watching someone doing it or through hands-on instruction (Moffit and Tesch 290). If the district

office had a pioneer program that could be transferred to the local churches, then many people are more likely to be motivated to start the same in their churches.

The literature stressed the need for applying 2 Tim. 2.2 in people's lives and to equip them for the task. Everyone needs to participate in the alleviation of poverty. Fountain Daniel (204) offers guidance as to what the church should do in the training process. Needs must be assessed to determine what people must be trained to do; it must be determined who is capable of being trained to meet those needs; and the actual training must be based on behavioral objectives (Fountain 204). Effective approaches to economic empowerment in Kenya will only happen when the people are well prepared in seminary and in the local churches. Helping the trainees implement programs will enable them to gain the confidence to empower others do the same. They should be responsible and delegate responsibilities without intimidation since they are new to the task. Just like Jesus, who followed up with his disciples to see what they were doing, the trainers should do the same. Such a follow up requires "repeated contacts, encouragement, support, and correction if necessary" (Fountain 204). Once pastors and leaders are well-trained and prepared to do minister holistically, the church will be truly fulfilling the Great Commission.

Theologically the church represents a compassionate God who taught His people how to care for the needy by example. The action of God to come down and rescue people after hearing their cry (Exod. 3:7-8), is a great example of showing mercy and concern for the well-being of the oppressed. The church should learn to practice what they are mandated to do, to be concerned with those who are needy and the oppressed and to be the voice of the voiceless. God's love was demonstrated by the sending of Jesus to the cross to save humankind (John. 3:16). God truly loved the world but sending His only begotten son confirmed his deep love. Leading by example can bear more fruit than mere words. Miller states that it is worthwhile to practice what we

confess and show compassion with our actions. He further states that we are called to be like our compassionate God (Miller 15). Serving humanity especially the poor will encourage the congregants and the community to support one another. Ultimately, the other thing they might be taught is how to be “Good Samaritans” (Luke.10:30-37) and to share and sacrifice their possessions and time for the sake of others since, “compassion springs from the heart of God” (Miller 116). More importantly, people should be shown by example how to be self-sustaining.

The Committee will Enhance Smooth Learning of Poverty Eradication Program

Among many other factors, the lack of an organized committee is a hindrance to a viable economic program in Kijabe region. The years I have served with A.I.C., I have struggled to find who is responsible for benevolence in the district. Having a committee from the district level to the local church will enhance learning the program. I have learned that for a program to succeed, there must be a small committee which oversees the overall running of the program. While not everyone will take part in the program, I am convinced that if the church leadership can form a committee and empower its members, it will make a significant impact within the district and beyond.

The committee should be comprised of district chairmen, pastors and lay people. Forming committees comprising all people will bring great success since all classes of people will be included. When the senior person in leadership owns the vision, it will be easier to implement the program in the entire district. They can also start such programs in their local churches and invite the rest of the people to learn from them. Leading by example will bear more fruit in the local churches and the district.

It was noted in the literature review that the indifference of churches in poverty eradication programs was mostly due to lack of committees to lead the congregations. Although

the mission of A.I.C. is to fulfill the great commission, lack of poverty eradication committees has contributed to low participation in poverty activities programs in the district. The findings can justify the lack of committed committee leaders for facilitating economic programs. The high number of leaders who admitted that they rarely teach economic involvement, 74.2%, is alarming. Although some of their reasons seem varied such as; one time sermon; lack of preaching materials; poor follow-up once preached; and the church structure being an obstacle, I am convinced there is much they can do if they are committed and willing to reach out holistically.

In order to start a viable economic empowerment program in the district, a well-organized committee will be necessary. According to Elliston, there is a need for good coordination and organization to begin poverty alleviation programs. Preparation makes someone “marketable for business” (Elliston 302).

