

**THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN ALLEVIATING RURAL POVERTY:  
A STUDY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
AND THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF KENYA IN KISUMU AND  
SIAYA DISTRICTS**

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by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the  
degree of Master of Arts, in the University of Nairobi

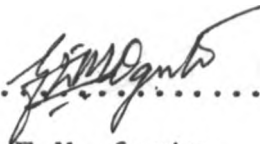
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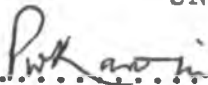
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ABBREVIATIONS :

A.I.C.	African Inland Church
Am.	Amos
CCPD	Commission on the Churches Participation in Development
Cor.	Corinthians
Dt.	Deuteronomy
Ex.	Exodus
Eph.	Ephesians
ff.	following
Gal.	Galatians
Is.	Isaiah
Jer..	Jeremiah
Jam.	James
Lev.	Leviticus
O.T.	Old Testament
RSV	Revised Standard Version
cf	Reference

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A B S T R A C T

Interest to examine the role of the church in alleviation of rural poverty was sparked off by a course offered in the Religious studies Department entitled, Church and Society. Our primary objective in conducting this research was to examine the role that the Roman Catholic Church and the C.P.K. in Kisumu and Siaya Districts are playing towards alleviation of rural poverty. The focus of this research was on those programmes which are geared towards the alleviation of the suffering and poverty of the widows, the orphans, the aged, the physically disabled and the unemployed. Examination of other related programmes was also made, especially where they merged with those of our group of the poor. The survey sought to describe each programme, give insight to the state of the poor, evaluate the programmes and define the opportunities and need for additional efforts that can help the church have other effective programmes.

Information for this thesis was based on written materials and data collected from the field. A total sample of 305 respondents were interviewed through questionnaires, while others were informally consulted to verify the information that had been

received through the questionnaires. Observation was also used to gather data. Analysis involved tabulation and interpretation of the tables, which was reported in descriptive form.

From our research findings, it was evident that, alleviation of poverty and the suffering of the poor, has become part and parcel of the mission of the church. But, there was a further evidence that, even though this is the case, the call to alleviate poverty has not received desired responses from both the clergy and the laity. Some still envisage a conflict between a ministry that provides for peoples' material needs, and that which provides for spiritual needs.

Attempts to make widows self-reliant, has shown some good results. The church however, has not been able to provide much solution to their physical needs. Generally, the physically disabled suffer the most among the categories of the poor since they have fewer programmes that cater for their needs. There is however evidence, that quite a number of them, have been helped to overcome their dependency, because they can now earn their living. The church's effort to alle-

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viate the unemployment problem is particularly hampered by lack of funds and shortage of personnel who can train the unemployed to become self reliant through self employed after learning basic skills.

Six main approaches that are being used by the church to alleviate poverty and the suffering of the poor are:

- (1) Family Development Approach - where both needs of individuals families and individual members in those families are catered for.
- (2) Self Reliant Approach - which attempts to eradicate the problem of dependency of recipients. Much emphasis is given to this approach because it is seen as the key to success in alleviating poverty of the poor.
- (3) Educational Approach - is the priority in church programmes. Children from poor families are usually sponsored to receive primary education. Education of the poor children is offered through provision of



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school uniforms and building funds, since most of the poor parents find it difficult to send their children to school because they cannot afford to buy school uniforms, or raise money for school funds.

- (4) Christian Community Approach - Where the church uses its fellowship or worship groups to promote its programmes. A number of poor people have been helped through such groups, and rural development projects also established.
- (5) Rural Development Approach - where the church has reached the people through its development work. Government interest in this area has boosted the church's keenness in offering her ministry through medical, educational and agricultural activities.
- (6) Evangelistic Approach - where spiritual promotion of the recipients, is part and parcel of the church's mission towards the welfare of the poor. Prayer and bible readings are common elements used to instil spiritual awareness in the people.

## C H A P T E R   O N E

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Problem of poverty has caused a major concern in both developed and developing countries for many years now. In most societies, attempts have been made, and are still being made to either ease or eliminate poverty. The United Nations and its agencies for example, have been at work, in response to poverty, to increase the economic performance of the poor countries. Most governments, economic planners and labour organizers are all busy marshalling their efforts to combat poverty. Several voluntary agencies, like wise, have substantially expanded their efforts in the fields of services and development aimed at the poorest of the poor. As a result of all these efforts, new proposals, new solutions and practical ways are being suggested to combat poverty that is threatening millions of lives on this continent. In Kenya, the concern is made more explicit in the current Development Plan (1979 - 1983), where emphasis is placed on "alleviation of poverty in the rural areas".<sup>1</sup>

Concern to alleviate poverty among the masses in the developing countries, is not only manifested in secular institutions. The churches in Africa have also been evoked by the existence of poverty that is both abject and dehumanizing. From international conferences, theological discussions and travels, church leaders have been made aware of their past neglect of this aspect of their role in the society, and have been called upon to involve themselves in the alleviation of poverty and the suffering of the poor in the community. In the last few years, the call to alleviate poverty has been taken seriously in the life of the church.

Challenges of poverty make it necessary for the church to redefine its mission today. It is from this premise that one finds it vital to find out:-

(i) what the church, being aware of the problem, is doing to enhance material and social development of the poor people, besides her obliged role of evangelism.

(ii) Since the mission of the church is unique because it is the only institution that can meet the needs of the whole man, it is also important to find out how the church is handling the problem of charity which in the past, reduced those who received it to objects of pity.

(iii) It is important to investigate the attitude of church leadership towards the needs of the poor, and also what the church considers as the root causes of poverty.

(iv) The above concerns are not adequate until one finds out, how the church relates to the political, economic and social structures as it struggles to alleviate poverty.

(v) It is common knowledge that grand plans can fail when poor methods of implementation are employed. Thus, a look at how the church is motivating people to meaningful involvement in its programmes is of cardinal importance.

(vi) Finally, one would like to know, to what extent the church increases Christian commitment of the poor members of the community, who are being assisted to overcome their suffering.

The above points make one ask: "Is there a relationship between church initiated programmes and alleviation of rural poverty?"

1.1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM.

(i) Kenya government is concerned about rural poverty as expressed in the current Development Plan (1979-198), where a great emphasis is placed on "alleviation of poverty" in rural areas.

(ii) the church by its very nature, is an institution of the poor, and as such it is called:

'....to preach good news to the poor,....  
to proclaim release to the captives and  
recovering of sight to the blind, to set  
at liberty those who are oppressed....'

(Luke 4<sup>18</sup>. RSV).

(iii) it gives insights into the state of the poor, their struggle to survive on their own, and what the church is doing to help them survive.

(iv) it gives an evaluation of what the church is doing now.

To recommend future solutions, practical

ways and approaches to help the church, government and private planners, who attempt to include the poor in their programmes.

## 1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

While it was the aim of this study to make a complete survey of the poor people in Nyanza Province, we realized that that approach was going to be more demanding in time and money because of the vastness of the geographic area where the study had to be carried out. We therefore decided to limit the geographic area of study, the categories of the poor, and the churches represented. ① Thus, for the geographic area, we selected Kisumu and Siaya districts since these two have the longest history of Christian influence in Nyanza Province. Secondly, in addition to limiting our study to the two districts, we also decided to limit our study of the poor to five categories, namely: the widows, the orphans, the aged, the physically disabled and the unemployed. ② The choice of these five categories was strongly influenced by our background reading, especially the biblical references where these kinds of people are given special attention, and from the fact that the church in Nyanza is attempting to give them special attention.

Thirdly, because of the existence of many denominations in our area of study, we realized that we could not study what all of them are doing to help the poor, partly because time would not allow us and also because this would make the study superficial. So we selected the activities of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of the Province of Kenya. These two churches are also the oldest, the largest and the most concerned about the fate of the poor in the rural areas.

### 1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 1.3.1 GENERAL VIEW ON POVERTY

The church, by definition is universal. It is for this reason that we shall first look at various writers' global view of poverty.

Despite the world's economic growth in the last thirty years, including developing countries, very limited benefits have reached the poor. In many situations the poor are having a decreasing share of the results of economic growth. In African nations, the number of the poor people is growing rapidly and it is here too, where millions survive on inadequate food,

shelter, education and health facilities. Behind this gathering gloomy situation, it is estimated that about three thousand million people in third world countries are either unemployed or have no gainful employment to enable them live decent lives.<sup>2</sup>

According to Ana, The Director of Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (1979), today's poor do not only suffer from worsening poverty, but they are also subjected to increasing deprivation, exploitation and marginalization.<sup>3</sup> In other words, the lives of the poor are characterized by both dependency and oppression. Very little opportunities are often given to them to make decisions on how to shape their own lives. They have no voice either, for they are considered ignorant and worthless. This kind of operation and treatment of the poor is unjust, for it discriminates against the poor and the destitute. This is what D. Millwood (1977), among others, asserted when he said, "to be a "have not" (poor), means lack of access to the things that are vital to your life".<sup>4</sup>

The unavoidable results of increased hunger, lack of health facilities have led most of the poor



to leave their homes to seek better life in urban environments. Yet even in urban areas, most of the poor's misery is testified by the rapidly growing slums. 5

Causes:

Discussions centred around third world countries in the past couple of years, have revealed that contemporary poverty is a very complex phenomenon. People like Ana, Millwood and others, rightly identify its origins from colonial enterprise which brought about seeds of change in socio-economic and political levels in the formerly colonized countries. Some people may dismiss this point as a past event, yet many exponents like Cole (1976)<sup>6</sup>, do agree that its effect still lingers on in many of the present socio-economic systems in a number of developing countries. Most rulers in these countries have not - in many ways - attempted to change the socio-economic systems which they inherited from colonial systems or masters. Falling into this category are land policies. Through the system of private ownership and means of production, leaders in the developing countries have as colonialists used to accumulated wealth for themselves. They even

use the poor on their land in exploitative ways to earn themselves more capital.<sup>7</sup> This is therefore a clear indication that though the period when the colonizers exploited the colonized resources is over, there is however a similar process still going on. Apart from unjust land policies in several developing countries, the drive for quick gain of wealth, has brought about the oppression of the poor who are economically and politically weak.

\* Cole, Oduyoye (1977)<sup>8</sup> and W. Buhlmann (1974)<sup>9</sup>, all point out as one of the causes of contemporary poverty, corruption of the third world leaders. Elites in these countries have also been accused of showing very little concern towards the gross inequality within their societies. Several facts illustrate this. For instance, when determining areas of economic growth, the economically powerful rarely give emphasis to goods necessary to satisfy the basic needs of the poor sectors of the population since these are considered to be of low profit potentials, as a result, the poor's participation in the economy is only limited to the purchase of a few subsistence items.<sup>10</sup> Added to this, is the fact that, despite the economic growth

that has occurred in most of the third world countries, the products of development are unevenly distributed. In this regard the few prosper, and more remain poor.

In addition to the above causes, many writers have pointed out that, the way labour is organized to exploit national resources of the developing countries, needs critical and creative reshaping to allow benefits of national wealth to spread evenly to all citizens. This ideal unfortunately, is often hampered by selfishness and greed on the part of those responsible in bringing forth development.

Poverty is also attributed to developed countries. As Aduyoye says, what is happening in the poor world cannot be adequately explained without relating it to the rich world, since there is a share of responsibility of the rich world for economic underdevelopment and material poverty.<sup>11</sup> According to Buhlmann, the contribution of the developed countries is based on their failure to give aid to the developing countries. Buhlmann sees this as resulting from the widening gap between the rich and the poor countries. He says that the aid given by developed countries to the poor countries is growing feeble.<sup>12</sup>

R. Sider affirms this claim by pointing at western international trade policies.<sup>13</sup> On international trade, the industrialized nations have carefully shaped the patterns of international trade for their own economic advantage. Sider attests:

of all the money that moves from rich to poor nations, 80% comes from international trade; only 20% results from foreign aid and private investment.<sup>14</sup>

Unjust trade patterns between the rich and poor nations have however, been made possible through tariffs and other trade restrictions. Developed countries are found for instance, to charge very high tariffs on processed and manufactured goods from poor countries. Consequently, millions of people in poor countries, find themselves deprived of extra jobs. It is from this position, that Cole comes up with what he calls "liberalized" trade, where he spells out ways the developing nations could be helped to fight their poverty. Cole is convinced that, if the third world countries could be given more opportunities to process their own raw materials, and to run those industries which they can handle effectively by using their own textile, the

problem can be eased. In addition to his philosophy of "liberalized" trade, he also calls for better price from developed nations towards the commodities and products from the developing countries.<sup>15</sup>

X Other root causes of poverty are seen in the poor themselves. According to Buhlmann, though the poor cannot be blamed for this entirely, he believes that it is the poor's apathy and their incapacity to shake themselves and really want a better life.<sup>16</sup> Affirming this view, Millwood says that a vast majority of poor people are kept impoverished largely by their acceptance of the system. The way they do this, is by naive attitude that, when a few are seen by many to benefit from the system and are able to reach higher levels in their economic development and become rich, the others would reason and ~~and~~ hope that, "next it could be me". This view may be right to some extent, but there is another aspect to it. As the World Council of Churches' report on poverty (1978) and Ana both say, because the poor are marginalized they are rarely counted in the affairs of life, hence they have no voice in decision making. On the other hand, in countries where the poor may wish to change their conditions of life, repression is usually used to hinder them to act against

forces which victimize them.<sup>17</sup>

✓ Among causes mentioned above, rapid population growth in the third world countries is seen as contributing to the problem of poverty too. But as Cole says, for many families in third world countries, many children are like insurance premiums - that is parents often look at them as economic assets. Causes of Poverty according to the respondents, see p. 281 - 2.

#### Attempts To Alleviate Poverty.

Despite some of the contributions that have been made by both the developing and developed countries towards the alleviation of contemporary poverty, there is now a unanimous agreement for instance among the economists (New International Economic Order), International Labour Organizers and Bankers (e.g. World Bank), that the state of the poor today demands not only immediate, but radical decisions and solutions. On this premise, many solutions have been suggested. .

To most of the exponents, a shift in development strategy is inevitable if poverty is to be combated effectively. At one level this would mean having social/economic development policies to focus on meeting basic needs of the masses. The International Labour

Organization (ILO) conference report of 1972, endorsed basic need approach in the following words: "strategies and national plans and policies should include explicitly as priority objective, the promotion of employment and satisfaction of the basic needs of each country's populations....."<sup>18</sup> However, since the largest number of poor people live in the rural areas, a large part of the solution should concentrate on the rural areas. McNamara of the World Bank, had this in mind when he said that poverty and starvation in the third world countries, can only be attacked through improved agricultural production, and only subsequently, by establishing informal trade in urban sector economy.<sup>19</sup> Evidently, rural poverty is reflected in poor nutrition, poor shelter and low health standards. In order to improve agricultural production, third world countries need further awareness of redistribution of land to intensify small scale farming for the rural areas.

On the international level, the exponents advocate fair and considerate dealings with the developing countries when it comes to aids and trade policies. They believe, like Cole, that the poor can be helped if the developed nations could increase financial help

they give to the developing nations. Assistance should also be given in developing a system of technology which is relevant to the third world countries.

Cole, Ana, WCC Report and many others, advocate total transformation of the existing socio-economic structures before poverty could be eradicated. This suggestion shows that the exponents in this category are opposed to the ways in which socio-economic, political and even religious structures in most developing countries, have been used as means to perpetuate poverty. The point on structural change is thus seen as the major way of fighting poverty. Minor changes in the existing socio-economic structures are seen to retard efforts towards development. Finally Cole regards strategies focusing on employment as the ideal means to get rid of poverty. He attested to this when he said:

....we can only hope to have prosperous and happy world when proper employment has been offered millions of the unemployed.....<sup>20</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL VIEW ON POVERTY.

There is a general agreement among the scholars that the poor are getting poorer, marginalized and



oppressed. Causes of poverty that are attributed to the leaders in developing countries are related first to their greed to amass wealth despite the deteriorating state of the poor, secondly to the little attention they give to economic development of the poor sector of population and thirdly, unequal economic distribution between the masses and themselves.

On the international scene, the developed countries are identified as the main causes of poverty through their unjust trade policies.

The poor themselves are also blamed as the contributors of poverty. On the one hand, it is their apathy and incapacity to shake themselves and really want better life, that encourages this, on the other hand, it is their hope that one day they will climb the ladder of prosperity. But it is noted that in some countries the poor's efforts to change conditions of their lives is always suppressed. Rapid population growth is among the contributors of poverty.

Solutions to the problem of poverty is seen in

a shift in development strategies where socio-economic policies would focus more on meeting basic needs of the masses. Since a large number of the poor live in the rural areas, improvement of agricultural production is advocated. To do this, policies on land distribution should be reviewed to enable small scale farmers to get land for agriculture. Fair and considerate dealings with developing countries in trade should be the aim of developed countries in their aid and trade policies. Employment of the poor is also seen as one the vital ways of improving their living standards.

#### 1.3.2 CHRISTIAN VIEW ON POVERTY.

The Church's response to poverty ought not to be a response of expediency (that is, there are needs, therefore the church ought to take action to remove them). This however, was exactly the way the missionaries responded when they first came to Africa and witnessed the pitiable conditions of the Africans, caused by dire poverty, disease and ignorance. The missionary involvement with the poor to a great extent had no biblical basis, they were guided rather by their desire to "civilize" the African.

Adoption of the western culture, economy and education had to be used to achieve this goal. Above all else, the missionaries viewed new methods of agriculture, trade and industrial skills as means to help the African converts to disassociate themselves from their traditional life.<sup>21</sup>

Affirming this point, Odwako adds in reference to the missionary education in western Kenya, that one of the aims of teaching Africans trades was necessary for the missionaries because they wanted to build houses and produce food and other items which could earn money.<sup>22</sup> He further points out that this policy was quite in agreement with the Nyanza Province's Commissioner who stated to the Chief Native Commissioner that African education should commit the Africans to the "reserves" and also produce efficient boys for the demand of modern civilization.<sup>23</sup>

This however does not dismiss the fact, as Muga says in his analysis in African Response To Western Christianity, that, the missionaries did become in their pioneer period, instrumental in bringing about achievements in economic and social progress.<sup>24</sup>

Today however, there is a considerable shift of emphasis with regards to what the task of the church should be in the face of contemporary challenges that result from socio-economic and political experiences of people in Africa and other developing countries. Affirming this Mbiti said:

Radical change is called for in order to meet these challenges on which the future of Christianity depends. There is radical change all around us and if Christianity does not make itself flexible enough to change, it will be left behind the times like an anachronism fit only for our historical museums.<sup>25</sup>

Out of the new emphasis have emerged two schools of thought in relation to the modern thinking of mission. One school of thought, represented by theologians like Sider, J. Cone, Guiterrez, adopt the principle from the Old Testament, where God's righteousness is seen in terms of defence of the poor, the oppressed and the needy against the powerful. Although this school of thought may appear to be biblical, in reality the concept of salvation has been watered down and as a result, this approach deprives the church's involvement

in the spiritual development or its Christian distinctiveness, that is the spiritual liberation of man. This is perhaps what led Pope Paul VI to sound a warning in his article entitled "Christ to the World"<sup>26</sup>, that Christians should take precaution in their eagerness to involve in the problem of liberation lest they miss their main objective (evangelization), and instead dwell more or unduly on political affairs. These sentiments are also echoed on Second Vatican Council's "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity".<sup>27</sup> It is amazing how much the Catholic Church particularly in western Kenya, got involved in the ministry of the laity and their socio-economic welfare following the Second Vatican Council.

Theologically interpreted, poverty and oppression are a result of man's rebellion against God's law for man's happiness. Greed and selfishness are seen as preventing the poor from enjoying the resources God had generously placed before him.<sup>28</sup> This situation therefore, calls upon the church to evangelize man so that he is not only liberated from sin, but that he might also be made aware of the consequences of sin that causes others to suffer oppression and poverty.

According to Christian liberals like Mbiti, Magesa and Best, in Africa, salvation in the face of poverty, has been broadened to act of setting people free from economic, political and social bondages. Sin therefore is viewed as a common social evil, and salvation as corporate social action against oppression.

✓ Jesus' model of love and concern for the poor is significant. As a demonstration of a true concern for the poor, Jesus spent most of his time among them. He, for instance, fed the hungry, showed compassion to widows and healed the sick and the physically handicapped. He even exhorted his disciples to display a genuine compassion towards the poor in their midst. From the model of Jesus, physical and spiritual components of man should form guidelines in the mission of the church. Summarizing this, Magesa said that such ministry "makes man whole psychomatically, in body and soul".<sup>29</sup> A church which concentrates only on the spiritual liberation of man is not performing its complete ministry. (Conversely, is the one which offers only material assistance to the people). Scripture is

very explicit on this, because it clearly commands Christians to serve and to preach. According to Wiesinger (1979), this is why neither service nor preaching has received its justification from another.<sup>30</sup> In the scripture, service is neither subordinate to preaching, nor is it simply an aid, but it finds its own place in the gospel. With service alone, man is not helped sufficiently. The gospel reveals more radical diagnoses of man's needs.....<sup>31</sup>

Stott (1979), points on the other hand that evangelization that interests itself only with the souls and ignores the welfare of the people's bodies, situations and community, robs the gospel of its credibility. Thus, it is only when a service is rendered towards the physical welfare of the people that the preaching would be made visible and credible.<sup>32</sup>

According to Odwako, though missionaries who establish churches in western Kenya believed in this concept of, "mission to the whole man and his development", it was never to be outside religion.

Practical Ways To Alleviate Poverty.

In practical terms, it is doubtless that the church does not have definitive answers or strategies for dealing with the critical issues indicated in the section of "general view on poverty". Yet it is possible for Christians to engage themselves in very concrete programmes with many of the issues, in ways which can have deep significance for the needed changes in Africa today. On broad basis, Christian scholars have suggested ways to do this. Below are some of them:

One thing which is becoming more and more clear, is that charitable gestures cannot be effective in the face of blatant poverty, except in urgent cases which might need immediate attention.<sup>33</sup> H. Gollwizer (1970), lists three reasons why he thinks charity is not the best means to combat poverty in its present magnitude. In the first place, he says that the extent of and the context in which poverty is exposed now, is quite different from what it was in the past decades. In addition to this, he says that the way the poor are being helped tends to make them objects of pity. Finally, Gollwizer says that



charity does not aim at the eradication of the real root causes of poverty.<sup>34</sup> Affirming this, H. Camara the Bishop of Brazil says, the tendency of giving charity to the poor and needy people, has developed from the attitude which reduces the whole problem of hunger and misery in the world to one of "assistance". Commenting on the effects of charity on the poor, Bishop Okullu from western Kenya said "It (the church) should reject ad hoc projects and refuse to accept money or material aid which tend to make people perpetual beggars and destroy their self-respect".

Instead of this attitude many writers are advocating an approach that would aim at an establishment of social justice. To do this, church leaders are challenged to express their solidarity with the poor by opposing those unjust structures that tend to deny masses human dignity, and work towards those that release creative power in the poor and which can make them satisfy their needs, and help them decide their own destiny.<sup>35</sup> In other words, it is imperative to make the poor masses be aware of their human dignity, of their rights, because it is impossible

to elevate them to a better life until they are conscious of their low standard of living.

From another perspective, Christian writers say that, church leaders can express their solidarity with the poor by condemning those decisions which national leaders usually make for their own benefits at the expense of the poor masses. K.Y. Best (1975) is very strong on this point. He stated that, while it is understandable that church leaders fear to denounce social evils in their societies because of their insecurity, they forget that: "theirs is a mandate and obligation from God to condemn and warn national leaders of the decisions they make, especially those which tend to impoverish masses of people".<sup>36</sup> Church leaders are therefore called to guide their nations, for they are responsible for their citizens.

The above argument is clearly based on what is happening in many African countries, where poverty is met with very little sympathy by those in authority. Affirming this, Bishop H. Okullu, Anglican Bishop of Diocese of Maseno South, further points out that even

Christians are caught up in this habit. By turning deaf ears to the cries of the needs of the poor, Christians are also failing to face the problem of poverty squarely and to demand whenever necessary, from their governments, removal of political and economic obstacles, which stand on the way of those who are looking for satisfaction of their human needs.<sup>37</sup> In addition to this, the church is further accused of being responsible for the selfish use of the resources that are available.

One of the other ways the church can effectively participate in helping the poor to improve their living conditions, according to some Christians writers, is by changing the existing church structures. Most of existing church structures are said to be replicas of the social structures found in their societies. From the illustration Ana gives, one model is highly hierarchical and authoritative, this tends to inhibit active participation of its members. In contrast to this is a second model which does allow its members to participate actively in its activities, but unfortunately, tends to favour the middle class more, thus its interest towards the poor is quite limited. The

model in which the poor are represented is the kind found in the rural areas. The problem with this type of church is the way its members perceive the world and its problems. As a tradition, the members of this church live out their faith in isolation of real concrete life situations.<sup>38</sup> Ana's third model is truly present in western Kenya. The rural church in this study area is of the poor. And the rural church has the majority of believers. For example, the Catholic Church in Kisumu Diocese has 14 parishes and out of this only three are in urban areas.<sup>39</sup>

Since the Uppsala Assembly (1968) (for protestant churches) and the Vatican II 1966 (for the Catholics), churches have turned their attention to development in an effort to alleviate poverty. Today however, the most outstanding theological emphasis in relation to goals of development, is where significance of human perspective is given more attention as opposed to economic development. Human development focuses more on the human beings rather than things, and it also gives attention to the poorest segment of society.<sup>40</sup> As a starting point therefore, this type of development should begin with the primordial needs of man (for example, shelter, food, clothing). Quality of life is more

important than the quantity in this kind of development. Bishop Okullu summarizes this point in the following words:

"Speaking about development, we must speak about the quality of life and not the quantity of goods produced. The quality of life refers to the way in which people are making use of things, not how much they possess or how much they can acquire and consume.....If we speak about economic growth, we should seek to know how the man at the bottom is faring....."

According to T. Visocchi (1977)<sup>42</sup> and a number of other exponents view on church's role in development, development only comes when community members are allowed to identify and define their own needs and are given opportunity to respond to their own initiative and to have control of the development activities. Visocchi is aware of the traditional approach which has been used in development. In most cases, traditional approach is said to deny people participation in identifying their problems, and instead problems are identified for them and solutions on how to deal with their problems suggested as well.

Visocchi's emphasis thus, emerges as a corrective

measure on the traditional approach where people have been excluded in aspects of development. However, in order to involve the people in development, they need to be motivated first and be made aware of how they can do this. Bishop Okullu moreover, emphasises that the role of the church in development should include both the publication of government policies and to motivation of the people towards development.

He however, advocates that, the Christian message is still the most potent tool in enhancing development, particularly because of its liberating power. Another anonymous exponent, advocates that for the church to succeed in development, it must work within government policy, using existing institutions wherever possible, and only establishing institutions where they do not exist.<sup>43</sup>

In short, what Christian writers are advocating above, is that the church's response to the problem of poverty can take different courses. At one level church leaders can identify with the poor by being their representatives in fighting against unjust structures that impoverish them (poor). Secondly, they can

alleviate the suffering of the poor by establishing development programmes that aim at the development of the poor's lives, thirdly, the church leaders need to be sensitive towards the suffering of the poor before they could educate the people on how to gain better living standards. Church structures also need to be changed in order to have more active participation in alleviating poverty.

#### 1.4 BIBLICAL TEACHING ON POVERTY

In this section we are to examine the concept of poverty and attempts to alleviate it in the scripture. The Biblical reference we saw earlier on, forms the basis for the church's modern interpretation of its mission towards the poor. Therefore, biblical teaching on poverty is an essential background to this study.

##### 1.4.1 OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCE ON POVERTY

The exodus tradition emphasizes the fact that the people brought out of Egypt, were originally subdued and enslaved. In His intervention, God intended to end

the suffering of the oppressed Israelites.<sup>44</sup> Because of this experience, God expected the Israelites to have similar attitude toward one another, when they eventually settled in Canaan. But, when the Israelites became a monarchy and thereby, a political power,<sup>45</sup> social situation came to change. The community not only became highly stratified, but, the rich also began to take advantage of the underprivileged. This situation, forms the background of the Deutromic theology and prophetic protest.

Deuteronomy constantly reminded the Israelites of their foundation of existence (Exodus experience), and urged them always to be mindful of the poor and the needy and politically inferior people amongst them, as Yahweh had been mindful of their situations as slaves (Dt. 10<sup>17-19</sup>). The main aim of Deuteronomic theology was to help the victims of human injustice (Dt. 15<sup>7-11</sup>), but above all, it's protective measures were geared towards alleviating poverty and providing for the impoverished. (Deuteronomic "poor law" however met with very little success in practice.)



The development of disparity between the rich and the poor during the monarchy period instigated the prophets to denounce the greed, heartless oppression, corruption and injustice of the rich towards the poor. These qualities arose from shameless trade (Am. 8:5), land grabbing (Is. 58), enslavement of the poor (Jer. 34<sup>8-22</sup>), abuse of power and the perversion of justice itself (Am. 5<sup>7</sup>, Is. 10<sup>1</sup>, Jer. 22<sup>13-17</sup>). Persistent oppression of the poor and the needy led to the destruction of the Kingdoms of Israel. The sin of idolatry also contributed to this punishment. In the prophetic books, the poor are depicted as in a number of O.T writings, as God's special charge. Widows, orphans and the poor enjoyed special favour and God's care through the law.

Through his prophets God condemned the social and economic injustices of the Israelites. The kings who were supposed to safeguard the poor and the needy failed to do so. They had therefore to suffer like the rest of the people who had oppressed the poor and the needy.<sup>46</sup>

Attempts to Alleviate Poverty:

Methods used to Alleviate Poverty during O.T. times.

God's desire for equitable distribution of the national and natural resources is also clearly depicted in the O.T. Some of the mechanisms and structures are outlined below:

The law regarding harvesting (Dt. 23<sup>24-5</sup>) permitted the poor and the needy to glean in the field and vineyards, to cut the grain that had left standing at the edge of the field after the reapers, and to take away forgotten sheaf which remained in the field when the harvest was over.

To equalize land ownership, the Israelites who happened to buy land from their poor brethren were commanded to return this land to the original owners after every fifty years. Traditionally, the poor who found himself in a needy situation was sometimes forced to sell his land to provide for his needs. Ownership of such land by the buyer, was very temporary. When the poor man failed to redeem his former land either through a rich

relative or by himself, he would be rescued from losing his ancestral land by the Jubilee principle. This took place every fifty years.

Debts owed by the poor were cancelled every seven years, to prevent an evergrowing gap between the rich and the poor.<sup>47</sup> In every town there was also what was called "Tithe of the Third Year". This could be either a tenth of an animal, wine or grain. The poor of every town were thus provided for through this kind of tithe after every three years.

During Sabbatical Year (Ex. 23<sup>10-11</sup> cf. Lev. 25<sup>2-7</sup>) which recurred every seven years, land was left to lie fallow. Spontaneous growth from such fields was taken as needed by the owner and all his dependants without any discrimination. Though this may be regarded as both ecological and humanitarian, the principal motive behind was to provide for the poor.

#### 1.4.2 NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE

Prior to the ministry of Jesus, the governing classes (pharisee and priests), had little feeling for

the needs of the people. Added to this was lack of mercy and sympathy with the poor. People were no longer bothered as was during the O.T. period. Their main concern instead, came to be placed so much on devotion to public worship and the cult of "righteousness". Although this concept may have appear contemporary during the N.T. period, however its emergence goes back into exile period, when the Israelites as 'the oppressed' people had been promised a Messiah who would deliver them from their oppressors. But prior to the ministry of Jesus, public worship and cult of righteousness were inhibiting fraternity among the Israelites. Condemnation of oppression and tyranny which runs through most of the O.T. references had long died. The poor and the oppressed classes were therefore left on their own. Their hope thus hanged on the promises and consolation of the word of God about the Messiah, their hearts were hence ready to receive him. Jesus found this usage of speech in existence and adopted it in his ministry.

In his inaugural sermon, Jesus sees himself as the "good news to the poor". Importance of the poor in his ministry is quite evident in the gospels. In the beatitude, when Jesus "blessed the poor and

offered them the kingdom", he was actually referring to creation of justice which he came to establish and restoration of human dignity and brotherhood. This was to be achieved through the new groups of his followers (Christians) who, because of their love for Christ, would stay in love and harmony, while at the same time, forming a "fellowship" which express brotherhood and thus ending indignity, isolation and alienation which the poor had suffered prior to this.

As a demonstration of a true concern for the poor, Jesus spent most of his time among them, especially in Galilee. As was stated earlier, it is for this reason that, he fed the hungry, healed the sick and the physically handicapped. He also exhorted his disciples to display a genuine compassion towards the poor in their midst.

Communal sharing of the members of the early church apparently was a response to this. With it came a new dimension to the Jewish traditional practice of sharing. Availability of unconditional financial

resources to all the needy, was an evidence of an operation of true love and fellowship. It re-established a sense of brotherhood and restored dignity of the poor and needy Christians, because they came to be accepted as part of that society. The record in Acts 4<sup>34-35</sup> show that the immediate result of this was elimination of poverty among the believers.

Other documented records related to this incident however, indicate that this benevolent nature of the believers was not one continuous phenomenon. The selling of land and houses to aid the needy was usually determined by the need of a particular period.<sup>48</sup> Some biblical scholars argue that this sharing was responsible for the later economic collapse in Jerusalem church. This state of Jerusalem church was however a result of many factors of which, we cannot discuss in detail at this point. However, the need of material relief is evident from the story of the appointment of the seven deacons to serve in the daily distribution (Acts 6<sup>18</sup>). The situation was no doubt, aggravated for the Church by Jewish hostility (Acts 4<sup>18</sup>, 5<sup>17f</sup>, 6<sup>12f</sup>) and by several famines, one of

which is recorded in Acts 11<sup>27f</sup>.

Care of the poor also formed one of the principle themes on the apostolic activities and preaching of Paul. A great deal of Paul's time was spent in raising money in gentile churches to assist the poor Christians in Jerusalem.<sup>49</sup> Paul's collection began as an act of charity, instigated at the Jerusalem meeting described in Gal. 2. According to Nick, the prototype of Paul's collection was the famine relief sent from Antioch (Acts 11<sup>27f</sup>). According to Paul's interpretation, response to the need of the poor is a free expression of believers' gratitude to their faith in Christ and a confirmation of their acceptance of the gospel.

Later Paul came to give a theological interpretation towards the collections he was making in attempt to reconcile the prevailing conflict between the Jews and Gentile Christians (ref. Council of Jerusalem).

In brief, his theological view originating from the Hellenistic and Christian world view, implies that

an intimate fellowship in the body of believers had a concrete economic connotation.<sup>50</sup> Each Christian therefore, ought to have a share from his fellow Christians. The sharing however should be voluntary. Furthermore, Paul believed that it was possible to establish economic equality among the believers by this method.

But, the most systematic theological exposition on poverty and wealth in the Epistles of Paul, is found in 2 Cor. 8 and 9. Here Paul sets the idea of Christian sharing in the context of the gift of God, and especially that of his son Jesus. He perceived in the incarnation and death of Jesus, an impoverishment by which the wealth of Jesus was distributed to the believers. The reference here relates to the idea of spiritual salvation which came as a result of God's love and concern for man.<sup>52</sup> The Christians are also expected to demonstrate their love for God, by serving others who are needy and poor.

James on the other hand, perceived in the social stratification of the second century church,



a danger which would affect the cordial relationship of the Christians.<sup>52</sup> This stratification in fact, did lead to exploitation of the poor (Jam. 5<sup>1-6</sup>) and discrimination between the rich and the poor (12<sup>1-3</sup>). For James, already the basic principles of the Kingdom of God (the spirit of justice and brotherhood) was being violated. The attack of the rich in James' epistle should therefore not be misconceived and seen as an attack towards the wealth of the rich, but rather it was an attack on their failure to respect and behave justly to the poor (2<sup>1-13</sup>). His call to true religion was love and care for the poor and to visit widows and orphans.

#### 1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The church is a community or family of believers with a concern for the social and spiritual welfare of all its members. For members of the church to be "happy", they must be lifted both socially and spiritually. Some members ('the widows, the orphans, the aged, the physically handicapped and the unemployed), are socially depressed, they cannot fend for themselves. In order for such members to be developed, their social problem

must find a solution. In other words , the church has a call to develop the whole man. It is within the theoretical framework of developing the whole man that the present study finds its focus and thrust.

The above theoretical framework is consistent with the thesis that; the poor in the rural areas need both help and guidance on how to <sup>feed</sup> fend for themselves, and that the church is in a better position to do this than other institutions. Hypotheses being tested in this study are outlined below:

- (i) That lack of factories, basic skills and land, poor agricultural yields, and high population are the major causes of poverty in the rural areas, Kisumu and Siaya are no exceptions,
- (ii) That among the poor namely; the widows, the orphans, the aged, the physically disabled and the unemployed in Kisumu and Siaya, the physically disabled suffer more compared to the others,
- (iii) That the church has great resources for alleviating rural poverty,

- (iv) That it was not until recently that the church began to take poverty problem seriously,
- (v) That charity given by the church in its attempt to alleviate poverty and the suffering of the poor, leads to dependency and apparent lack of initiative on the part of the poor and their immediate able relatives.

## 1.6 METHODOLOGY

### 1.6.1 DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaires formed the key technique for our primary data collection. The questionnaires we used were of two categories. One was designed only for the laity, while the second one was used to get information from the clergy and church social workers. The two questionnaires however had identical questions. Our purpose for designing two separate questionnaires was basically to enable us to verify information we had gathered from the clergy and the laity separately.

Another method that we found useful in supplementing questionnaire technique was that of "indepth interviews", using key informants. These were generally knowledgeable individual(s) who were well informed of what the churches are involved in, in their areas of work. Included in this category were the local government personnel (for example, chiefs, sub-chiefs, headmen etc.), some church elders, various church workers (for example social workers) and the clergy in both the Roman Catholic Church and C.P.K. administration (for example, bishops, pastors, etc.)

Information from these groups of informants was usually tape recorded with the permission of the participants. One way we had to do this was to tell a particular person (or groups of people), that our purpose of gathering data was related to what the church was doing to help the needy. This explanation was mainly to assist us in getting as many people as possible interviewed. Those who agreed to give us information had their answers tape recorded. In the case of the church personnel (bishops, social workers,

pastors), we had to ask specific questions, related to specific area of their involvement with the poor. For each group, we had different questions formulated to suit the project in question.

Where we were not allowed to use a tape recorder, we made use of our notebooks instead, to take down any useful information from our respondents. The use of notebooks also became handy whenever a situation arose where we could have informal interviews.

Observation method was quite useful in gathering data during our visits. During our field survey we made visits of rehabilitation centres for example Aluor, Maseno schools for the blind and the deaf respectively, sites where the church projects are located (for example Sigmare farm and fish pond). We also attended church ceremonies (for example: an opening ceremony of a fish pond by the Roman Catholic Bishop in Kano location at Kabonyo Sub-location), church services (Ahero). Through observation we were able to witness the churches' activities in live situations

and in due course noted methods and purpose of the activities that took place.

#### 1.6.2 SAMPLING.

Our research was carried out in Kisumu and Siaya districts of Nyanza Province. The choice of these areas has already been noted in the section of "Scope of the study".