There are many great biblical and theological examples of people who inspired and organized their peers to accomplish great tasks. Nehemiah, for example, wept, prayed and fasted for three days about the ruins of the wall of Jerusalem. After getting permission from the king, he travelled to assess the extent of the destruction. Once there, he determined how to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Despite opposition and challenges, Nehemiah organized a great and committed team which enabled him to do the work (Neh. 1-7:3). Nehemiah understood that the work required a committed team to accomplish the task, which they did as they worked together for the same goal.

Another great example of good leadership and organization revolved around helping a sick and needy person. The team of these men were not only wise, brave, and committed but also organized (Luke 5:17-39). They did something great by creating a hole in the roof so that they

could lower a terminally sick man to Jesus for healing. While crowds obstructed their way through conventional means, they worked to create an unconventional way to accomplish their mission (of helping the sick man). First, the team figured out what to do in what must have seemed like, at first, an impossible situation. Second, they made a hole in the roof, which was risky in several ways, both in weakening the structure and possibly causing destruction to someone's property. And third, they used their combined strength and possibly even a pulley-system to slowly lower the man, who was dead weight, to where Jesus was sitting. Like the innovators who did what they had to do to accomplish their objective in making this traditional home handicap accessible, the district and church can inspire and teach others to work as a team to engage poverty alleviation and economic empowerment.

Starting Income Generating Projects is of Great Importance

Having been brought up in a poor background and serving as a pastor in a community with dire need, I am convinced that the church has a great responsibility to fight poverty. I am also the founder and CEO of Family Empowerment Ministry Kenya, a program which helps people to become self-sustaining, I believe that the ministry could be a model for creating a program for the A.I.C. Kijabe region. Although I did not have much experience when I started the program, the ministry has been an eye-opener on how people are eager to participate with engaged support. Those who were enrolled in our program have expressed regret that their churches were not doing anything similar. My experience with the program and concern that the church was not going to be enough, led me to pursue studies focusing on the role of the church in poverty eradication. I have also started a conversation with my fellow pastors and leaders about being ambassadors of hope to the less fortunate and start income generating training and programs.

In the study, it was discovered that many leaders in A.I.C, Kijabe region suggested the need of starting income generating projects. Starting such programs can only be possible if district policy makers (district chairmen) realize the need of holistic ministry. First, they must change their theology of work to view it as part of the rich Christian life and not as a curse. Two, church leaders need to realize that we cannot separate spiritual matters from the physical, and instead see them as interdependent. For that to happen, some participants suggested that the district church policy be revised so as to accommodate poverty-related concerns. When economic empowerment policy is incorporated and people are enlightened in financial literacy, many will be encouraged to start income generating projects. Preaching about giving is not enough, guiding the members about how to start an income generating project will have greater impact.

The literature review evaluated successful economic programs like the one in Ethiopia. It was clear that such a program will not only transform a village but will encourage more to follow the teaching of Jesus Christ. Those impacted by the program learned that transformation is possible. Inviting experts to teach the congregation and work with them in such programs will help people to change their thinking about poverty eradication. When starting such holistic programs, the literature review suggested the need for clearly defining the vision for the project. The literature also demonstrated that people fail when they are unclear about their objectives. As mentioned earlier, this study does not support charity but rather empowerment. The denomination should be careful not to start charity programs that will make the needy more dependent than independent. Poverty eradication aspires to foster independence.

Ministry Implications of the Findings

The study clearly revealed the need for starting economic programs in A.I.C. Kijabe region. The interviews, surveys, and interaction with the church leadership in Kijabe region

demonstrated the need for implementing programs that can improve the economic well-being of parishioners and the community. With guidance to start an empowerment program, many congregations would increase their income and eventually be able to support church projects.

The findings also stressed that the A.I.C. Kijabe region and denomination rework their Bible school curriculum. The leaders who took the survey, along with the interviewees, revealed that they received little information about poverty eradication in college training. Reworking curriculum would require an eye towards adapting it to today's needs. The leadership can survey church members regarding needs and struggles they would like their pastor to address. Additionally, the A.I.C. can visit other seminaries and evaluate how they engage in holistic training. They can also enlist business and agricultural university experts to teach short courses on how to start a business or agri-business.