When we found that church initiated programmes were widely spread in the two districts, we not only resolved to select randomly projects and rehabilitation centres to visit, but we also decided to select our area of operation in such a way that we were able to stay around the vicinity of either a church or areas where church activities were going on. This is where our previous contact with the head offices of the Roman Catholic Church and C.P.K. became vital. From the two head offices we had gathered information on various localities where the two churches have ongoing activities. Since these activities are carried out at parish levels, it was necessary to identify those which had activities

from those which had none. After this we found it necessary to identify the exact locations of these activities. This procedure proved useful when it came to sampling of our respondents. We were able to start with the locations where the church is active to select people to interview.

#### 1.6.3 SAMPLE SIZE

Originally, we had set out to interview a total of 300 people from the districts of Kisumu and Siaya districts. This meant interviewing 150 people from each district. However we ended up instead with a total sample of 180. This composed of 62 clergy and 118 laity. Among the laity 56 people were interviewed from Kisumu and the rest, 62 from Siaya. Then, in the category of the clergy 26 were from Siaya and 36 from Kisumu.

The reason for the reduction of the original number of 300 intended to be interviewed, was that we had problems in getting research assistants. Reaching the number of 180 was even a problem in itself because the few research assistants that we got to help

us kept on dropping from the work. We had therefore to device ways of getting data collected. At the end of four and half months, we had to settle with a total of 180 respondents.

However, when we discovered that the Church of the Province of Kenya was sponsoring some three hundred and fifty poor families through its Family Development Project, we had an addition of 116 adults interviewed from this group, to verify the responses we had received from the 118 laity that we had interviewed earlier.

From the clergy we had 62 respondents. In addition to this, we had 9 lay readers, lay men, who were social workers from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of the Province of Kenya, given indepth interviews. So in all we had a total of two hundred and thirty four laity (118+116) and sixty-two pastors and nine social workers interviewed, that is a total of 305 people.

#### 1.6.4 PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE STUDY

The field survey was initially scheduled for three months, but instead, it took four and a half months



to complete. Several factors contributed to this. First and foremost, securing research assistants was a major problem. It proved extremely hard to get people to assist us in carrying out the survey. We constantly faced the unwelcome situation of being turned down whenever we got someone to help. The nature of the research simply scared the research assistants that we had employed. We therefore resolved to use church leaders, local leaders and occasionally other cooperative individuals to recruit research assistants for us from either churches or local areas. This unexpected turn of events had a negative description of plans we had of training the research assistants together, before they could carry out the survey. The result was that, we kept on getting individuals at different times and in different places. We were thus forced to instruct them as they came to us individually. Sometimes we were not even able to meet with the research assistants who were available for us because of transport problem. In such cases, we were again forced to use the local or church leaders whom we had asked to do the recruitment to brief the research assistants on our behalf.

Another aspect of the hardship with research assistants, came about as a result of their unwillingness to carry out the research for a stretch of time. Most research assistants were unwilling to cover the areas which they were allocated.

At most, they would work for us only for a week or two then they would abandon the whole exercise. To arrest this problem, we decided to make use of several assistants at very short periods of time. We realized, through the hard way, the danger of depending on just a couple of them for the whole survey. Each assistant was therefore assigned to a particular area of survey with twenty questionnaires. Upon completion, he was allowed to leave or continue with us. Very few of them indeed would be willing to continue with the interviews. This was a disadvantage. It made us train others afresh after losing those who had gained experience.

A second problem came from the church personnel. Because the church personnel was a bit suspicious of our motive of carrying out a research related to poor people, it took us over two weeks to convince them that our research had no ulterior motive behind it, but that

the aim was just to survey the role of the church, and to find out exactly what is going on through church initiated programmes in attempts to alleviate rural poverty. Having convinced church leaders of the usefulness of our research, we were then given permission to carry out the research by the heads of the projects. But even with this, we still faced problems from some of the church field workers who were supposed to give us information. Some of the church field workers were very unwilling to release the kind of information relevant to our study. Some gave us very cold reception for to them, we were intruders. That is why we began to use the observation method more. It proved fruitful, for at least we were able to observe some of the activities going on, and later we were able to develop further questions to get more information. A number of other church workers were however, very cooperative, and from this group, we were able to gather much of our data.

A third problem came from members of the local community. Most of our research assistants reported that there were times, when the informants were unwilling to give any information. Most of these kinds of people

could either demand for money, refuse to respond, or discuss the questions on the basis of age gap between them and the research assistants. Traditionally it was those senior in age who directed the flow of a discussion, thus interviewing makes those who still have this mentality to feel uncomfortable.

#### 1.6.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis included tabulation and cross-tabulation of answers from the respondents. Interpretation of these tables are reported in descriptive form.

### 1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

#### 1.7.1 POVERTY

Poverty as a term is not easy to define, although as a phenomenon, its effects can always be identified without much problem. In order to have a functional definition, we decided to combine several shades of meaning to the term, because there is no single, or general accepted way of measuring poverty. As Rein<sup>53</sup>, points out, poverty can be broadly identified as

subsistence, inequality or external. By subsistence, it is where the concern is with minimum provision needed to maintain wealth and working capacity. As a term of reference, there is therefore the capacity to survive and to maintain physical efficiency. "Inequality", unlike "subsistence" perceives poverty on a social stratified income layer. This means that, the poor cannot be isolated and treated as a special group, but rather they have to be seen against a series of stratified income layers.

A similar view on the concept of poverty comes from Mencher,<sup>54</sup> According to Mencher, poverty can be determined by drawing a distinction between "absolute" and "relative" standards of poverty. By "absolute" standard of poverty, the focus is more on the emphasis that brings out "the economic insufficiency", while with "relative" standard, the stress is on the "economic inequality". But as Smith and Townsend say,<sup>55</sup> although poverty is essentially a relative concept, and may be used to refer to financial conditions, yet poverty is a much complex thing because it refers to variety of

conditions involving things like differences in home environment, material possession, educational, occupational resources, as well as financial resources.

In this study, operational definition of poverty that has been used, is closely related to that of Rein in as far as one sees the poor as "those who lack income or resources needed to acquire minimum necessities of life". At another level, definition of poverty brings out the aspect of "inequality", when focus is given to the social status of the poor. Poverty as "inequality", thus comes out in several areas as characteristics of the poor. These include for example, their educational standard, occupational resources, home environment, just to mention a few. A combination of the two aspects of poverty (subsistence and inequality) however, runs throughout the thesis and in many places they overlap.

#### 1.7.2 UNEMPLOYED.

D.L. Hanson distinguishes five types of unemployment in his analysis: (i) mass unemployment which results from deficiency of demand, (ii) structural

unemployment resulting from a change, for example, a change of demand for industrial produce rather than agricultural, (iii) unemployment due to technological process, in which utilization of labour saving machinery leave a great number of labourers redundant, (iv) seasonal unemployment, where occupation depends on the out-door activities, for example, farm work and building construction and, (v) residual unemployment on account of physical or mental disability.<sup>56</sup>

E.D. Edwards<sup>57</sup> on the other hand, brings out the nature of unemployment which helps us see the complexity of the unemployment problem. Three main faces of unemployment that are in existence, according to Edwards are: (i) open unemployment (involuntary). In this group are those who are looking (actively) for a job, (ii) the under-employed, those who work less daily, weekly or seasonally than they would like to work, (iii) the "disguised unemployed found in the government sector on full-time basis, although the services they render may not require full time.

From the above analysis, the unemployed in this study includes, the youth school leavers who are neither self employed nor are absorbed into wage employment sectors, some semi-skilled adults who are actively looking for employment and those who are mainly engaged in unskilled labour.

#### 1.7.3 THE POOR

We have also treated the concept of poverty under different categories. To a great extent, our category of individual poverty is largely a condition of want, resulting from individual's misfortune or incapacity. In this category, are the widows, the orphans, the aged and the physically disabled. These kinds of people have special problems of supporting themselves. Individual poverty also embraces insufficiency of material and means of life. In terms of unemployment, to a great extent, the category of the unemployed fall under collective poverty. Because a large proportion fall under collective poverty, the church tries to deal with it at both individual



and collective levels. Our examination of poverty at collective level comes in the Rural Development Project and Unemployment chapter.

#### 1.7.4 RURAL POOR

Our focus on rural poverty is functional. By far in Kenya, the largest number of the people (80%) live in the rural areas. It is therefore in the rural areas where a large section of the poor population live. The current development plan, shows clearly that the urban areas are more developed compared to the rural areas.

#### 1.7.5 "DISABLED"

The word "disabled" has several connotations. Townsend<sup>58</sup> for instance, in discussing the definition of "disabled", brings four main facets: (i) there is a disability which results from cronic clinical conditions such as tuberculosis (T.B) or epilepsy. This tends to "alter", or interrupt individual's normal or psychological process, (ii) the disability which results

into functional limitation of ordinary activity, example of this is when one cannot care for oneself. (iii) the disability which is "a pattern of behaviour due to either impairment or pathological conditions, (iv) finally, there is the disability that is automatic, physiological abnormality or loss of a limb. This category includes people who have lost a limb or part of the nervous system through surgery, accident etc., thus becoming blind, deaf or physically damaged or abnormal.

According to M. Jobling<sup>59</sup>, "any disability which interferes with living a normal life is a handicap." From this perspective, a handicap can either be physical or mental or both. Here again, we have Townsend's four categories succinctly implied.

M. Blaxter said that "to be disabled is to be present with problems".<sup>60</sup> What she really meant, comes up more clearly in her further explanation of the above definition. She said that, "disability" means, 'to be less able, to be at disadvantage in earning one's living or daily activities". It can however be said

that, this is rather wide and vague definition, because even those who are not necessarily physically handicapped, can be disadvantaged or unable to earn their daily living. This definition, nevertheless, gives us another dimension of the concept of disability for example, the dimension comes up with impairment resulting from prolonged illness.

In this study, definition of 'disabled' is limited to that of the physiological abnormality or loss of limbs. Therefore our categories of the disabled will include: the deaf and dumb, the physically handicapped, including the lame and the blind.

#### 1.7.6 THE CHURCH

In the thesis the meaning of "church" reflects three levels of usage. In the first level, the church has the original meaning "ecclesia", that is the body of believers or community of Christian believers, or those who profess the Christian faith. At a second level, the church is referred to as an "institution" and thirdly, the term refers to "church hierarchy", that is, church leadership.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND TO THE AREA OF STUDY

This Chapter focuses on the setting of the area of study. The Chapter examines the social organization, role and relationship among the Luo in relation, to the concept of poverty, against the background of the Luo traditional milieu. The Chapter also attempts to show how the coming of the missionaries had an impact on the Luo traditional values.

#### 2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The Luo inhabit the territories bordering the shores of Lake Victoria. This area falls within Kisumu, Siaya and Homa-Bay districts of Nyanza Province, in Western Kenya. To the North East, the Luo have the Luyia as neighbours, to the North East and South East they are surrounded by the Nandi and Kipsigis, and to the South and South East by the Gusii, the Masai and the Kuria.<sup>1</sup>

Kisumu and Siaya districts<sup>2</sup>, are situated to the north of Lake Victoria. The area consists of a narrow

strip of lowland surrounding the Gulf, the North Eastern extension of Lake Victoria, the broad expose of Kano Plains and the Nyando Valley.<sup>3</sup> To the West of the Nandi Escarpment,, is the Kavirondo peneplain which falls gently into the lake shore, Kisumu district is generally low, being below 1221 meters, except for its northern areas where the Maragoli Hills, and the Nandi Escarpment rise to an elevation of 1837 and 1529 meters respectively.<sup>4</sup> The landscape in Siaya district is basically a rolling plain, with a few scattered hills like the Ramogi, Usenge, Usire, Abiero, Regia and Muaga.<sup>5</sup>

Central Nyanza in Western Kenya is drained by six major rivers, namely: Yala, Nzoia, Nyando, Kajulu, Awach and Sondu. Annual temperatures vary from 18 degrees centigrade during cold months of June and July, and 20 degrees centigrade during hot months of December and January. Except for the regions along the lakeshore, the annual rainfall is quite reliable with annual mean ranging between 190 centimeters to 380 centimeters. The vegetation of the area vary too. On the higher grounds, there are highland savanna type of vegetation, while

most of the area has a mixture of tropical savanna type and thorny acacia trees. Apart from the areas which were formerly uninhabited because of tsetse fly, the area under study is generally thickly populated, with a population density of 277 persons per square kilometer.

## 2.2 SOCIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES

Although the Luo occupied a big unbroken territory, they would not think of themselves as a single unit. All relationships within the tribe, were seen in terms of kinship. Politically, the Luo society was decentralised and had no overriding authority for the whole tribe. Autonomy and leadership were features found within the clan and sub-clan units only.<sup>6</sup> The clan, the largest social unit, was made up of one core lineage and other lineages called 'dhouidi', who usually attached themselves to each other primarily for protection against other sub-clans.<sup>7</sup> Each clan however was autonomous unit within a defined territory, having leadership and common ancestor who formed the focus of unity. Life within the clan was based on collective efforts. For

instance, communal cultivation was highly recommended.

As Oginga said in his book entitled Not Yet Uhuru,

".....you had your own plot, but you helped others dig, plant and weed theirs and your turn to be helped came round in strict rota. When the villagers worked your farm, you supplied food and water, when you helped others, they fed you.....!"

This collective work gave security to the members and also promoted social get-together. Thus loneliness and psychological insecurity were minimized in this way.

The family unit formed another important social unit. Family unit was made up of paternal and maternal members.<sup>9</sup> The pattern of paternal unit consisted of the father, mother and children - thus forming what is called 'Jokawuoro', or the people of the same father. The maternal unit on the other hand, consisted of the mother, her sons and unmarried daughters. This group formed 'Jokamiyo', or the people of the same mother. In this kind of traditional family set-up, each wife was regarded as a leader of the household in both domestic and economic activities.

A break up of a family unit, only came about at the death of the family head (the husband). At this

time, the family land and cattle were divided amongst his sons. The sons would later establish their own lineages.<sup>10</sup>

Traditionally also, the family unit formed the basic unit of production and consumption, thus each member made an attempt to contribute in order to be self reliant or supporting. Work was done through division of labour by sex and age. Members of the household inevitably worked together on agricultural land of the homestead to raise enough crops that could sustain the group throughout the year.

Since marriage was considered a covenant relationship, when a man died, his wealth would be left under the custody of the man who would inherit his widowed wife and her children, until his sons were old enough to take care of his property and the home. The widowed wife on the other hand, would be taken into marriage by the brother or half brother or cousin of the dead man.<sup>11</sup> Neglect of orphaned children by a dead man's brother or any male relative, was regarded as unbecoming. The inheritance of a

dead brother's children and wife would earn a man some respect and honor from his people.<sup>12</sup> This was, as we shall see later, one of the ways in which the Luo provided security and material needs for widows and their children. Once the widow was past bearing age, she would leave the homestead of her inheritor and would go and live in the home of her eldest son

### 2.3 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The mode of labour in traditional Luo society was very significant, because it provided every member with specific work to do. Every individual in the community had a specific role to play, and in this way idleness was minimized.

The family labour unit was always divided according to sexes.<sup>13</sup> Women for example, were responsible for cultivation, while the head of the families were on the other hand, responsible for the clearance and preparation of the fields for cultivation. In addition to this, men were also responsible for the building and maintenance of houses and granaries, and fencing of the homestead, fishing, hunting and herding,

particularly where there were no young boys to do so. Young men helped their parents with milking, building houses, clearing fields for cultivation, and even in the actual farm work of digging, weeding and harvesting. The girls on their part, helped their mothers with cooking, fetching firewood, looking after babies and sweeping of the homestead compounds.

Within the clan and family structures, members were sustained by subsistence economy. The Luo would therefore work with the aim of satisfying their immediate needs, having farm activities essentially for the provision of food. But it was also common to find that the Luo had strong desire to accumulate wealth in the form of cattle.<sup>14</sup> Ownership of large herds of cattle was regarded as a sign of wealth and prestige in the traditional society. Cattle could be accumulated in a number of ways. One way was through the natural increase of the herd, marriage of a daughter where a father receives dowry in the form of cattle and through cattle raids too;



In his book, Paul Mboya<sup>15</sup> analyzes four categories of wealthy men in Luo traditional society. According to Mboya, okebe and ogayi were men who had many cattle, sheep and goats. The difference between the two was that, in the case of okebe, the herds owned were slightly more than was the case with 'ogayi'. In other words, okebe was slightly wealthier than ogayi. 'Jamoko', a third category of the wealthy, was a man with many herds of cattle, sheep and goats, but he did not necessarily have many children like the first two. He could, for example be found with only one wife and perhaps just a few children, or even none at all.<sup>16</sup> Jooseso, a fourth category of the wealthy according to Mboya, however was a rich man on the marginal. He had a few cattle, sheep and goats, and just enough grain to make him and his family self reliant.

Often in addition to herds of cattle, sheep and goats, wealthy men had plenty of various kinds of grains such as simsim, millet, beans, sorghum, maize and peas stocked in their granaries. These were their subsistence crops which constituted the main diet

. Possession of plenty of grain, may be explained

in two ways. First, the rich, especially the ones with big land, tended to have more land by virtue of having a large family. Secondly, is the fact that the rich had many wives and children, hence his farm produce was often boosted by the many hands working. As a result, he was always able to have surplus grain. Indeed, the surplus of the farm produce made it possible for the rich to trade with the surrounding neighbours and consequently, ensured exchange of farm products for more herds of cattle, sheep and goats.

In contrast to the wealthy, the poor or 'Jodhier' had neither cattle nor sufficient grain to feed themselves and their family members. 'Jodhier' in Luo traditional society comprised people like the orphans, wasumbini (servants), jodak (squatters) and the widows, especially those who had poor background, or those without children to look after them.

Social and economic disparity among the Luo was generally accepted as a fact of life. A close examination of most Luo folklores and proverbs would confirm this point. From their religious background, fate was seen as the major determinant of this, since

the Luo believed that every individual's luck or well-being was controlled by his/her personal god. As a result of this, it was easier to accept the fact that people were not expected to have equal possession of property. Although fate was seen as a contributor to one's economic status, individual's own effort too was believed to have a part to play in the acquisition of wealth. An individual thus could become poor if he was lazy, or he could climb the ladder of prosperity and social status, depending on how much effort he would assert in doing so. But the climbing of the ladder of prosperity and success however, was seen as an endeavor that needed patience, endurance, health and time. In other words, it was seen as a gradual process.

In the midst of social and economic disparities, the Luos often made attempts to create peace and harmony among members in the community. The gap between the rich and the poor had therefore to be minimized. One way of doing this was by constant reminder that fate is something which keeps on fluctuating between fortune and misfortune, thus human ways of life were not to be regarded as transient and impermanent.<sup>17</sup> Viewed in this way, the people were

being reminded that wealth and poverty were not permanent.<sup>18</sup>  
One who is rich today may turn out to be a poor man the next day.

### Causes of Poverty

In practical life, reasons given for causes of poverty were varied. Individual's poverty could be inherited, as in the case of the orphans who failed to inherit from their fathers, land and livestock. In normal cases, an adult orphans became self reliant from his father's property. This was enacted when he was ready to get married and begin his own independent life. Before this, the father's property would be in the hands of the man who inherited the mother in levirate marriage. 'Misumba' as unmarried man, and a servant, falls in this category. In other cases, poverty was the result of disaster (famine) or crisis (war). This brings us to another category of the poor, 'jodak', or squatters. As we have already said earlier, poverty also could be caused by an individual's character, such as laziness.

2.4 ROLES AND RELATIONS TOWARDS/WITH THE POOR IN THE  
LUO COMMUNITY

Most of the methods that the Luo used in attempts to alleviate the suffering of the poor, were primarily to bridge the gap between the wealthy and the poor. An orphan who was left without any kind of wealth from his father, would often be forced to become a 'misumba', or a servant for his clansmen to meet his basic needs. As a servant of the people, he would carry out all kinds of humble errands, ranging from wood chopping, herding, fetching water, cleaning the compounds, to cultivation of farms. To lessen an orphan's sufferings from possible mistreatment from members of his community, clan elders would have him attached to one particular family. Once this was done, it was the responsibility of wuon pacho or the head of the village to assign the orphan to one of his wives' house. Wuon pacho could decide for instance, to attach the orphan to the house of migumba - that is, the wife without either male children, or one without children at all. But whichever the case may be, the orphan became a son to the wife given the responsibility of guardianship. For the orphan, this

attachment became vital, for it gave him the right to inherit his foster mother's land and livestock when she died.

Like an orphan, jadhier as an adult, could become a misumba to his people, and for all services rendered, he would be given food. Jadhier who had a house of his own, would walk from home to home rendering services to people, but in the evening he would go back to his house for the night. In most cases however, this was not the case because jadhier usually had no proper home to stay. Thus, after rendering services to his fellow clans-men, jadhier would get accommodated in whichever homestead he found himself in the evening. Abila or duol<sup>19</sup> for the head of the homestead was always opened for such people.

Jadhier was also traditionally, commonly an unmarried man. Bachelorhood of jadhier usually resulted from lack of property, in form of herd of cattle, thus he could not afford to marry. Thus, unless his relatives assisted him to get a wife, he was liable to remain single. Attachment of misumba or unmarried and poor man to a wealthy family was done voluntarily. The man himself took the initiative,

and through mutual agreement between him and a rich man, he would settle in the homestead of the rich man as a servant, and in order to earn his living he worked for the rich man's family.<sup>20</sup>

In the case of widows, the Luo tried to minimize their suffering from poverty by allowing them (widows) to choose, upon the death of their husbands between remarrying in their deceased husbands' homestead in levirate unions, or return to their patrinal homes to remarry, provided that their bride wealth was given back to their deceased husbands' lineage. The upkeep, protection and security of widows and orphans, generally were directly under the umbrella of family and lineage units. In principle then, the people were expected by the society to support and care for the family members of the deceased kinsman. In our research we came across a number of levirate marriages. Discussion with some of these cases and other respondents who are not involved in such marriages, brought out the idea that this practice is becoming unpopular with the present generation. A number of female respondents for instance, expressed the feeling

that they would like to be independent of levirate marriage , if they could, because it is now becoming apparent that, levirate unions are adding more problems to their already existing ones. For example, having to get more children from levirate union and having in most cases, to look after them single handed.<sup>21</sup> These respondents therefore desired instead, to remain as single parents and to bring up the children beget by the deceased husbands on their own.

The practice of sharing was another prominent method used by the Luo to help the poor members in their community. According to Luo custom, one was not allowed 'to starve', as long as there was food to be shared. This idea features alot in the Luo traditional stories and proverbs<sup>22</sup>, which is an evidence that it was considered important. Traits like selfishness were strongly disapproved among the people, and every attempt was made to stamp it out the moment it manifested itself in an individual. Individuals were likewise taught to be hospitable towards other members of the community, right from their childhood. Male children, in particular, were encouraged in this, partly to enable them to develop



a sense of responsibility, which they were expected to apply in their adult lives towards their brothers and sisters in case of a father's death, or, just in their own homesteads as the heads of the homes.

Sharing was carried out in several ways:

- (i) those who had no livestock could borrow some from their rich relatives or neighbours for milk and blood, since these formed the main diet of the people. Retention of such livestock was however indefinite, for the owner could at any time claim back their cattle. But as long as the borrower had the cow, he was certain of getting food for himself and his family. (ii) A person in need of grain could get some from those who had enough to share with him. This practice was popularly known as 'kisuma'. Through kisuma, those who lacked food, were temporarily helped to feed themselves. (iii) Exogamous system of marriage, where a man married outside his clan, further provided another means of helping needy members.<sup>23</sup> A marriage of a woman into another clan did not only form maternal and affinal connection between two clans, but it also created a kind of friendship between different families and clans. It was in this context, that when one clan

was shattered in either war or by famine, a man from the affected clan could go and live with his affines and affinal links as a jadak. Those who were landless, too, could use maternal, affinal and friendship connections to ask for land on freehold basis.<sup>24</sup> Land loaned to an individual in this way, could last as long as Jadak complied with the regulations laid down for him by the owners of the land. It was however very rare to find jadak being turned out of the land he had been loaned.

Above all, the Luo made sure that individuals were prepared from childhood to become self reliant. The primary method of doing this was through traditional education, transmitted through folklores as well as through practical involvement in the daily activities in the homesteads. Children were taught importance of hard work and means of subsistence in the family through actual work in their parents' farms and in the herding of cattle.

## 2.5 INROADS OF CHRISTIANITY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE LUO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS.

Missionary enterprise was non existent in

Nyanza Province between 1844, when the first missionaries came to Kenya and 1905, because the area could not be reached from the coast where the first mission centres had been established. Evangelization of Nyanza Province began with the arrival of Church Missionary Society and the Mill Hill Fathers from Uganda.<sup>25</sup> In the turn of the century, a flood of missionaries began to pour into western Kenya.

In fact, it was the building of the Uganda Railway that accelerated the move of these later missionary societies into western Kenya. The railway provided both cheap transport and safety during their travels from Mombasa to Kisumu.<sup>26</sup> The first C.M.S mission station was opened at Maseno, under the tutelage of Archdeacon J.J. Willis. In 1919, a new station was opened at Ng'iya by Canon Pleydell. After this several other stations were established in Siaya district.

The Catholic Mill Hill Fathers, on the other hand, established their first station at Kisumu in 1904, currently Milimani parish. Later they established Ojolla mission in Kisumu, but since this mission was

a failure, it was eventually transferred to Aluor in Siaya district in 1913. In 1920, the Catholic church opened Rang'ala mission station. Thereafter followed the opening of Kibuye (1926), Yala (1932), Sega (1934), Nyabondo (1935), Mbagha (1937), Madiany (1937), and Lwak (1946).<sup>27</sup> Several other missions were also opened in the sixties: Ahero (1960), Barkorwa (1960), Koru (1965), and Nyangoma (1960). Ojola was re-established in 1978.

Social solidarity and unity based on the Luo religion and kinship system went through a gradual, but steady process of disintegration when Christianity came to be established in the Luo traditional society. In their endeavor to win converts for their respective denominations, both the Catholics and the Protestant societies ended up by starting many churches in the area, since each mission group wanted its denomination represented in the area of its operation. As a result of this, those Luo members who become Christians had to identify with a specific denomination, thus depending on missionary society or societies operating in a particular area, the Luo Christians would become either

'Jo-C.M.S.' (C.M.S. converts), 'Jocatholic' (Catholic converts), 'Jo-A.I.M.' (A.I.M. converts) and so on. In this context, kinship identification turned out to have far less impact on the converts, consequently, their churches became their custodians instead, in almost all aspects of their lives.

On the religious level, the introduction of Christianity came to isolate the Luo Christians from their tribal belief system. The missionaries saw the Luo belief on ancestors as useless. In its place, they began to teach the Luo to believe in the God the Christians worshipped. The only mediator, the Luo were told to believe in Jesus Christ.

In the area of marriage, we further see the process of erosion of Luo solidarity in the family unit. Upon joining Christianity, demands were made on an individual to abandon the customs and practices of his 'heathen' family members.<sup>28</sup> Marriage in a Christian fashion, alienated him further from his family members, since a Christian wedded couple often ended up setting themselves a new home, thus separating

from the household of their parents. Consequently, the basic family unit among the converts was reduced to a nucleus family, comprising the husband, his wife and their children.<sup>29</sup> This was contrary to the Luo cultural heritage where marriage between two individuals was regarded as a means of cementing the union of the households, and clans from which the couple came.

The Christian concept of monogamy based on the New Testament teaching, also came to deny the Luo Christians practice of polygamy. The missionaries maintained that polygamy was inconsistent with the Christian teaching. For a polygamous man to become a Christian, he had to send all his wives away except one he chose to remain with.<sup>30</sup> To curb the problem of polygamy, the missionaries ensured that the Christian boys and girls married among themselves. This was done through arrangement of marriages among the residents in the mission stations. Summarizing this tendency by the missionaries in general, Tamu said:

Residence in the mission was therefore one way through which the white missionary could enforce monogamy, for they encouraged that their adult converts need their wives from the mission house. Those who did not obey the wish of the missionary were thrown out of the mission homes.<sup>31</sup>

The greatest conflict between the missionaries and the Luo in the area of marriage was with the practice of wife inheritance.<sup>32</sup> The missionaries came to view the whole custom with a lot of misconception. In the first place, the practice was equated to material possession because of the payment of bridal wealth.<sup>33</sup> It was also understood by the missionaries as a means through which the Christian widows were readmitted back into the traditional life.

Practical alternatives open to the missionaries in their fight against levirate marriages, were limited and generally involved attempts to strengthen widows to resist their incorporation into their husbands' families. In the Catholic church, for instance, a number of alternatives were carried out: (i) a widow would be allowed to build a house outside the compound of her brother-in-law's homestead, as a sign that she was not cohabiting with him, but that he was still

officially guardian, (ii) the Christian widow would be allowed to move to a Catholic mission compound, where she built a house and was given land for growing food, (iii) a widow would be allowed to remarry as a new wife in a new lineage, this was similar in the Anglican church, (iv) finally, a widow would be allowed to live in her husband's homestead, or her father's as a single person without designated marital pattern.<sup>34</sup> ←

For young people, the formal type of education introduced by the missionaries came to entail total alienation from tradition community, especially when they were kept away in boarding schools.<sup>35</sup> It was however their experience in these schools that isolated them, because whatever they experienced, was quite unrelated to their entire social, economic and religious background. The method of keeping students in boarding schools further took them away from their traditional responsibilities and tasks at home. To a great extent, formal type of education, robbed parents and the entire community, the privilege of transmitting cultural traditions to the children.



Ironically, however, it is interesting to note that, when formal education was first introduced in Luoland, the people were quite disinterested, but as soon as the young educated men began to acquire European materials like clothes, bicycles, furniture, which they were able to buy with the money they had earned from their salaried jobs, the community began to have changed attitudes towards the missionary education. Those adults who felt they were too old for formal education, saw to it that their own children recieved it instead.<sup>36</sup>

Perhaps, it was the desperate needy situation in which the people were, that earned the missionaries a measure of success in disintegrating the Luo traditional society. Challenges from disease, ignorance, inadequate housing and general poor living conditions, led to the creation of subsidiary activities in medical, agricultural and industrial fields.<sup>37</sup> The missionaries saw in this context that the only way to make Christianity have impact, was to adopt new means of economy and social values. This however did not obliterate their primary aim of evangelization, these activities simply

came in to assist as developmental elements and as catalysts of Luo conversion. On the whole, in the missionaries' view, new methods of agriculture, trade and industrial skills were to help the African converts become independent, so that it could be easier for them to disassociate themselves from their traditional way of life.<sup>38</sup> Attesting to this, Welbourne said '...it became clear that the missionaries have taken to Africa not the pure milk of the gospel..... but a complex of culture which perhaps is easiest to call western Christian'.<sup>39</sup>

Improved agriculture and new methods in trade and industrial skills, did not just equip the converts with new skills to enable them begin new Christian lives, they actually contributed to the disruption of the subsistence economy, which the missionaries had found in operation among the Luo society. Due to this, it became much easier for the colonial administration to continue with the process, through their own revolutionizing agents. For instance, when the colonialists introduced the system of taxation, the people were forced to find new sources of revenue to meet the

demand placed upon them by the colonisers. One way of paying tax, was by earning money through cultivation of unconsummable commodities like sisal. The second alternative, was to get salaried work either in the railway or European plantations.<sup>40</sup> The second alternative always proved favourable with the majority of the people, particularly the young men. With the introduction of the European material goods in the market, the Luo had no choice but to get cash, to be able to buy these commodities.<sup>41</sup>

Increased importance of cash in the domestic life of the people, eventually reduced the part that had formerly been played by the family wealth and traditional goods. Traditional role between the young and old were similarly reversed. The senior persons now had to depend on the help from children, for their general upkeep especially if they did not have a fairly young wife to cultivate land for them.<sup>42</sup>

Heavy demands and expectations put on the Luo men became more and more great a burden to bear. With low wages, a man usually finds that he could not earn

enough money to pay his taxes, maintain his wife, educate his children and also continue to support his parents and relatives. Nor could he make ends meet without relying on his land which, he generally left behind to be cultivated when he went away to get salaried employment.<sup>43</sup>

Thus by 1963, when Kenya got her independence, the Luo had experienced alot of changes. The church in independent Kenya not only began to work in a totally different political set up, but was also to work and deal with a society totally different from the one which was in existence when the church was first established during the missionary era. It was therefore going to deal with a people torn away from the kind of life they had known and were used to, a people who were faced with a new kind of life which was not only foreign, but also the kind of life which they had had no time to gradually build into.<sup>44</sup>

In Chapters three, four and five that follow, the study is going to look into what kind of methods the C.P.K. and the Roman Catholic Church are using to fight poverty today.

FOOTNOTES.

1. H. Fearn, An African Economy: A Study of the economic development in Nyanza Province of Kenya 1903-1953, Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 2.
2. For the purpose of our discussion, from here henceforth, Kisumu and Siaya districts are to be referred to as Central Nyanza, this is the former name for the two districts.
3. Fearn, Ibid., p. 1.
4. G.E.M. Ogutu, A Historical Analysis of the Luo Idea of God; Nairobi, University of Nairobi, M.A. Thesis, 1975, p. 11.
5. E.E. Barker, A Short History of Nyanza, London, African Literature Bureau, B.A., 1950, p. 1.
6. M. Whisson, Change and Challenge, Nairobi, Christian Council of Kenya, 1966, p. 23-24.
7. Ibid., p. 24.
8. O. Odinga, Not Yet Uhuru, London, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1968, p. 13.
9. Ogutu, op. cit., p. 18.
10. Whisson, p. 34.

11. Whisson, Ibid, p. 35.
12. Ibid. p.35.
13. N.A. Othieno-Ochieng', Luo Social system with a special analysis of marriage ritual, Equatorial Publishers, 1965, p. 1.
14. Fearn, op. cit. p. 29.
15. P. Mboya, Luo Kit gi Gitimbegi: A handbook of Luo Customs, (South Kavirondo Native Council), 1938, p. 3f.
16. The fact that a wealthy man usually had many wives, it followed that he also had many children. Rich men with one wife, a few or no children were not very common, but they did exist in the Luo community as Mboya shows.
17. P.S.O. Amuka, Ngero as a Social Object, Nairobi, University of Nairobi, M.A. Thesis, 1978, p. 158, 227.
18. Ibid, p. 229..
19. Interview data - A number of people or individuals were interviewed in Siaya and Kisumu districts in order to get relevant data on Jodhier. This kind of data was not available in any of the written sources that we had read.
20. Interview Ibid. between 29th January and 6th February 1981.
21. Interview, see Chapter Three.

22. A.B. Odaga, Thu Tinda: stories from Kenya, Nairobi, University of Nairobi, M.A. Thesis, 1980, p. 39.
23. Since the Luo clans were exogamous, members of the same lineage were obliged to help the others in times of need for instance, in case of war.
24. A.B.U. Ocholla-Ayayo, Traditional Ideology and Ethics Among the Southern Luo, Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, p. 131.
25. The Church Missionary Society came to be established in Uganda in 1877, as a result of Stanley's challenge (1875) to the English Missionary Societies to follow up the evangelical work he had started with Mutesa. Mill Hill Fathers followed years later in 1893.
26. W.B. Anderson, The Church in East Africa 1840-1974, Nairobi, Uzima Press Ltd., p. 62.
27. Catholic Directory of Eastern Africa, 1981-1983, 6th ed., Nairobi, AMECEA Documentation Service, Tanganyika Mission Press, 1980, p. 54ff.
28. African customs and practices were regarded by the missionaries as primitive and Unchristian. This began to encourage individualism in family units.
29. During pre-European times, the African family life was closely knit and tradition was the dominating power of the family and the society as a whole.
30. The woman chosen by the man to stay with him was not necessarily the first wife.

31. A.J. Temu, British Protestant Missions, London, Longman Group Ltd., 1972, p. 108.
32. J. Baeta, Christianity in tropical Africa, International African Institute, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 79.
33. Ibid. p. 79.
34. N. Kirven, The Christian Prohibition of the African Levirate Custom: An Empirical Study, University of Michael College, University of Toronto, Ph.D., 1974, p.129.
35. This was one way of keeping the youth in mission schools away from their traditional environment.
36. E.H.O. Odwako, The Church and Education: the contribution of the C.M.S. to education in Western Kenya 1905 - 1963, Nairobi, University of Nairobi, M.A. Thesis, 1975, p. 91.
37. These were used to win adherents.
38. R. Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa, London, Longman Group Ltd., 1952, p. 169.
39. F.B. Welbourn, East Africa Rebels: A Study of Some Independent Churches, London, SCM Press Ltd., 1961, p. 170.
40. Odwako, op. cit. p. 113.
41. Thus men had to seek for wage employment.



42. Othieno, op. cit. p. 32

43. Ibid. p. 34

44. This is what the church is dealing with now.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CHURCH AND THE POOR - WIDOWS, ORPHANS AND THE AGED

This Chapter presents research data on the response of lay people and the church leaders concerning the mission of the church to the poor families. The analysis is based on a study of programmes carried out by the Catholic Church and the C.P.K. in Kisumu and Siaya districts.

The analysis attempts first, to explore the official pastoral policy of the two churches towards the welfare of the poor families. Secondly, the attitudes of the people towards the church programmes geared towards alleviation of poverty of the widows, the orphans and the aged, thirdly the extent to which the people are aware of what the church is doing to help the poor. The fourth point, is to find out whether or not, the poor who are being helped through the church programmes, have had their living standards raised, and finally, the analysis examines the people's assessment of the programmes, to find out whether the two churches are failing or succeeding through their programmes designed to help the poor families

3.1 MISSION TO UPLIFT THE LIVING STANDARD OF POOR FAMILIES (WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE WIDOWS, ORPHANS, AND THE AGED).

3.1.1 CATHOLIC CHURCH PROGRAMMES

Some of the most successful programmes in the Catholic Church geared toward the welfare of the poor families are carried out by members of the congregation themselves. Examples of group activities are salient with 'Joot', literally means 'family' members' and 'Ne ema e mwandu' group. 'Ne ema e mwandu' literally means 'grace is wealth'<sup>1</sup>. Members of 'Joot' group are primarily concerned with the welfare of the destitutes in their community. The first 'Joot' group was started at Ahero parish in Kisumu. At this point, it should be noted that 'Joot' group is not comprised of extremely rich members. It is a group formed by both the poor<sup>1b</sup> and the rich who were initially brought together by the need for worship. Therefore helping destitutes was not their original purpose. The initial purpose of the group was to meet for Bible studies for their own spiritual nourishment. But as they became aware of needy

people like the orphans and the aged who had no proper source of help, they began to organise their group with an aim of extending their activities to include programmes that could assist the needy. From the start, 'Joot' group members demonstrated their concern by donating part of their collection, or offering during bible study meetings, towards the welfare of orphans and the aged. Later, individual members would take individual orphans and take care of them as foster parents. The aged on the other hand, would have some of their needs provided for in their respective homes. Basic needs of the aged were met through the provision of food, clothing and shelter.