Limitations of the Study

Although I did not encounter many limitations during the research, the ones I did almost altered with the end results. The main limitation was during the data collection, both in the survey and in the interviews. Since I lived in America for some time, and was doing studies at a prestigious school, some participants assumed that I was funded. But this was not the case. Although they signed an agreement that no money was involved, some still expected reimbursement. I used the challenge to explain further to participants in the church and the community about the need for studies in poverty eradication. Some pastors gave me an opportunity to preach in their churches about biblical economic empowerment, which was well received.

The other limitation was time. With busy schedules, finding time for interviews was a challenge for many people. On one occasion, we had to stop the interview so the interviewee

could take a call, which took more than an hour. Coming back to the interview was difficult since the person was now distracted. We had to reschedule for a later date. Saturday was my best day for interviews since I am a pastor and work full-time at a Bible college. Unfortunately, many of the participants who work full-time on weekdays use Saturdays for family time.

I also encountered a challenge from one of the survey participants who, for lack of a better way of putting it, was a “know it all.” In response to a question from the survey, he wanted to prove to the other participants that he knew the answer and got embroiled in satisfying his ego. Unfortunately, his response was wrong. The participants seemed uneasy and distracted and their responses may have been impacted by the experience. On a different occasion, the level of spiritual maturity was low, which made it difficult to convince the participant the importance of taking time to fill out the surveys about poverty eradication. However, these were few and did not likely affect the end results.

If I were to do a similar study, I would use a focus group discussion. The surveys were good, but they seemed to inhibit the participants from sharing freely. Perhaps the focus group would have revealed more information that was not asked in the surveys. I would also reduce the number of surveys and instead increase the number of interviews since the district chair are key informants and policymakers.

Unexpected Observations

In this study, there were three unexpected observations. The first was that there are a large number of leaders within the Kijabe region who are knowledgeable about the need for economic empowerment. Surprisingly, they shared that they had attended some form of training about economic empowerment, yet they admitted that they had done very little preaching or

action to help the needy. It was also a surprise to realize that many expressed that they would like for churches get more involved with such programs to help the needy.

The second unexpected observation was the high number of leaders who had received theological training. This seemed to go against the assumption that many people do not implement programs because they lack training. However, it was a surprise from the findings that even if they attended training and seminars on poverty eradication and economic empowerment, they were not guided on the steps necessary to implement the ideas they had learned or where to get the capital.

The third finding that was unexpected was the high number of years that most pastors have served in a particular church. 35% of the pastors have served in their churches for 11 to 20 years. Having served such a long time in a particular church, it would be expected to have brought a great impact in poverty eradication, but it is not the case for most of the churches. More surprisingly, most of the leaders were older, with the highest number, or 41.3%, between 36-45 years of age. Again, it would be expected that since the leaders have been in ministry for a longer time, they have identified the needy cases in the district and perhaps started income generating projects. Sadly, they only expressed a desire to have economic programs in their churches. Although they expressed an interest and willingness to participate in economic programs, they have not yet started anything.

Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the levels of knowledge, training, and practice exhibited by the leaders in dealing with poverty eradication in A.I.C, Kijabe Region. This study hoped to discern the best practices for poverty eradication. The study was inspired by the fact that A.I.C. is among the largest denominations in Kenya whose mission is to fulfill the Great

Commission yet falls short in its commitment to poverty eradication programs. The findings reveal that many people express a desire to be involved in poverty eradication programs.

The researcher makes the following recommendations for economic empowerment and poverty eradication programs:

1. The church urgently needs to define in its *Mission Statement* details and steps for holistic ministry approach. Each local church needs to be guided on how they can reach their members holistically.
2. There is an urgent need for creating an economic empowerment team at the regional level and parallel committees in each local church. The team will oversee the economic programs, offer guidelines, and monitor progress. For efficiency, the team should participate in management and entrepreneurship training to learn the intricacies of managing such a group.
3. The Africa Inland Church needs to consider revising their theological training curriculum. They should make sure that their colleges are offering short courses on business skills and community development courses, along with short courses in the local churches.
4. The church has sponsored several high schools, hospitals, and a Bible college. The denomination should in a similar manner start more vocational training to offer skills which could enable people to make a living.
5. The denomination can make a policy where all the local churches may have at least one Sunday annually for business. They can invite bankers, and experts in market and entrepreneurship to enlighten the church on issues regarding investment.

The researcher notes that his study considered the A.I.C. Kijabe region. Yet the denomination extends all over Kenya. The researcher recommends more studies to investigate if other regions have programs that could be emulated to help strengthen the program throughout Kenya.

1. There are other denominations such as Catholic, Anglican Church of Kenya, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and the Quakers who have successful empowerment programs. There is an urgent need to understand their success and how they operate.
2. The researcher also recommends the invitation of missionaries from countries like America and the Netherlands who have successfully created and implemented economic empowerment programs. Training materials should be translated into the local language for clear understanding and made available for Bible colleges and in local churches.

Postscript

My journey to accomplish the program of Doctor of Ministry was made possible through God's grace and guidance. It is a dream come true and I owe it all to God. Although I did not know that I would join a seminary let alone a doctoral program, I desired to further my studies. Although I was a staunch Catholic, I grew up in a poor background and always wished that the church could help us live a more empowered life. When I became a pastor, I encountered many people struggling with poverty, yet they believed in God. They inspired me to begin thinking about ways to address their suffering. When I approached the Bishop to seek guidance on how to help, I was very disappointed because, according to him, "I was dealing with earthly things which should be done by other organizations." My upbringing and the needs of the parishioners

continued to stir me to do something to address the needs of those living in grinding poverty. I registered *Family Empowerment Ministries*, with the aim of empowering people holistically. This program uses farming as a tool to share the Gospel and train people on how to be self-sustaining.

I am grateful that my dream to do studies centering on the role of the church in poverty eradication has come to be a reality. I am excited that the work has been written and will be available for reference to those who have a heart to uplift the lives of the poor in the society. I am hopeful that Christian leaders from all circles will be inspired to use my research to implement such programs in their schools and churches. My hope is that many lives will be changed. I am convinced that when people are ministered to holistically and guided to live empowered lives, they may be more inclined to follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and contribute to illuminating the Kingdom of God.

APPENDIXES**Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter (For Surveys)*****The Role of the Church in Poverty Eradication in Kenya:
A Focus of A.I.C. Kijabe, Region.***

You are invited to be in a research study being done by **Simon. K. Thiongo** from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are a leader of a local church within the Africa Inland Church. Kijabe Region.

If you agree to be in the study, the researcher will conduct a survey with you at an agreed time in the agreed place. You are requested to fill the provided survey questions. There is no payment for the exercise and your name will not be associated directly with your response. A number or initials will be used instead of your name.

If something makes you feel bad while you are in the interview, please inform **Simon. K. Thiongo**, the researcher about it. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the interview, you may stop whenever you want.

You are free to ask **Simon K. Thiongo**, the researcher questions any time about anything in this study. Signing this paper means that you have read this, or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

Date Signed

Appendix B. Informed Consent Letter (for Interviews)

The Role of the Church in Poverty Eradication in Kenya: A Focus of A.I.C. Kijabe, Region.

You are invited to be in a research study being done by **Simon. K. Thiongo** from the Asbury Theological Seminary. You are invited because you are a senior Pastor of a local church within the Africa Inland Church. Kijabe Region.