The way in which 'Joot' activities and programmes have developed over the years, cannot be said to be the same in all Catholic parishes. 'Joot' group usually advance their programmes according to the specific needs of the destitutes found in their parishes. However varied 'Joot' programmes may be, each group aims at meeting basic needs of the needy in their community. In Kisumu parish for instance, 'Joot' members have been given an upperhand by the church personnel, to deal with the appeals made by the poor who go to seek help

from the church. At the same time, they are in charge of material or financial help issued out to the poor whom the church decides to give assistance to.<sup>2</sup> The 'Joot' group in Kisumu Parish have also acquired a piece of land from the municipality of Kisumu. This has made it possible for them to engage in agricultural activities. Harvests from this communally owned farm are used to provide food for the poor and while some of it is usually sold, and the money received from such a sale is normally distributed among the poor members.

A more interesting feature with Kisumu 'Joot' group is their practice of loaning and saving of money through 'Savings and Credits' system.<sup>3</sup> Through this procedure, members of 'Joot' group are encouraged to become self reliant through trade. To achieve this, the church tries to teach the people how to save the little money they may have as individuals, into group's account before they can borrow from the bulk saving. The aim here is for the members to boost their economic power in order to meet their many family needs. To put this idea into practice, a member is allowed to borrow three times the amount he or she had previously saved in the group account. Thus, if one had saved 50 shillings,

he would be allowed to borrow 150 shillings. Since borrowing does not guarantee automatic profitable use of capital, 'Joot' group has formulated regulations to be followed so that there is a desired result of the money credited. The criteria of borrowing includes: reasons why an individual wants the money, how he intends to use the money and the procedure of repayment. The duration of loaning is one month, and payment is done in instalments to enable the group members to pay whatever amount they had borrowed. This practice has been found quite beneficial by several members of the group. . But according to the father-in-charge of the parish at the time of the survey, some of the members were failing to repay their loans as had been agreed.

This was inhibiting, progress that the group had begun to make, and was even weakening the desire to lend money to those who wanted to borrow.

### 3.2 ORPHANS

The idea to establish an orphanage was born as a result of 'Joot's' endeavour to help orphans in their community. As an alternative of keeping orphans in

different homes by different individual families as was the practice, 'Joot' group members at Ahero parish decided on the establishment of an institution where more of these orphans could be kept, looked after and have their needs met. Kisito Home - the first of its kind in Kisumu and Siaya districts - was established in 1964, at Ahero in Kisumu district. Not all orphans around Ahero are cared for in Kisito Home. This is because some orphans are usually left in the hands of extended family members who are able to care for them. Furthermore, even though the home is referred to as an orphanage, it does not cater for orphans only, but it is open to other needy children in general. A number of destitute children from the area, who are not orphans, have therefore been admitted into the home, because they were found abandoned by their parents, to those from broken homes.<sup>4</sup> Although these two groups represent different psychological make up compared to orphans, their physical needs might be identical. From the random samples extracted from a list of reports on Kisito Home<sup>5</sup>, we identified 56 orphans (37 from Siaya district, 19 from Kisumu district). In addition to this, there were 6 children among the abandoned

lot, and all these were from Siaya district, while 6 of these children were from broken homes. 3 of these were from Kisumu and Siaya

During the time of our survey, Kisito home had 60 children. Most of these had previously been found in desperate state. Among them, were those who were not going to school because of lack of money to pay their school fees or buy school uniforms. As a result, they would roam about in the villages doing nothing useful.<sup>6</sup> But all the children who were eventually selected for admission into the Home, had been found living with either parent(s) or relatives in very poor living conditions. For instance, they had little to eat, had poor shelter, were in pathetic health and had dirty and tattered clothes.

For the parents, lack of means to maintain their children, would force a number of them to delegate this responsibility to their close relatives or kind neighbours. This is where 'Joot' group members become handy. It is therefore for this is the very reason that the majority who had one or two of their children selected to stay in Kisito Home, still found it difficult to maintain those children who remained under their care thus,



they continued to face the same predicament of an unpromising future because the poverty state in their homes.

Age of admittance into the Kisito Home is between 6 and 18 years. The children in Kisito Home often leave the home at 18 years of age to return to their respective homes.

In order to locate children to be admitted into the home, 'Joot' group make use of a committee that it had selected to help them with the responsibility of locating needy children in the area. Before the committee decides on the children qualified for admission into Kisito Home, they have to examine the home condition of each child, then give a written report of each family concerned. Thereafter, 'Joot' group members, send trained social workers who help to assess whether or not the case identified should be placed in Kisito Home. Basing their decision on recommendations given by the social workers, various children are subsequently selected for admission into the Home.

To maintain regular contact with the family members of the children in the Home, church personnel are required to pay these members regular visits in their respective homes. At such times, the

family members receive reports of the welfare of their children in the Kisito Home. During this time also, parents are helped to solve some of their family problems. For instance, they are shown ways of how they can earn a living that can help them maintain the rest of their family members.

Contact with sponsors is also encouraged. Thus, every sponsored child in the Kisito Home have to write letters to their individual sponsors abroad regularly in order to keep them in the picture of how they are getting on. In addition to child-sponsorship, funds that are used to run the home are received mostly from European countries. Help given to the children in Kisito Home is not limited only to the provision of basic needs, for children of school age, the priority is given in the area of education. Sponsorship start from nursery school level and continues to secondary school. During the year 1981, ten of the children, nine boys and one girl, had just completed their primary education and earned admission to different secondary schools. These were going to continue to receive sponsorship from the church. For technical education, some of the children from Kisito Home are taken to village polytechnics

in the location, where the boys learn carpentry, masonry, crafts and other various basic skills, while the girls are taught home economics. After receiving their education, these children are helped by the church to become self reliant by starting them off on their own businesses.

The Catholic's approach of taking care of both the orphans and the destitute children in a home was affirmed by the respondents' answers to the question on how best, 'they think orphans should be assisted'. People's attitudes towards the assistance given to the orphans, or destitute children, appear to have been highly influenced by their observations on what the Catholic church is doing to help needy children. The data showed that 58.1% of the Catholic laity interviewed suggested that orphans can best be helped through rehabilitation in orphanages, while 9.3% suggested that the orphans be educated. These groups of respondents in fact, simply mentioned what is already happening through the Catholic church programmes. But, another 4.7% of the respondents disapproved of institutionalization of orphans in orphanages. The suggestion indicates a need to offer help to the orphaned and destitute children instead, in their own home environment.

Recently, changes were made by the Catholic church in their approach of assisting orphans and destitute children. What really sparked off the need for change was not just a mere need to keep such children in their own home environment, but it was the realization of an increase in the number of orphans and needy children. The Catholic church now has additional programmes which cater for the destitute children and orphans in their own homes. Children under this programme are mainly those who have at least one parent alive, but who, due to poverty, cannot maintain them properly. The church in this case, gives help to the orphans and destitute children through their relatives rather than have them placed in the orphanage.

Deinstitutionalization of the programme for the destitute children has proved to be of great benefit to the church in many ways. First, this change now enables the church to carry its programmes in a much wider scale than it was able to do before. As a result of this new approach, more children who are needy are being assisted by the Catholic Church. At the time of the survey, over three hundred children were being

helped by the programme as compared to sixty-five who were in the orphanage. Obviously, placing orphans and destitute children in orphanages demands constant expansion of physical structures like dormitories and dining halls. Apart from this, expenses are also needful for daily feeding programmes for the children who reside in the orphanages. Giving destitute children support at their homes, eliminates the problem of accomodation and even cuts down expenses for food. Help given outside an orphanage, therefore concentrates more on the education of the recepients. This is done by supplying both school funds and school uniforms.

A second benefit though indirectly, is that, by helping needy children in their own homes, the help not only filters down, sometimes to other members in the home of the needy child, but it also minimizes the dangers of maladjustments on the part of the children. Children in orphanages are vulnerable to maladjustment. This alienation usually comes because the orphans and needy children are kept away from their traditional way of life for a long time. Institutionalized life style plants in the minds of the children, values that are different from those found in their homes, by providing

things that are commonly out of reach in these children's home environments. Things like expensive silver ware and rooms with electricity, though good for life, have been found to make the children living in the orphanage, begin to dislike home, and it is a struggle for those children who have been in the orphanage to adjust to their home environments at 18 years of age, when they are required to leave the orphanage. Furthermore, communal life results into behaviour totally unlike that of a family. The problem of orphanage children's readjustment to their home environment is thus common.

### 3.3 BABY HOME

Besides the orphanage at Ahero parish, the Catholic church has another type of orphanage in Siaya District called "Baby Home", which was established for orphans between ages of one day to 3 years. For the past 40 years, the Franciscan sisters of St. Joseph, have been orphaned babies. Basically, what instigated the establishment of Ran'ala Baby Home was repeated experience of having babies, whose mothers had died during delivery, brought to the mission sisters. Repeated requests made to the sisters to take care of such babies,

eventually led to the establishment of Rang'ala Baby Home in 1942.<sup>9</sup> The mothers of all the children were dead, except for a few cases where children had been found abandoned on the streets.

Rang'ala Baby Home had a humble beginning with only 10 motherless children, but over the years it has grown, and by 1979, about 514 children had been registered to have passed through the Home. Intake into Rang'ala Baby Home vary from time to time, since children who have been admitted in the Home are only expected to stay there for a period of 2 years. But because this does not always work, the period can be extended to five years at times. Progress report of 1979 showed the following number of children for 4 different years. In 1972, there were 30 children in the Home, while in 1976 there were 40, 1977, 30 children, and 1979 there was a total of 33 children in the Home.

Expansion of the Home has been evident. This is why more children have been admitted into the Home. Donations from charitable organizations, together with the church donations and government grants, have enhanced

this expansion work, especially between 1962 and 1971.

In order to maintain contact between parents and their children in Rang'ala Baby Home, the sisters-in-charge have developed a system where this can be achieved. One way, is for the sisters to keep in touch with the relatives of the babies in the Home through regular visits. The sisters also have, as far as possible, to encourage the relatives to have concern and parental responsibility. To achieve this, they have respective parents or relatives pay towards the upkeep of their children. When this was first introduced in 1942, fathers or relatives of the babies had to pay only 5 shillings. This has however been on the increase. In 1972, for instance, it was 45 shillings per month, but by 1976 it had risen to 100 shillings per month, because of the rise in the cost of living. It is carefully considered by the sisters-in-charge of the Home that, material support can never replace human relationship. Therefore in addition to the payment of the fees, the children's relatives are encouraged to pay their children regular visits at the Home. However, some relatives tend to shun the visits, to avoid being involved particularly with the payment of the fees mentioned above.



To minimize this habit, sisters-in-charge of the Home try to visit as many of these relatives as possible, to explain to them the importance of paying visits to their children while they are in Rang'ala Baby Home. Whenever such attempts are made without positive response, the sisters are sometimes forced to involve the local authority to put pressure on such relatives so that they can visit their children, and also to pay the fees required. Despite all these efforts however, some relatives have not only continued to shun visiting their children in the home. A number of children have been left in the Home this way. In this category are those children who were found abandoned on the streets.

Failure to claim a child from the Baby Home within a certain period of time, forces the sisters to get foster parents who can take care of the abandoned children. Between 1972 and 1979 for instance, 19 children who had been abandoned by their relatives were adopted both in Kenya and other European countries. The table below illustrates this.

TABLE 1. YEAR Vs. NUMBER OF ADOPTED CHILDREN

YEAR	NO. OF CHILDREN ADOPTED
1972	3
1973	2
1974	3
1975	6
1976	2
1978	1
1979	2
TOTAL	19

1972 and 1974 had 3 children each, abandoned by their relatives in the Home. In 1975 six children were abandoned. Among these were children who had been found in the streets. 1973 and 1976 however, saw a reduction in the number. In these two years there were four abandoned children. Most of these are usually adopted by people who are willing to bring them up as their own.

In cases, where children are not abandoned,

In cases where children are not abandoned, the sisters in Rang'ala Baby Home follow their policy of returning the children who have been in their charge to their respective homes, so that they can be brought up in home environment with the rest of the family members. Home provides the right environment that is conducive for the upbringing of the children, those behind the Baby Home believe in this strongly. Children whose fathers are very poor and are unable to maintain them in their respective homes get enlisted in the Family Helper Project, to ensure that they get some education.<sup>10</sup> However for those who are still under the care of the sisters and are old enough to attend nursery school, do so at the nursery school which has been built by the Catholic church in the compound. The purpose of the nursery is to assist in the effort of having children in the Baby Home lead normal and meaningful lives as they mix with other children from the village at the nursery.

In addition to the problems caused by the relatives of the children in the Home as we have already said, finance is another major problem facing the sisters who run the Home. Although the government donates a substantial aid towards the management of the Baby Home

annually, the sisters still find it inevitable to rely on help from overseas countries. Assistance from the local people has been in non existence for along time, they have just began to be involved in the maintenance of the children in Rang'ala Home. They do this by donating commodities like maize and beans to provide food for the children. This is a sign of a changed attitude on the part of the people, compared to the former one, where people kept aloof because they thought that the whole endeavour was entirely the responsibility of the church through the sisters at the mission center. Needless to say, what the people are giving the Home is far below the kind of support that can keep the Home running.

The financial state of the Home has been causing great concern to those in-charge of the management of the Home. Need for money to pay salaries of staff and for the general maintenance of the children, have often led to over-dependence on the aid from developed countries. However, efforts are being made to support the Home from within the country. At the moment the church has to continue to grapple with the financial problems in running the Baby Home. The 1969-1977 report on the

donation-expenditure, indicated that the expenditure, exceeded the amount of money received from donors. As Table 2 below shows, in 1970, expenditure exceeded the donation that the Home had received that year by Kenya shillings 39,632.10. In 1972 - 73 it was Kenya shillings 645,886.40. Only for the year 1975 - 76, did the donation exceed the expenditure with Kenya shillings 164,772.95. Since the figures for 1977 expenditure and 1978/79 donations were not available, it was not possible to show the difference between the donations and the expenditure for these years.

TABLE 2. DONATION Vs. EXPENDITURE

YEAR	DONATION (Total)	EXPENDITURE(Total)
1969	- -	- -
1970	31272.30	70904.40
1971	- -	- -
1972	28724.70	79121.10
1973	4510.00	
1974	30582.95	- -
1975	88663.10	11418.25
1976	87528.10	- -
1977	81136.75	- -
1978/79	- -	20558.00

### 3.4 THE AGED

As we stated in Chapter 2, the economic changes which cropped into the Luo traditional society in the beginning of the nineteenth century, brought about a changed role in the traditional families. Elderly people who were formerly key persons in the welfare of the families, became dependants in the monetary society, especially where they could not fend for themselves because of lack of land. Those who had wage earning children, relied heavily on the help they got from their working children. However, as the cost of living continues to rise and most of the bread winners, particularly the children, keep living away in the urban areas, the aged parents have had to fend for themselves. Those who have no working children or enough piece of land to cultivate for their subsistence, tend to

be really needy, and provision of basic needs becomes a major problem. Care of the aged among the Luo even in today's monetary society, to a great extent is still the responsibility of relatives. Where this lacks, the aged suffer from poor housing, poor feeding habits, poor health and general lack of domestic assistance.

Concern towards the aged is a recent thing in the government circles, and even among charitable organizations. Thus largely, the needy among the aged have been left to fend for themselves.

In the area of our study, the Catholic church has been the only group who has shown direct concern towards the welfare of the needs of the aged. Placement of the aged in the 'old peoples' homes has been a common practice with the Catholic church. The practice began during the dawn of the missionary era, when widows, most of whom were elderly, were encouraged to move to mission centers where they had houses built for them, to avoid inheritance through marriage by male relatives of their dead husbands as the tradition required.

The 'old peoples homes' manned by the Catholic church today, are specially built for the aged around mission centres. These homes are where the most needy lot are settled. Almost all the old people in 'The Aged' Homes are widows who have neither land to cultivate,, nor children to look after them. The purpose of having the aged in a home is therefore to help them receive food, clothing and shelter, which they lack when they are completely on their own in their respective homes.

The location of the aged homes around mission centers is for strategic reasons. Members of each congregation at every mission center, are given the responsibility of looking after the aged in the 'old peoples' homes. Assistance from the church administration is only given to the very old, in the form of food and clothing. Members of the Catholic congregation themselves help the aged with manual work like fetching firewood, water, cleaning the compound, cooking and cultivation of whatever piece of land they may have as their possession within the home. These actually are the immediate needs of the aged in most cases. The



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fact that such roles are carried out by members of the congregation at various centers, shows that their response is in accordance with the needs they see in the lives of the aged.

Catholic Church programmes do not center for all the aged in the "old people" homes, therefore, rather than have the aged in the old people's homes, 'Ne ema e mwandu' group found in Buholo sub-parish in Siaya district, for instance, started a project to help the old women fend for themselves. This group began in 1976, under the leadership of one catechist in the area.<sup>11</sup> Ne ema e mwandu is equivalent to 'Joot' group, except that it concentrates more on the old people, especially the widows. But in addition to widows, those women who have husbands but are from very poor families, are likewise assisted. Although the basic aim of the group is to meet for Bible studies like 'Joot' group, their major activity besides this is on agriculture. In this way, they have blended evangelism with social concern to reach the whole man. The Bible is for the soul and development for the physical needs.

Cooperative farming being carried out by Ne ema e Mwandu group has been made possible by the cooperation of the neighbours who, not only sympathize with the needy members of the group, but also loan their land to the group to use for a period of time. A number of such plots have been acquired by the group from kind donors, and on such plots of land, the group has been able to grow crops like maize, green grams, bands 'a type of grain' and beans, to be used by them and the poor within their community. At the time of the research, achievement by the group on their agricultural activities could be registered. During a four year period(1977-80),the group had already harvested the following bags of maize:

TABLE 3: NE EMA E MWANDU'S 1977-80 MAIZE HARVEST.

YEAR	BAGS
1977	25
1978	50
1979	60
1980	45
TOTAL	180

The best yield came in 1979 when the group received a total of 60 bags of maize. In 1978 and 1980, the group was able to harvest 50 and 45 bags respectively. 1977 the year of their first attempt to do this, the group had the least yield. At this time Ne ema e mwandu was able to harvest only 25 bags of maize.

Harvests of other crops had also been made. Members of the Ne ema e mwandu group receive great help from such harvests. Good yields have given them independence in the area of food and a high sense of dignity of being able to fend for themselves without seeking help from or depend on others. Sometimes they receive money when their harvest get sold.

The majority of the Catholic laity, when asked to state ways in which the aged could best be helped suggested services like the provision of food and shelter, because these are mostly lacked by the aged, particularly, those who have no source of help at all, compared to 4.7% who suggested that some funds be set aside for their use. Of those interviewed, 9.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that the aged are neglected and that the aged are also alienated from the mainstream of society. The same people suggested

that the aged be visited regularly in their respective homes by members of the church. Under 'other', 20.9% of the respondents said that the aged need spiritual help. Those who saw the need for spiritual nourishment also saw a big need for carrying out manual work of various kinds for this kind of people.

Due to benefits derived from being aged, it was evident that some people force themselves into the category of the poor even though they were not old. This is perhaps the reason why some respondents suggested that the aged be given land to cultivate or be given employment. This suggestion brings out the fact that some of the 'aged' are idlers who can still fend for themselves, if they can get resources to do so. They are thus exploiting the word 'aged' from the church personnel and members.

From responses and some of the practical help offered to the aged, we can deduce that on the one hand, the aged are very much dependent on the assistance given to them by the church administration and church members in terms of food, clothing and shelter. There

is however another side of help being given to the aged. Instead of placing them in the old people's homes, the aged are helped while they stay in their own respective homes.