If you agree to be in the study, the researcher will conduct the interview with you at an agreed time in the agreed place. There is no payment for the exercise and your name will not be associated directly with your response. A number or initials will be used instead of your name.

If something makes you feel bad while you are in the interview, please inform **Simon. K Thiongo**, the researcher about it. If you decide at any time you do not want to finish the interview, you may stop whenever you want.

You are free to ask **Simon K. Thiongo**, the researcher questions any time about anything in this study.

Signing this paper means that you have read this, or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to be in the Study

Date Signed

Appendix C. Interview Protocol

- 1. Describe how A.I.C Kijabe region has been involved in poverty eradication/economic empowerment.**
 - a) Church members
 - b) The community

- 2. How have each of the following acted as a challenge in poverty eradication by A.I.C., Kijabe region.**
 - a) The content offered in theological training institutions.
 - b) Lack of good will from the larger A.I.C. denomination
 - c) Lack of resources to start poverty eradication programs
 - d) Poor cooperation from the congregants in poverty eradication initiatives

- 3. State any other challenge that have been encountered (or may be encountered) by A.I.C., Kijabe region in poverty eradication efforts.**

- 4. Suggest the practical steps which need to be taken by A.I.C., Kijabe region in poverty eradication and economic empowerment of members and the community.**

- 5. Give any other view on the involvement of A.I.C. Kijabe region on poverty eradication among the members and the community.**

Appendix D. Survey Protocol

Dear Fellow Worker in A.I.C., Kijabe Region.

My name is **Simon K. Thiongo**, a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min) student at Asbury Theological Seminary (United States) and a pastor with the Africa Inland Church, Kijabe District. I am doing a study on *“The Role of the Church in Poverty Eradication: A Special reference to Leaders/Pastors in A.I.C., Kijabe Region”*. Kindly fill up the survey to assist me complete the project. You don’t need to write your name on this form. Make sure that you sign the consent form provided before filling up the survey. Thanks in advance for your willingness to participate in the study.

Background Information

A. Gender

- Male
- Female

B. Age

- 18-25 years
- 26-35 years
- 36-45years
- 46-55years
- 55 years and above

C. Theological Training

- No Theological Training
- Certificate Level
- Diploma Level
- Undergraduate Level
- Post-Graduate Level

D. Duration in the Local Church

- Less than 5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20years
- 21-25years

- 26-30years
- Above 30 years

E. Position in the Church

- Pastor
- Deacon
- Elder
- Departmental leader (Specify.....)

F. If Pastor, duration of Service

- Below 5 years
- 5-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 21-30 years
- Above 30 years

1. Gauge the poverty levels within your Local Church

- Very High
- High
- Low
- Very Low

If high or very high, what might be the contributing factors to poverty among the congregants?

2. How often do you hear messages aimed at economic empowerment of people in your Local Church (Question not for Pastors)?

- Very Often
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

3. If a Pastor, how often have you preached on economic empowerment/poverty eradication?

- Never
- Rarely
- Often
- Very Often

Explain your answer in 3 above:

4. Does your Local Church run any program towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment for members and the community?

- YES
- NO

If yes in 3 above, describe the kind of poverty eradication program undertaken.

5. Is there any type of poverty eradication/economic empowerment program in your District/Region?

- YES
- NO
- I DON'T KNOW

If yes in 4 above, describe the type of poverty eradication program run at the District or Regional level:

6. As a leader in A.I.C., how would you gauge your knowledge on poverty eradication skills.

- Very knowledgeable
- Knowledgeable
- Less knowledgeable
- Unknowledgeable

7. If Pastor, to what extent were you trained on poverty eradication/economic empowerment in Bible School.

- Never
- A little
- Much
- Quiet Much

8. Have you attended any on-job training/Seminar organized by your District/Region on Poverty eradication/economic empowerment in the last two years?

- YES
- NO

If yes, state some of the issues which were handled in those trainings:

9. What challenges have you faced (or are you likely to face) as a leader in addressing the issue of poverty in your Locality (you can tick more than one)?