### 3.5 FAMILY HELPER PROJECT

In comparison with the orphans and the aged programmes, the Catholic Church's Family Helper Project, started quite recently. In Rang'ala parish for instance, the plight of the poor families became an open truth one time, when a call was made for those parents who had physically disabled children to bring such children for help.<sup>12</sup> Although the programme for the physically disabled did not materialize, in its place was born a challenge which was eventually turned into practical action in the part of the sisters at Rang'ala mission center. But it was more, the awareness that assistance could be obtained from some voluntary Christian organizations, that enhanced the establishment of the Catholic Family Helper Project. The objectives of this programme was "to build destitute families to improve their living standards, so that they could become active and independent members in their own society".

The state of destitution among most of the families enlisted in the Catholic Church's Family Helper Project, is mainly attributed to absence of the head of the family.<sup>13</sup> The next common reason for suffering in these families is poverty. This was true even in families where both parents are alive. One outstanding factor of inability of male members to support their families in such homes, was attributed to poor health or physical disability. Poverty which comes about as a result of lack of land or unemployment of the father of a home, were represented by 2 responses out of our 51 interviews from a random sampling. Cases of drunkenness or negligence by the head of the home were represented by 1 case and 2 cases respectively. One other case was based on the father's bankruptcy (see table 4 on the next page).

TABLE 4: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DESTITUTION OF  
FAMILIES.

CATEGORY	Nu.	PERCENTAGE
Widows	27	52.9
Widowers	7	13.7
Sickness/physical disability	11	21.6
Abandoned children	2	3.9
Lack of land/ unemployment	2	3.9
Drunkenness or negligence	1	2.0
Bankruptcy	1	2.0
TOTAL	51	100.0

Rang'ala Family Helper Project is currently the only home of its kind run by the Catholic Church in Siaya and Kisumu districts. The programme however, was still in the early stages of development. There was therefore, still a lot of preliminary work going on at the time of the research, mainly as a result of shortage of staff.

To avoid institutionalization of its recipients, the Catholic church through Family Helper Projects attempts to offer the help to the people in their homes with an aim of reaching every family member either directly, as in the case of children who are being sponsored through education and parents who are given financial assistance to become self reliant through business or farming, or indirectly, as parents try to use assistance that they have been given by the church, to maintain the rest of the family members who are not enlisted in the family helper project.

The programme operates at two levels. In the first place, the Family Helper Project assists the children of extremely poor parents. Funds for children are raised by Christian Children's Fund (CCF) - a Christian organization based in Nairobi - who in turn receives the money from individual sponsors from countries abroad.<sup>14</sup> The sponsorship covers the educational needs and general welfare of the children in the programme.<sup>15</sup> A number of children have been enrolled in the programme, though the real existing number who need this kind of help has been very large.



When the Catholic Family Helper programme started, each family was given blankets, kitchen utensils, and food.<sup>16</sup> Some families were lucky and to have had had semi-permanent houses built for them. Many grass thatched houses were also built for the children. Children of school age were taken to school, and their uniforms bought and school funds paid.<sup>17</sup>

Parents were given instructions on how to improve their agricultural yields. Those parents who had business were given capital to boost their them. Those who had no business were also given some money to start one. Attempts to make parents self-reliant is the second level of the programme.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Catholic church is trying hard, to create self-reliance among those it is helping through social programme. However, it is more the congregations at large (in some parishes), that have really caught the vision of the Catholic church of helping the poor both inside and outside the church. Some of the programmes that the Catholic church has developed are remarkable and are used not only as tools to alleviate the suffering of the poor, but they have also turned out to be models for other less active

members, or congregations in other parishes.

But, as this study shows, the church hierarchy still has some tendencies of making the recipients dependent. This attitude is created by the offering of free things to the poor without any move to show them how to be self supporting. Despite this tendency however, there is desire on the part of the church administration to make the poor self reliant. Short term ventures have been undertaken by the church. A case in point in this regard is the starting of Savings and Credits, intended to make the poor self reliant in the long run. This has one weakness though, it over looks the fact that the programme was intended to take off ground with a people who had totally nothing to live on, leave alone, to save. Most of the people who were supposed to be involved in this Savings and Credits Programmes, could not afford to save whatever they may have had. For such poor people, a few shillings saved, could afford them some immediate needs for the family members, if not a decent meal once in a while.

The system of loaning money to parents to start business is undoubtedly, a method which aims at making the poor adults become the kind of people, who are

capable of looking after their family members without depending on others. But here again, at the time of the research, the effort to make the poor parents independent in this way was questionable, particularly since most of these parents were still in very poor state. It was even questionable as to whether, the Catholic church's plan of withdrawing financial assistance from these parents after three years was wise, helpful or even practicable. There is very little money given to start business, compared to many demands in poor homes which go on without being met. So the little money granted to the poor families to engage in business is like "a drop in the sea of poverty". Such obstacles therefore need to be looked into by the church as it strives to assist the poor parents through the loaning of money to start business.

In regard to Ne ema e mwandu's endeavour to help the poor who are old, or widowed, one aspect needs to be considered; that, the land that has been loaned to them by kind neighbours can be taken away from them at any time by the owners. The church thus, needs to think of ways of acquiring land for the group, so that they can rest assured that they would not have land problem in the future.

3.6 CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF KENYA (C.P.K.)  
DIOCESE OF MASENO SOUTH PROGRAMMES.

Efforts to help the needy and poor families by the C.P.K. in Kisumu and Siaya districts, are to a great extent in the hands of the church administration. Group activities are less prominent as compared to the Catholic church. One of the group activities is found among the 'convert' group, where the concern for the poor is noticeable but on a very small scale. The group's involvement features more in the building of houses for widows or poor families. Other assistances are quite unexplicated, they are more of charitable gestures than anything else, and they tend to be demonstrated occassionally when, for instance, an individual gives another needy member some food or clothing as the case may be. Below however, is the description of the centrally administered programmes of the C.P.K.

3.7 a) FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Family Development Project run by the Church of the Province of Kenya in the Diocese of Maseno South, like the Catholic Family Helper Project, attempt to improve the living standard of the poor families. Though

the project was actively serving the poor families within a seven mile radius from Kisumu town,<sup>18</sup> at its initial stages, it gave priority to the welfare of children who were either orphans or were from very poor homes, as well as those of unmarried mothers.<sup>19</sup> As in the Catholic church's Family Helper Project, education of the children receives greatest attention. Thus, C.P.K's Family Development Project sees to it that, the children in the programme are provided with school uniforms. Furthermore, because most of the families had poor beddings, their children were initially, provided with blankets as well. Due to poor diet in most of these families, this same project tries to provide the families catered for, milk, fish, beans, and flour, to ensure a balanced diet at least once a month.

When asked to comment on the type of assistance given to their children, there was an interesting and honest response from those parents whose children are receiving support from C.P.K. Family Development Project. independently, nearly each of them stated that, 'only the children who are being helped

to get education, are the ones who are really benefitting from the assistance'. For instance, they qualify this by saying that, those children who are being sponsored through C.P.K. programme, can now go to school without failure, since their school uniforms and their school building funds are paid for by the church. As for the rest of the family members, there is still hardship in getting enough food, clothing and school fees.<sup>20</sup>

Awareness of the problem above, led the C.P.K. to expand its programmes so as to help in the development of the poor parents too. Help given to an individual child in a poor family, was found to exclude other members of the family. In addition, many parents who are poor have several problems which cannot simply be phased out by merely providing education to one member of the family. Problems like general upkeep of the family ranks highest in these families. When it comes to the education of their children, poor parents find it extremely difficult to educate their children even in the case of primary education, which in Kenya is now free, simply because they cannot afford to buy their children school uniforms. Secondary education is even more difficult, since this requires huge sums of money to pay school fees. Besides that,

there is the school uniform to be considered. Poor living standard is also common. This is seen in the problems of shelter. Lack of land likewise, hinder poor parents from having adequate food for their children.

Of the 116 families interviewed (61 widows and 55 non-widows)<sup>21</sup>, the widows as single parents stated that their major problems were: general upkeep of the family (60%), education of the children (21%), lack of land (4.9%). Only a small number (3.3%) referred to the problem of shelter. Responses from non-widows brought out: problem of bringing up their children (60%), education of the children (14.5%), problem of shelter (1.8%). There was no response in relation to the problem of land from this group of people. From all the 116 families, only a very insignificant number (4.9%) mentioned that they lacked land where they could carry out subsistence farming. Though this may seem unrelated factor to their state of poverty, it is the main contributor to their inability to maintain their families, because they lack adequate food supply, nor can they get sufficient income from their farm produce because the land that they have, is either unproductive, or is too small to produce surplus yield for

sale. In order to get food for their family members, some of these parents have to continuously depend on other people's land. Acquisition of land through this method is often from kind neighbours or relatives. Those who have land, have indeed very small pieces as Table 5 below shows:

TABLE 5: SIZE OF LAND OWNED BY WIDOWS AND  
NON-WIDOWS

ACREAGE	WIDOWS		NON-WIDOWS	
	No. of respon dents	Percentage	No. of respon dents	Percentage
No land	35	57.4%	10	18.2%
Less than 1 acre	18	29.5%	27	49.1%
1 acre	4	6.6%	7	12.7%
2 acres	3	4.9%	9	16.4%
3 acres	1	1.6%	1	1.8%
4 acres	-	-	-	-
5 acres	-	-	1	1.8%
Total	61	100.0	55	100.0

Among the 61 widows, the majority (57.4%), stated that they had no land. 29.5% however had less than 1 acre of land. Those with 1 acre constituted 6.6%, and those with 2 acres 4.9%, and 3 acres was only 1.6%.



Comparing this with acreage held by non-widows, there was not much difference. Those with less than 1 acre of land constituted the highest percentage in this category, 49.1%. Those who indicated that they had no land constituted 18.2%. The percentage of those who said that they had 2 acres of land was higher (16.4%), than those who said that they had only 1 acre (12.7%). Non-widows with 3 acres were not as many as in the case of widows. Only 1.8% said they had 3 acres of land. Another 1.8% said that they had 5 acres of land. There was no one with 4 acres of land as was the case with widows as Table 5 shows.

There are some areas where, due to soil infertility, and poor climatic conditions, reasonably big plots of land only have inadequate yield. To survive in such areas, is therefore difficult. It is no wonder that parents faced with such conditions, are usually forced to look for alternative ways to earn their living. In this study it was found that the most common and promising alternatives chosen by these kinds of parents, are those activities which do not require trained skills or high standard of education. These included: (i) casual labour - especially on other

people's farms or in big plantations (e.g. sugar or rice), (ii) petty trading in basketry, pottery and farm produce, (iii) illicit sale of locally brewed beer, although this is strongly discouraged by the local authority.<sup>22</sup>

At the center of these activities, is the desire to be self reliant. Thus, unless a parent was physically handicapped or just lazy, there was evidence that all poor adults were making every effort possible to fend for themselves and their families. The attitude of the community supports this, and in a way it kind of confirmed the underlying interest to be self reliant on the part of the poor themselves. For instance, only where the problems of shelter was involved did the general populace come to a common agreement that poor widows should get direct help by having houses built for them. On the whole however, there was a general attitude that the poor, especially the widows, should be encouraged instead to work hard to fend for themselves, and that they should be given advice on how to take full responsibility of their family matters. Dependence is thus an unpopular thing in the Luo community.

But, despite the emphasis on self reliance, the poor still find it difficult to attain it. This partly explains why the majority of the parents interviewed suggested that they be given cash, to help them carry out their own businesses, or to start one, if they did not have any. In saying this, they hoped that they will be self reliant. In other words, they see themselves able to earn their living through their trade, and in turn, they highly hoped that they will be in a position to maintain the rest of the family members who are not being catered for through Family Development Project.

To some extent, a keen desire for self reliance, has also been enhanced among these families by the C.P.K.'s attempt to achieve it for its recipients, through the Family Development Project. Some parents have had money loaned to them to boost whatever occupation they may have been involved in, or would like to engage in to earn a living for themselves and their family members. Those who have farms are encouraged to use money loaned to them to improve their farm yields.

Among these adults, there are however those who prefer getting direct assistance by having their children

educated. This group of parents have come to realize that even if they got some capital, it would not meet their numerous needs as poor families. One of the areas where a great problem exists is in the area of children's education. It is for this reason that they expressed the fear of not being in a position to educate their children if the church ever decides to withdraw the assistance it was giving to their children at that time.<sup>23</sup> They have also come to realize that the money they are given can only provide for their basic needs. So their greatest desire from the Family Development Project is to have the education of their children continued, since they find it difficult to meet school expenses themselves.

Examples from C.P.K. 'self reliant' group, consisting of individual widows and poor women who had been given money to start business shown on Table 6 next page, confirms this problem. Parents face many obstacles in their attempt to become self reliant. Regulations from local government is one of the many obstacles which hinder free trade and transportation of essential commodities for trade among these parents.

Commodities like maize, rice and millet can earn these parents quite reasonable income. Unfortunately, they cannot be transported from one place to another without license. This state of affairs, usually force the parents involved to trade on cheap commodities which fetch them only enough profit for subsistence. Commodities like salt, spices or soap, do not fetch money unless they are sold in large quantities. As Table 6 shows, those adults who were involved in selling maize, made very good progress within a period of 3 months, as compared to those who went for commodities like salt or spices.

TABLE 6: SELF RELIANT PROGRAMMES: ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS FACED

Individual	Kind of trade	Achievement	Problems	Amount saved
A	began with 3 bags of maize	after 3 months had 4 bags.	Licence to trade in maize, as a result started trade on vegetables, but stopped this because of transport problem. Thus decided to construct a house for renting-hoped to get money from rents.	Ksh. 100/- for the child.
B	started with 3 bags of maize	after 3 months had 4 gags.	had problem of getting maize to buy. Turned to fish trade.	Ksh. 50/-
C	started with 3 bags of maize	end of 3 months had 4 bags.	stopped trade temporarily, (delivered). Hoped to start trade in fish, no reason was given for this change.	-
D	started with 3 bags of maize	after 3 months increased to 5 bags. Profit was used for buying a goat	Fear to sell without licence, hence changed to trade in salt and soap.	Ksh. 50/-

TABLE 6.

Individual	Kind of trade	Achievement	Problems	Amount saved
J	traded in fish	after 2 months made some profit	-	-
K	-	bought 2 goats	-	-
L	-	bought 3 chickens.	-	-
M	-	bought 1 goat. The rest of the money was used for ploughing.	-	-

An examination of Table 6, reveals that many poor people who opt for petty trade/or business, are more inclined to commodities that are used daily within their community. Examples of these are spices, salt, beans, fish, vegetables, maize, millet, bananas and rice. Among the list, maize generates good returns. Both 'A' and 'B' started selling maize, each with 3 bags and within 3 months, had saved Kenya shillings 100/- and Kenya shillings 50/- respectively. The problems faced by these people are many as the chart shows. However, one common problem with almost every individual, is the trial and error trend. This can be said to be the reason why there is engagement in one kind of business for only a very short period of time, (with the samples shown on table 6 it is three months), before one switches to a different kind of trade that is hoped would bring the highest return. Although the foregoing is dictated by rules of commerce, it has its side effects: for instance, an individual does not cultivate a good grasp on what a particular trade demands. This tendency also creates a situation where individuals come up with desperate plans without counting all that it takes to have success in a particular trade.



While the above problems could be brought about by lack of foresight, there are really pressing problems facing these poor individuals. The leading one is money, especially for those who are engaged in selling maize. Without a licence, one cannot be involved comfortably in the business because there is regulation that one has to have a licence that authorize transportation of a maize from one place to the other. Problem of getting enough maize to buy is another thing that these people have to grapple with. Secondly, since many people are trying to be self reliant through petty trading, there is the problem of flooding the market with similar commodities. This makes it clear why, there is no much creativity in the kind of trade the people in C.P.K. Family Development Project are involved in. Another problem which is evident from the chart is single handedness in business. As cases 'C' and 'E', business had to suffer because there was no one to continue when sickness and delivery took place. For a time the owner is incapable to carry out business.

### 3.8 INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Integrated Rural Development Project was formulated by the Diocese of Maseno South with

consultation of the N.C.C.K. (National Christian Council of Kenya), to help the entire population within the Diocese mobilize their effort towards rural development. The basic objective in this project was to uplift the living standard of the rural population.<sup>24</sup> Prior to 1976, C.P.K.'s Integrated Rural Development Project was developed out of a programme devoted to education, which was in existence until 1975. Previously, the church's approach to rural development was to train farmers in training centers. While some centers were quite successful, they did not however benefit small farmers, who were meant to be helped through the project. Similarly, massive governmental effort was found to be benefitting more progressive farmers more, than the poor ones.

In 1976, the C.P.K. decided to expand its Integrated Rural Development Project into three programmes, namely: agriculture, health and education. The project as a whole, operates on a firm belief that 'it is the people themselves that are a critical element in their own development, and that the diocese can only stimulate their energies and effectively articulate their wishes and aspirations through the programmes that it designs'.<sup>25</sup>

Collective self reliance of the people involved in the project, is therefore not only encouraged, but it is also actively promoted by the Diocese. This means that the people's consciousness is awakened to understand thoroughly their own pathetic situations and economic conditions, and to contribute both in cash and kind for the successful execution of their programmes. Programmes in agriculture, health and education are all initiated at the village church by groups, through church social workers and/or clergy . Village groups usually consist of 50 to 200 people. Nevertheless, the programme is opened for both church members and non-church members alike. Before they can decide on how to solve their problems, members usually discuss the problems first. Thereafter, they select leaders from among themselves to operate the programmes and to coordinate the activities within the community.

### 3.8.1 AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMES

Since a number of families in the rural areas were found without nutritious feeding habits, the church decided to incorporate within its development project, agricultural programmes. The purpose of agricultural

programme, is to educate and assist small scale farmers to increase their farm production for subsistence as well as for cash sale.<sup>26</sup> At subsistence level, the people are encouraged to grow things like carrots, vegetables and fruits for their own home consumption. Many families in the rural areas would rather sell all that they produce from their farm, than have it used for consumption to avoid malnutrition in the family. It is this habit, that the church is trying to eliminate. Kitchen gardening is a very salient feature in this area. Already the church had succeeded in mobilizing the community in growing fruits, vegetables for home consumption. The majority involved however were women. Plans to go in for commercial vegetable growing through minor irrigation schemes were also under way. The church anticipates that this will generate income for the group.

At cash level, the church had, as its starting point, seed loaning to motivate the people to take part in modern methods of agriculture for better yields. Seed-loan of hybrid maize was given to groups and individuals to plant in their own communal or individual's plots. Encouragement was also given on diversifying

crops for sale, and vegetables and fruit growing for the improvement of nutrition. Farmers have had instruction on the importance of use of fertilizer for better yields of some crops. Manure has been recommended as a fertilizer because of its availability. With the help of a trained agricultural adviser, farmers have been instructed on how to improve soil fertility through crop rotation, reduction of soil erosion through the method of hillside farming, and mechanical adjustment to ox ploughing for greater efficiency and production.

Demonstrations of modern methods of agriculture on church plots, have proved to be the most effective way of involving the people. Church plots often consists of 1 or 2 acres, obtained either from existing church land or purchased from the local people. Communal farming in the church plots, does not only generate group income, it also helps in demonstrating improved farming methods, and motivates farmers to increase and diversify production in their own farms.<sup>28</sup>

Other activities in agriculture includes, afforestation, where the people are encouraged to plant trees in their own compounds. Church groups have proved

very responsible in this area. From the church report of 1980, 32 churches, represented by 810 people had already planted 14,600 trees. Poultry keeping and fish farming are being encouraged as an alternative sources of protein for the people in the study area. From the interviews, the projects in both poultry and fish are quite promising. Many groups are already involved, for instance, two parishes in Kisumu district, Greater Kisumu and Maseno, had a total of 300 chicken. Bee-keeping was coming up too. In Kisumu, there were a total of 151 people actively carrying out the project. There was an anticipation of starting a similar project in Siaya district as well (Table 7).

As table 7 shows, 25 churches, represented by 25 people had a citrus fruit project. 36 trees of citrus fruit had been planted by this group. Project on poultry keeping was being run by 2 churches, who had already raised a total of 300 chickens. Bee-keeping had 6 churches involved, with over 58 people. The 6 churches had 117 beehives between them. The church report also indicated that fish-farming was being carried out by 1 church in Siaya district, represented by 70 people. This group, had breed 400 fish through their project.

TABLE 7. CHURCH AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Project	Parsih	Church/ Churches	No. of people involved	No. of animals	No. of tress	No. of beehives	No. of birds	No. of fish
Sheep & goats	Ndiru	Diemo	35	15	-	-	-	-
Afforestation	Ngere	16	400	-	8000	-	-	-
	Migori	6	300	-	300	-	-	-
	Ahero	1	5	-	500	-	-	-
	Masogo	6	6	-	600	-	-	-
	Ludha	1	30	-	2000	-	-	-
	Hono	1	32	-	2000	-	-	-
	Bondo	1	37	-	1200	-	-	-
Citrus Fruit	Ndiru	25	25	-	36	-	-	-
Poultry	Greater	Nyamasa-	-	-	-	-	200	-
	Kisumu	ria	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Maseno	Rabuor	-	-	-	-	100	-
Bee-Keeping	Ndiru	Magwar	28	-	-	60	-	-
		Kit-						
		Mikayi	N/A	-	-	30	-	-
	Ludha	Wagwer	30	-	-	5	-	-
	Got-	Got-	35	-	-	7	-	-
	Osimbo	Osimbo						
	Bondo	Ulomo	28	-	-	10	-	-
		Nyawita	N/A	-	-	5	-	-
Fish-farming	Got-Osimbo	Got-Osimbo	70	-	-	-		400

In addition to farm activities, C.P.K. agricultural advisers are also making efforts to boost animal husbandry in the area. This programme has not however been exploited adequately. Most farmers still find it difficult to adopt new methods of handling animals.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.8.2 HEALTH PROGRAMMES

The Diocesan health programme aims at: raising the living standard of the rural people, developing an organizational basis of people's participation, and to educate the people on how to make effective use of existing health services. Health care programmes are, thus geared towards several related health areas. Where villagers have little knowledge of the need of good hygienic practices, the programmes teach the people how to improve the level of hygiene by keeping the compound clean, building pit latrines, garbage disposal and dish rack.<sup>30</sup> In order to combat the problem of malnutrition, C.P.K. health programme is also geared towards educating people on the need to eat balanced diet, eating sufficient number of meals, and the importance of growing various types of food. Shelter is another area where



rural people have problems. Health programmes have likewise been geared towards teaching people the need to improve their living conditions by building better houses with good roofing and washing area. Some members of the community have been helped in this area by having houses built for them by the church/church members. To improve the quality of water used by the rural community, health advisers try to give women advise on the importance of boiling water before use.

In another context , the health programmes have cured many of the diseases that have been afflicting the rural people by providing proper medication. Through dialogue or open discussions between health team and the rural community, the latter has been able to identify some of the common diseases that exist among them. The first agenda in the improvement of health conditions through people's participation, is to allow the people themselves, to identify their own health needs. Discussions, as mentioned above, have helped to create confidence in the people towards the church health team and health programmes.

Due to their heavy schedules and the vast area to be reached by the health programmes, the church health

team always makes use of individuals from health fellowships group,<sup>31</sup> who assist them in distributing medicine to the sick while they are away. Knowledge to do this is often acquired through instructions given by health team on dosage and how to diagnose symptoms of common diseases like, malaria. Apart from distribution of medicine, fellowship group members, help the team with home visits to ensure that the people are carrying out preventive measures against disease. Where the team cannot reach the people frequently, or use fellowship groups, or where health centres are non-existent, methods of immunization are applied to minimize attacks of common diseases.

Through health fellowship groups too, the church health team have initiated simple programmes of 'village pharmacies'. Village pharmacies are not well established local clinics or dispensaries, but are found in the premises of the church building. Church vestries are commonly used for this. Sometimes, the church health team gives a loan to a church group to set up a small pharmacy where drugs could be bought by the rural community, to treat common diseases.<sup>32</sup> Medicine sold by the "village pharmacists" is often at subsidy, to

encourage the people to go for proper treatment. Once the drugs from the village pharmacy has been bought, the health fellowship team is expected to repay the loan. Profit that the group makes from sale of drugs, goes back to the group to initiate other projects besides the sale of drugs. In the past, for instance, the money had been used to buy building materials for the poor and the needy members in the group. At other times, money had been used to take sick members of the church to the hospital for treatment.

Use of existing medical facilities is ensured by informing the rural community of their existence. In Kisumu and Siaya districts, there are four mission hospitals, run by the Anglican church, and 45 health centres, run by both the government and mission.<sup>33</sup> As a resource group, the church health team usually carry out both community health, as well as minor treatment as they visit the people. During the months of January/June 1980 the team was able to carry out the work as follows:<sup>34</sup> within the six months, 4,900 and 3,755 patients were treated in Kisumu and Siaya districts respectively. Malnutrition cases who attended the clinic were forty-three in Kisumu and one hundred and

twentyone in Siaya. The team also conducted two seminars to train the people in Siaya district. One hundred and sixteen people attended the seminar.

One practice which has boosted the C.P.K. health programme, has been the acceptance to work in cooperation with the government medical teams, particularly where the demand exceed their resources. Hinderances were however reported to be coming from some local leaders, who are not very enthusiastic in promoting church health programmes. Indifference from other denominations, have similarly posed as an obstacle. This feature was especially common with the Seventh Day Adventists.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

In their programmes designed to alleviate the suffering of the poor families and poor individuals, the C.P.K. personnel have been able to identify some of the causes of rural poverty. Their attempt to eradicate these causes is apparent in the kind of programmes they are carrying out. Having identified physical sickness as one of the causes of impoverishment in some families, the C.P.K., is using health programmes to improve the living standards

of the people. Poor health does not only render one inactive socially, but it makes the individual less productive economically. Where the individual is the bread winner of his family, this inevitably has great impact on the lives of the rest of the family members, in the sense that, they would not have proper and consistent source of income. Sickness in other words, drains the family's finances, especially when most of the money has to be spent on the treatment of the sick members of the family.

Through its Family Development Project, C.P.K. church demonstrates the importance of giving help to the whole family, instead of concentrating only on one member from the poor family. This method is indeed, a departure from the traditional approach where assistance to the poor did not look into the root-causes of poverty. Its significance, is that by giving help to the whole family, the church can easily identify needs of individual families. The main obstacles to the church's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the poor families in this way, has however been the fact that, there are too many needs in poor families, thus when the church tries to deal with one area which seems

to affect the lives of the poor family members, other areas which may not appear as obvious contributors to the poor state of these people, are left untouched by the church programmes. The church therefore should try to see the interrelated factors that causes people to be poor. To avoid this will only frustrate the efforts it is making as it strives to alleviate the suffering of the poor. Again, the church should be involved in advising those who want to take part in petty business. As we saw earlier in this chapter, a number of those who receive money from the church, keep on trading half-heartedly from one business to another. Perhaps with the church's assistance, these people could be helped to develop a petty trade that would not only generate them income, but also the kind they may have some talent in.

On the whole, rural development programmes are producing alot of positive results. The rural communities are already benefitting from what the church is doing through its various programmes. Evidence can be seen in individual homes. Members of C.P.K. for instance, have in their compounds different types of trees planted and kitchen gardening going on. There is also

improvement in cleanliness, as a result of the church's advice that is being given through its health programmes.

### 3.10 SUMMARY

Attempt to alleviate poverty of the poor families through agriculture, and promotion of self reliance programmes through trade overlook two things. In the first place, there is the problem of land. Those without land cannot participate effectively in agricultural projects. As we have seen, the poor who fall in this category depend much more on pieces of land that have been loaned to them by kind neighbours and relatives, or as an alternative method of earning their living, they get engaged in trade. Secondly, efforts to establish self reliance through trade, do not deal with obstacles such as the problem of trade licence, as a result, the poor who are being assisted by Family Development Project, are forced to trade on the type of commodities which do not fetch them much cash, thus their poverty state continue. Perhaps what the church needs to do in her efforts to promote self reliance, is to try and negotiate with the local authority on behalf of these people, as far as licence and transportation are concerned.

The tendency of institutionalizing the destitutes, should be limited only to severe cases because it is (i) too demanding financially, (ii) it subsequently encourages the church to depend on aid and the poor to depend on the help they receive from the church.

It is evident that charitable gestures still linger through the monthly provision of food and occasional distribution of clothes. Because of this, some parents feel that it is the responsibility of the church, to provide for their needs in this way, and on the other hand, they see it as their right to be helped.



FOOTNOTES

1.  
"Joot" in Luo literally means "family". This concept has enabled the group to regard those who receive their assistance as members of their group. The help is therefore issued with great concern and love.  
  
"Ne ema e mwandu" literally means "grace is wealth". Members in this group concentrate their help on the poor, the aged and destitute families.
- 1b.  
Thus, even before meeting the needs of those outside the group, there are several needy cases within "joot" group to be cared for as well.
2.  
Annual Report, Pandpier Catholic Centre, Kisumu, September 1980, p. 5.
3.  
Father-in-charge, Interview, Pandpier Centre, November 18th, 1980.
4.  
Administrator, Kisito Home, Ahero, Interview Ahero Centre February 15th, 1981.
5.  
Interview, Ibid. 15th February.
6.  
Poor parents often find it difficult to buy their children school uniforms and to pay building funds as required by school authorities, because of insufficient income. Thus it is common to find children from poor homes dropping out of school and instead staying at home idly.
7.  
The church's priority is given to the education of the poor children sponsored through its programmes. Provision of school uniforms and building funds are therefore part of its responsibility.

8. Rang'ala Baby Home report 1979, p. 1f
9. Sister Harmina, one of the sisters-in-charge of the Baby Home, Interview, Rang'ala Mission, January 22nd, 1981.
10. Z. Okumu has been the main drive in "Ne ema e mwandu" movement. He not only gives advice to members in this group on how to fend for themselves, but he also works with them and lives with them in the neighbourhood. We made some observations of the group's activities during our field survey. We also went to the members' homes to verify the impact the help given has on their life style.
11. Started in 1975 at Rang'ala Mission with 21 families, by 1981 it had 45 families in the Project. The realization of the sister-in-charge at this mission (Sister Harmina) of the number of destitutes around the mission centre caused concern and when she heard that help could be obtained from Christian Children's Fund (CCF), she applied for the sponsorship and the positive response from the CCF led to the establishment of the Family Helper Project.
12. Sister Harmina, Interview, op cit.
13. Interview, Ibid.
14. These families were found in desperate state. All of them were found with inadequate clothing, and insufficient food. They also lacked things like chairs, tables and kitchen wares.
15. Interview, Ibid.

16. Annual Report, F.S. Ong'ombe, Family Development Coordinator (Diocese of Maseno South - C.P.K. Programme). With the assistance of the World Vision, Family Development Project was started in 1977 after the Bishop of the Diocese Dr. Okullu, had made a request to the World Vision for help. (World Vision is an International Christian Organization who aims at alleviating poverty of the poor people).
17. Annual Report, Ibid.
18. These are parents in the Family Development Project; 116 were used as a sample to get depth information on the extent to which the assistance they are receiving is helping to raise their standard of living.
19. Random sample - interviewed at various times, in Kisumu and Siaya between November 12th and November 27th, 1980.
20. Data information from F.S. Ong'ombe, Kisumu town, November 8th, 1980.
21. Interview of the 116 adults in the Welfare, C.P.K. Family Development Project.
22. Analysis of occupational status of the 118 respondents (laity).
23. Responses from 116 adults.
24. Report: Diocese of Maseno South - "Integrated Rural Development Programme", (1980), p. 3
25. Report, Ibid.

26. P. Ombidi, An Agricultural Adviser - Diocese of Maseno South, Interview, Kisumu town, November 21st, 1980.
27. A. Resnick, United States International University: Designed for a Church Development Project, U.S.A., A Thesis (M.S.), 1980, p. 20.
28. Ibid., p. 22.
29. "Rural Integrated Programme", p. 12.
30. Ibid., p. 11 - 15.
31. R. Owino, Health Coordinator, Interview, Kisumu town, November 9th, 1980.
32. Interview, Ibid.
33. Interview, Ibid.
34. Report, Rural Integrated Project.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE CHURCH AND THE POOR - THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED

In the previous Chapter, the programmes that the church is carrying out to improve the living conditions of the poor families, were discussed with special reference to the orphans, the widows and the aged. In this Chapter, the focus is on the church's<sup>1</sup> assistance to the physically disabled. An attempt is also made to examine the extent to which the church has been able to alleviate their poverty through its rehabilitation and educational programmes.

#### 4.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED AMONG THE LUO

In the traditional Luo society, the disabled persons were regarded as none assets both to themselves and the community as a whole. They would therefore be kept in the background and were never involved in social activities. Their isolation was quite pronounced. Parents who found themselves with disabled children saw themselves as unfortunate and cursed. As a result, they would have their disabled children kept in obscurity. Nevertheless, members of individual

families took it as their responsibility to provide for their basic needs. Until very recently, traces of traditional view towards the physically disabled was still in existence among the people in Nyanza. Indeed, very few would take their disabled children to school to be educated. In families where poverty was prevalent, such tendencies were more acute. This has not changed much today either. As Brattgard says, for example, in reference to the disabled in his community in the western world, 'the only way to break down this kind of attitude is to accept the physically disabled as collaborator and fellow member of the community, and as a man who can take full responsibility for his life and his action!'<sup>2</sup>

#### 4.2 STATE OF THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED

The study sample of 118 laity shows connection between physical disability and poverty. In response to the question whether the disabled are poor or not, 61% stated that the physically disabled are poor because they depend on others for survival. These respondents did not however indicate how or in which ways the physically disabled depend on others. Dependability here

may refer to dependence for total survival, for instance, material and physical. 8.5% on the other hand stated that their poverty is due to the disabled lack of skills or trade through which they can earn themselves a living. In other words, those who have skills are able to fend for themselves. However for the physically disabled to do this also depends on the kind of disability as 6.8% respondents stated. For this group of respondents both in Kisumu and Siaya districts, poverty of the disabled depends much on the degree of their disability. This point was further affirmed by 11.9% respondents who stated that, poverty of the disabled depends on the severity of their physical impairment. Mentally handicapped were mentioned in this category because such impairment are to be trained in basic skills. (see also tables 19 & 20 in the appendix).

The above answers were sharply contrasted by those given by respondents who felt that, poverty caused by physical disability is something relative. This group of respondents expressed the view that, the physical disabled are not necessarily poor. To support their view, they raised a number of points: (i) only those from poor families are considered poor. (ii) in the case of disability caused by polio, people from both the

rich and the poor families are usually affected alike, (iii) those who happen to be disabled in later years of their lives, may not be necessarily poor due to the fact that some among them, were employed people with assets and savings that can support them comfortably. This latter point was echoed by one respondent, who constitutes 0.8% of the respondents, he stated that some disabled are not poor for their disability came up in old age.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.3 REHABILITATION OF ADULT DISABLED

In the study, the categories of adult disabled who were interviewed were either married or widowed.<sup>4</sup> But whatever their marital status, they all faced poverty problems. The first major problem which the adult disabled face is that of poor housing. The houses of the adult disabled were in very bad conditions, for example, they had leaking roofs, "gaping" walls and had very few and simple furnitures which were in very poor conditions too. Secondly, even though they had relatives living in the vicinity, these disabled adults still could not receive all the provision and help that they needed in the form of food, clothing and personal



attention. In the peri-urban areas around Kisumu, and to some extent Siaya, most of the adult disabled persons have taken to begging on the streets as a means of survival.

Admittedly, there is very little being done to rehabilitate the adult disabled in the two districts. Apart from a few adult women enrolled by the Catholic church at Aluor Mission Center for domestic science courses, and a handful others by the Salvation Army in Kisumu district to train in skills such as basketry and carpentry, there is hardly any programme run by the Church of the Province of Kenya.

According to 10.2% laity, the adult disabled only get spiritual and psychological assistance from the church members who not only pay them regular visits, but who also pray for them during those visits. 48.3% said that they only get material help when things like clothes and wheel chairs are given to them on charitable basis, while 2.5% said that they have instead, their children educated for them, 3.4% referred to manual work that is carried out for them by the christians. Another 3.4% said that they do not get any aid at all.<sup>5</sup>

With reference to the laity's observations above, it can be said that the disabled adults have their dependency perpetuated or made more acute because they lack basic skills that they could use to earn them a living. The above responses further shows that the disabled adults have no real systematised programmes to cater for their needs. To a great extent, therefore, we can conclude that most of the disabled adults' needs are mostly met on charitable basis, except for the education of their children, which again is offered on a limited scale. There were however many cases where help was not offered at all.

#### 4.4 DISABLED CHILDREN

Much attention for many years now, has been given to the needs of disabled children, compared to adults in the same conditions if not worse at times. Position of the disabled children has been different. In order to help the physically disabled children to live normal lives as other children, the church has been running rehabilitation centers and educational institutions for the blind, the deaf, and the physically handicapped (the lame), in Nyanza Province for a long

time now. The whole endeavour was pioneered by the Salvation Army church prior to independence in 1962, when the Salvation Army missionaries established a school for the blind at Kibos in Kisumu district. The Catholic followed later and then the Anglican church (C.P.K.). The Catholic church have Aluor school for the blind, Nyangoma school for the deaf, Nyabondo school and rehabilitation center for the crippled. For the C.P.K. there are: Maseno school for the deaf (1974). For Salvation Army<sup>6</sup>, there are Joyland school for the crippled, and Kibos school for the blind. There are also a few institutions run by other denominations like the African Inland Church at Ogada in Nyahera location, Kisumu district. Some of these have been established as a result of the government's administration because of the rising needs for similar institutions.<sup>7</sup>

Education of the disabled children has been the priority in the rehabilitation programmes carried out by the church. This is to enable the disabled children to be like other normal children. Traditionally, however, the disabled children have always received their education from special institutions. All these

institutions are being run with the assistance from the government who gives each institution grants in aid and trained personnel. A joint endeavour has however, on many occasions, limited the extent to which the church personnel in charge of the education of the disabled children, can go with their activities because they have to comply with some of the decisions made by the government officials.<sup>8</sup>

The number of the disabled children to be enrolled in the existing rehabilitation centre has increased over the years. This has made it vital to make stipulations in some of the institutions which helps those in charge to screen children to be admitted into these institutions. Usually, stipulations like these end up by victimising either older children who are past school age, or those who are considered to be under age, from being admitted into these schools. This inevitably leads older disabled children in particular, from poor families to have no future or hope of getting above their level of dependency. It is true that so long as their poverty state remains unchanged, they cannot become self reliant in their lives.