- Lack of skills in poverty eradication

- Lack of good will from the larger A.I.C. denomination
- Lack of resources to start poverty eradication programs
- Poor cooperation from the congregants in poverty eradication initiatives

State any other challenge beside the ones stated above:

10. (A) State the Level of Agreement with the following steps towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment in A.I.C. Kijabe region.

	STEP TO BE TAKEN	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
1	Revise the Region/District policy to accommodate poverty eradication initiatives.			
2	Increase financial literacy in the region among leaders and members.			
3	Have an annual economic empowerment Sunday in the Region/District.			
4	Work closely with the County Government in Poverty eradication in the community.			
5	Aggressively seek overseas donor support in poverty eradication.			
6	Initiate Saving and Credit programs at various levels (Local Church, District and Region) for members.			
7	Integrate poverty eradication training in Bible Schools within the region.			
8	Have a committee to deal with economic empowerment in the District/Region			

(B) State other important steps towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment initiatives for A.I.C. Kijabe region.

Appendix E: Research Authorization from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/18/93383/21335**

Date: **6th March, 2018**

Simon King'ori Thiong'o
Asbury Theological Seminary
USA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"The role of the church in poverty eradication,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for the period ending **2nd March, 2019**.

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

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kiambu County.

The County Director of Education
Kiambu County.

Appendix F: Research Authorization from Kiambu County

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
COUNTY COMMISSIONER, KIAMBU

Telephone: 066-2022709
Fax: 066-2022644
E-mail: countycommkiambu@yahoo.com
When replying please quote



County Commissioner
Kiambu County
P.O. Box 32-00900
KIAMBU

REF. NO: **ED.12(A)/I/VOLI/88**

DATE: **27TH MARCH 2018**

✓ Simon King'ori Thiong'o
Asbury Theological Seminary
U.S.A.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORITY

Reference is made to National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation letter Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/18/93383/21335** dated **6TH March 2018**.

You have been authorized to conduct research on " **The role of the Church in Poverty Eradication in Kiambu County Kenya.**" The data collection will be carried out in **Kiambu County** for a period ending **2nd March 2019**.

You are requested to share your findings with the County Education Office upon completion of your research.


J.A. RATEMO
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
KIAMBU COUNTY

C.C.
County Director of Education
KIAMBU COUNTY

National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

All Deputy County Commissioners
Kiambu County

"Our Youth our Future. Join us for a Drug and Substance free County".

Appendix G: Research Permit from NACOSTI

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the License and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this License including its cancellation without prior notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No.A 17790

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. SIMON KINGORI THIONGO
of ASBURY THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY-USA, 0-220 Kijabe, has been
permitted to conduct research in
Kiambu County

on the topic: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH
IN POVERTY ERADICATION

for the period ending:
2nd March, 2019

[Signature]
 Applicant's
 Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/93383/21335
 Date Of Issue : 6th March, 2018
 Fee Received : Ksh 2000



[Signature]
 Director General
 National Commission for Science,
 Technology & Innovation

Appendix H. Permission to Collect Data in A.I.C. Kijabe Region



KIJABE REGION

P.o Box 508-006605 Kikuyu, Kiambu, Kenya.

November 3, 2017

Re: Permission to Collect Data from Africa Inland Church Kijabe Region.

Dear Rev Simon Thiongo,

This is to acknowledge that our office received your request letter for Asbury Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry research titled, *"Identifying the levels of knowledge, training, and practice exhibited by the Pastors dealing with Poverty eradication in Kijabe, Central Province of the Africa Inland Church, to discern best practices for poverty eradication"* The Region Council have reviewed your request to collect data from our ordained Ministers, and we have no reservation upon your request.

The Council has the pleasure to work with you in your research which we believe will be beneficial to the church.

God bless you.

Yours Sincerely

Rev Paul Manyara

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