Enrolment of the disabled children in various institutions depends on several factors. It may on one hand, depend on the number of children available, or on the available building facilities and the kind of equipment to be used in the training of these kinds of children. For example, at Maseno school for the deaf, the enrolment has been 24 students a year, while in 1980, there were only 12 students enrolled. Comparing this with the Salvation Army's institutions, we find that the enrolment at Kibos school for the blind is higher than the one at Joyland school for the crippled. From 1962, the enrolment in Kibos school for the blind has been rising steadily. From 27 students, each year has brought an increase of several students, so that by 1980 the enrolment had reached 150 students.<sup>9</sup>

TABLE 8: ENROLMENT OF THE DISABLED STUDENTS  
BY YEAR

Year	Kibos	Joyland	Maseno
1962	27	N/R.	N/R.
1963	38	N/R.	N/R.
1968	112	N/R.	N/R.
1971	120	N/R.	N/R.
1974	N/R.	30	24

Year	Kibos	Joyland	Maseno
1975	N/R	30	24
1976	N/R	30	24
1977	N/R	30	24
1978	N/R	30	24
1979	N/R	30	24
1980	150	30	12

At Joyland, the enrolment has remained constant from 1974-80. Each year's enrolment has been 30 students. The reason for this has been mainly due to lack of adequate accommodation and classroom facilities.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.5 EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE DISABLED CHILDREN

Among the responses of the laity to the question on the kind of help the church should offer to the disabled, one major response which came out with the majority of the people, was in relation to the education of the disabled children (26.3%). 7.6% of 26.3% mentioned the need for raising funds to build more schools for this kind of children, while 18.6% referred

directly to the purpose and reason for training such children, that is, the need to be taught practical skills for self employment.<sup>11</sup> Suggestion was also brought up by 0.8% of the total sample, who stated that there is a need to offer advice to those members with disabled children on how to take care of their disabled children.

It is evident from the laity's responses that people in Kisumu and Siaya districts, are becoming more aware of the significance of making the disabled take full responsibility of their own life and action. The way to achieve this for most of these people is seen in offering education to the disabled, more than anything else. Obviously this view has been influenced by what the church is already doing to rehabilitate the disabled children in Kisumu and Siaya districts.

#### 4.6 TYPES OF EDUCATION OFFERED

##### a) The deaf

From standard 1 - 3, education for the deaf and dumb children emphasizes language training. As the training broadens, it begins to include academic subjects like geography, history and science.

Emphasis however remains on language and audiography.<sup>12</sup>  
In the place of Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E.), the deaf children sit for what is called 'Entrance Examination'. This examination prepares deaf children for employment. Within the Catholic church programme, after this stage, girls usually continue with their vocational training at Mumias in Western Province, while the boys would go either to Nyangoma for technical education or to Sikri in South Nyanza to train in agriculture.

b) The crippled

The crippled children receive formal type of education (academic) as other children in ordinary schools. At standard 7, the crippled children write Certificate of Primary Education examination. Joyland for instance had its first sitting in 1980, with a total number of 25 students. 21 of these students passed their examination, 4 failed. Of the 21, 16 were able to secure places in different secondary schools. Two at the time of our research were still trying to get into a rehabilitation center.



c) The blind

Like the crippled children, the blind also get formal education. Thus after C.P.E. examinations, those who pass with good grades can secure a place in other institutions in the country to receive further training in academic or specialized training. For secondary education, those children who qualify for admission go to Thika school for the blind. This is the only secondary school which offers higher education for the blind in the whole of Kenya. Failure to secure a place for further training after standard 7, brings problems to those in charge of them.

One common problem is related to employment of standard 7 leavers. The disabled children face more difficulties when it comes to getting employed. Most employment sectors are often unwilling to employ them, more so because of their physical disability. This as a result leaves the church - run institutions with problems of settling such school leavers. In an attempt to help the disabled who have left school at primary level, the Catholic church at Aluor for instance, decided to start an extension course for three

years in domestic science for girls. The purpose of this kind of training is to equip primary school leavers with skills which can help them get employment. Among the group are also older girls or women who have not been to school at all.<sup>13</sup> Annual admission for these courses ranges from 7 to 15 students.

Courses that are offered include: needlework, knitting, craft, cookery etc. Apart from training in these courses, while these students are still in school, individuals are also trained to be self reliant in providing for their own personal needs. Each student is thus expected to get her own pocket money, for example, from the harvest made from the plot of land assigned to each of them within the school compound.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the younger blind students in the same school, these groups of girls moreover are trained to look after themselves. Thus, they cook, serve food, and even fetch firewood by themselves.<sup>15</sup> This kind of training is obviously very beneficial, and it lessens the problem of dependency in the area of personal and general maintenance.

The expectation of resettling these girls after training has not been very successful either. After the church has given skills, it was found that, most of the disabled still end up being absorbed in wage employment sector. Those who end up jobless usually resort to repeating standard 7 with a hope of getting into employment sector some time later. Although the church has been trying to start some of them in business by buying them equipments that they require, this has also proved inadequate and short lived, for the support is often meagre.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4.7 PROBLEMS OF RUNNING INSTITUTIONS FOR THE DISABLED

Institutions for training the disabled are beset with numerous problems in the area covered by this study. Problems such as lack of adequate building facilities, the fact that many disabled wanting to enrol, and limitation of involvement by church personnel because of the government's contribution towards the programmes, have already been mentioned. There are other chronic problems worth mentioning here as well, which the church faces in running programmes for the education and rehabilitation of the disabled children.

On the top of the list, is the problem from parents of the disabled children. A common tendency of these parents has been to abandon the entire responsibility of upbringing of their children to the institution. Besides this, there has been the problem of finance. Apart from the grant-in-aid from the government, all the institutions have been getting their support from the christian organizations abroad.

Before 1980 when the President of Kenya declared the year for the disabled, local communities had been mere passive observers. But from 1980, awareness already was with the people to the significance of helping the physically disabled, and there were already signs of willingness to help, as many people were involved in raising up huge sums of money to help the physically disabled. Before this, charitable organisations were the only groups who made deliberate attempts to provide help in kind towards the welfare of the disabled in Nyanza Province.

Local communities cannot be blamed entirely for their lack of involvement to help the physically disabled. The church in a way, has not been offering incentives to motivate local people to be partakers in

the welfare of the physically disabled in their community, but rather for a long time, it made the people to believe that, it was the church's responsibility to cater for the institutionalized disabled. This view came about as a result of the awareness that the church receives aid from abroad to help the disabled in the community.

The data below shows the attitude of the community towards the disabled. Their lack of involvement emerges out clearly from the responses given. According to 48.0% of those interviewed, the people are generally 'sympathetic' towards the disabled, although 4.2% of these same respondents, specified that this sympathetic attitude, is not to help the disabled or assist the church towards their rehabilitation. Another 28.8% respondents stated that people were 'indifferent'. This is perhaps as, 1.7% stated, because the people feel that it is not their responsibility, but the government's to help such people. 5.1% on the other hand, stated that, the people see the disabled as poor people, 2.5% stated that the disabled are regarded as being punished by God.

In general, these responses show that there is no effort made by the people to help the disabled in

any effective way. Both the 'sympathetic' and the 'indifferent' groups, fall in the category of the 'uninvolved'. The fatalistic view point, further renders people inactive, for some feel that 'one cannot change the fate of a disabled person, since it is God's punishment'.

#### 4.8 SUGGESTED AND APPLIED SOLUTIONS IN COMBATING PROBLEMS OF THE REHABILITATION OF THE DISABLED

The old practices, or methods of institutionalizing the disabled are currently not solving the problems they initially set to. As we have already said, the number of the disabled exceed the number of existing institutions. It is therefore becoming more and more obvious that the church needs to device new methods to curb this problem. Some church administrators think that an extension of the work already in operation could be a solution to this problem. But from the results experienced by the Salvation Army for instance, this method may not necessarily be a real solution nor a permanent answer to the problem.<sup>17</sup>

A proposal to increase workshops for school leavers by the Catholic church and C.P.K. has also been strongly advocated. This is envisaged as another way of opening more opportunities for training school leavers in technical education for this is in favour with the Kenya's current trend of offering students practical skills than academics. However, the problem of unemployment facing students from similar institutions, presents a further obstacle which needs tackling before this proposal can become a long term solution as the exponents suggest.

A more recent solution currently being implemented by the Catholic church, has emerged with the idea of 'small Homes'.<sup>18</sup> The proposals for this project includes the following: (i) that small homes be established only where there is an actual need for them, and if the running costs are guaranteed by the members of the community<sup>19</sup>, (ii) that small homes be situated in immediate neighbourhood of a school and a local community and that parents be responsible for the management and the support of the children, (iii) that small homes for about 10 children be built with local

construction methods, example, the houses are to be similar to what is found in the village environment, (iv) that small homes are to provide for those children whose way to school is too far or who cannot manage to go to school in the heat or during rainy seasons, (v) that the children are to go home as often as possible, and their parents be asked to visit them, (vi) that the disabled children should obtain necessary treatment and orthopaedic aids through mobile units or by being taken to health centers/hospitals, (vii) that it should be made clear to the parents and the community members that the physically handicapped is not to be regarded as helpless and that with enough help and support, he is able to grow up to a nearly independent citizen.

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Implementation of these proposals is already taking place in several areas in Kisumu and Siaya districts. These are a few examples:

(i) Abwao small home (Kisumu). This small home was started in 1980 with 12 disabled children (9 boys, 3 girls). Supply of food had been assured by the headmaster of the school, the staff, the chief of the area, parents and the community members.



(ii) Ojolla small homes (Kisumu). By 1981, plans were under way. Staff houses at Angira primary school, had been offered by the school for renovation and later to be converted into a small home.

(iii) Barkolwa small home (Kisumu). By 1980, 17 disabled children (12 boys, 5 girls) had been selected for the home. A temporary accommodation was being provided for the children at the time of our research.

(iv) Sigomre small home (Siaya). Land for the project had been earmarked. The local chief, the church leaders, parents and members of the community were actively involved in the exercise.<sup>20</sup>

Through the establishment of 'small homes', the Catholic church hopes to solve a number of other problems as well. Basically, small homes are to continue to provide the physically disabled children with the same chance of education as normal children. The structural change is hoped to absorb more children than before. The project is attempting to sensitize and promote the families and the communities where these children live, to learn to take responsibility of the

disabled children in their midst. It is only in areas where professional services are required that the church administration would come in. Small homes therefore hope to leave the care of the physically disabled children as far as possible in the hands of the family members the village communities.

From the administrative perspective, the Catholic church hopes to provide the disabled in the small homes with special training by making use of local institutions such as the village polytechnics and colleges. For non-specialized training, the service of qualified house mothers will be employed.<sup>21</sup> The church however proposes use of services of Rehabilitation employment officer more in the area of employment. Resettlement of children after their education is regarded as vital.<sup>22</sup> The church's projects linked with existing local facilities like health and educational facilities held by the government, is encouraged to promote cooperation and to minimize the cost-intensive nature of the old structures. Moreover, it is anticipated that establishment of small homes, will minimize the establishment of special institutions as the practice had been in the past. The already existing institutions are hoped, will

be adopted to the new concept of small homes. The children are also expected to live independent lives as much as possible.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.8 Conclusion

The church's mission in rehabilitating and educating the disabled, especially the physically disabled children, has greatly revolutionized the attitude of the people towards the disabled. The church is doing a highly commendable work. Through the church's programme, a number of young disabled have been helped to get education, while others have been helped to become self reliant through the earnings they make in business they have established after being trained by the church's established institutions.

Since there are now more disabled children in our society than in the past, the demand to assist them is very high. Although the church is aware of this demand and the need to help the disabled, she is limited in her financial resources and thus is not able to cope with the demand. Where the church has shown a great

success in rehabilitating the disabled children, has mainly been due to the assistance received in the form of contributions and aid from abroad. The local people have hardly been contributing towards the welfare of the disabled in any tangible ways.

Socio-economic and political structures that are in operation have frustrated the church's efforts. Despite the fact that the government has been providing aid and staff in various institutions, very little achievement has been made in bettering the state of the disabled. The disabled poor is still disfavoured by programmes that are hitherto intended to benefit him.

FOOTNOTES

1. The church in this chapter refers to the church as an 'organization' and local administration.
2. S.O. Brattgard, "Social and Psychological aspects of the Situations of the Disabled" in The Handicapped Person in the Community, ed. by D.M. Boswell and J.M. Wingrove, p. 7.
3. Appendix p.
4. 2 married, 2 widowed, all were above 20 years.
5. Appendix p.
6. Salvation Army is a church movement that gives emphasis on social activities in the church.
7. African Inland Church (A.I.C.).
8. Headmaster - Kibos School for the Blind, Interview, Kibos, February 9th, 1981.
9. Interview, Ibid..
10. Headmistress - Joyland School for the Crippled, Interview, Kisumu Town, February 10th, 1981.
11. Self reliance is one of the aims of the church's involvement with the poor. One of the ways the church does this is by training people in basic skills which they can later use to start their own trade/business.
12. Headmaster of Maseno School for the Deaf, Interview, Maseno, February 12th, 1981.

13. Aluor staff and students, Interview, Aluor Mission, January 7th, 1981.
14. Interview, Ibid...
15. Interview, Ibid..
16. The Catholic church has been trying to buy materials such as clothes, tools etc., for the school leavers to help them start business, but sooner or later the assistance prove to be inadequate, so that the recipients find it difficult to maintain their business for long. Many times individuals find that they can not go on because of shortage of capital.
17. The Salvation Army personnel reported that extension work is also limited because it does not provide enough opportunities to absorb school leavers as should be the case.
18. The participants from the Catholic church decided to start this new structure with the physically disabled (the lame), since they are the biggest in number and because they are the most suitable for such a model.
19. Report: "Survey and case study of simplified homes for the physically disabled children", comp. by Z.P. Musambu, Kenya, July 1979, p. 2f.
20. Ibid. , p. 14.
21. House-mothers are responsible for teaching the children staying in the homes, domestic and needlework for personal benefit.
22. Musambu, op. cit., p. 14.
23. Ibid., p. 5.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE CHURCH AND THE POOR - UNEMPLOYED

In the previous two Chapters, it was indicated that poverty of individuals may be on account of the degree and type of personal disability like old age and physical handicap. In this chapter, poverty is shown to result from the nature of individual's work. Both underpayment in an employment, and participation only in seasonal employment and casual labour, have a worse effect on the living standards of the families involved. From this point, poverty can be taken to mean "having insufficient income to provide for basic human needs". This definition explicitly includes the problem of unemployment.

In this Chapter, therefore, focus is on the problem of unemployment and the church's attempt to alleviate it. The concept will be discussed against the background of the Luo traditional society and the new monetary economy.

#### 5.1 CAUSES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

In the monetary economy<sup>1</sup>, for a family to survive depends alot on its earning capacity outside

agriculture. In Chapter Three it was stated that most of the interviewees have inadequate land. The small plots that people own, can not be depended upon for producing enough food for the families to eat, and to have surplus to generate income. Members of a family have therefore to participate in the wider economy in order to increase their income and to enable them to buy necessities of life.

It is within the scope of monetary economy that we shall examine the problem of unemployment and what the church is doing to help its victims.

As mentioned in Chapter two, under the subsistence economy<sup>2</sup> in the Luo traditional society, each member had his role determined by whichever means of subsistence that was in operation at the time. For instance, herding of cattle, sheep and goats was the responsibility of the men and young boys. Women were mainly responsible for milking, sweeping compounds and cooking. Once the agricultural pattern came into existence, after the death of large numbers of herds of cattle in the 1880s rinder pest epidemic, men, women and children likewise, came to have specific roles assigned to them to fit this mean



of subsistence, Unemployment however, would occur when the community was plagued with drought, animal pestilence or due to lack of land.

In Chapter two we also saw that, the primary purpose of education of the Luo converts was both to make them literate so that they could read the Bible, as well and to alienate them from their traditional customs by keeping them in boarding schools. However, with the passing of time, the significance of paid labour came to have negative impact on the missionary education, because the original objective<sup>4</sup> of missionary education began to suffer as employment opportunities opened for educated Luos in both administrative centres and settler farms.<sup>5</sup>

For the people then, education was not only regarded as a means to acquire writing and reading skills, but more so, as a means of getting qualifications needed for "the best paying and highest status jobs". It is important to note that, up to the time before and immediately after Independence, the situation was not that of widespread unemployment, but rather that of "shortage of educated manpower".<sup>6</sup> What then has caused the

widespread unemployment we are witnessing today?

The responses received from our interviewees in relation to the causes of unemployment, indicated some of the important causes widely accepted today by scholars of economic discipline. Our total sample of 118 respondents gave the following answers as causes of unemployment: 22.0% referred to lack of jobs or inadequate industries in the rural areas, 21.1% referred to education. This included aspects such as low standard of education and lack of basic skills. 11.9% referred to population growth, 6.8% blamed lack of jobs to corruption, 1.7% referred to demand for white collar jobs by school leavers, 0.8% to lack of proper planning by the government, 3.4% to other factors, 32.2% did not give any response at all. It was not clear, why this high percentage did not give their response as to what they think is the cause of unemployment.

Limited job opportunities in the rural areas, low standard of education and rapid population growth ranked highest according to the laity, as the major causes of unemployment. Problem of corruption was also considered by a number of laity as another contributing

factor. Responses from the clergy confirmed the problems of education (4.8%), limited job opportunities (4.8%) and corruption (4.8%).<sup>7</sup>

The educational system in Nyanza Province as it is elsewhere in the country, is supposed to supply skilled manpower. However it is pumping into the labour market young people who have more formal qualifications than relevant skills needed for various jobs in the industrial and agricultural fields.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the educated have an excessive desire and high aspiration for white collar jobs, as a result, there has arisen an exodus of school leavers from rural to urban areas in search of employment. Few among them would be lucky to filter into employment sector, while the majority end up as perpetual job seekers idling all day long for days on end without any work to do. The drift from rural to urban areas has been brought about by the fact that rural areas as compared to the urban, have less amenities, limited job opportunities and low wages.<sup>9</sup> Demand for more education in recent years has even worsened the situation, for, the number of the educated have increased, while the absorptive capacity has remained

the same. The population growth is therefore faster than labour market demands.

Unemployment has also been explained in the light of the nature of population growth.<sup>10</sup> Having the highest population growth rate, it is now estimated that Kenya has the highest percentage of population below 15 years of age. This implies that the manpower that enters labour force is more than the one leaving it. In other words, there are more job seekers than the retiring civil servants. It is however, the rapid population growth that has been aggravating the unemployment problems.

When we narrowed down causes mentioned by the laity in our area of study, we found that from our random sample of 116 adults interviewed, the major contribution to their state of poverty was due to a low standard of education. Since high earning capacity is directly related to the level of academic achievement, we can presume that the educational standard of these adults is the main contributor to their unemployment. Table 9 on the next page shows educational standard of our 116 respondents mentioned above.

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS VS. STANDARD OF EDUCATION.

Standard of Education	No. of Responses	Percentage
No Education	62	53.4
Std. 1-4	24	20.7
Std. 5-8	23	19.8
Form 1-4	5	4.3
Higher	1	0.9
College	1	0.9
University	-	-
Total	116	100.00

The table shows that 53.4% indicated that they had no education at all. Those who seem to have had a bit of education are those with primary education 1-8, consisted of 40.5%. Primary 1-4 group(20.7%) consisted particularly of those adults who had received a missionary type of education, which in the plan of the missionaries was meant to enable them to read scriptures.<sup>11</sup>

Education for evangelization has proved that it has no educational value or relevance to employment today to those who received it. One researcher said the following to this effect:

....."This was not a sound educational aim because it was neither adequate nor had it any educational value or intention. Its purpose was to help the church missionary society to preach a gospel of extending the influence in their regional field."

This fact is also apparent from our data. The unemployed parents, mostly with primary education only, have not had a number of their needs met because:

- a) they are unable to get employment in the modern sectors for they lack, in most cases required skills.
- b) their income is generally low and irregular for they rarely get permanent jobs. Activities that tend to be left open for them include petty trading and casual labour that generate little income. Whenever they get engaged in salaried jobs, they tend to get the most humble kinds. For example, they commonly get employed as cooks, cleaners, and office messengers. In these types of jobs, the salary is very minimal.
- c) they are unable to maintain their families sufficiently, thus in a number of homes, we found children in

extreme, poor health conditions and poorly clothed.

d) the family life is generally unstable and disorganized. Girls from such families are often forced into marriage at early ages, with a hope that with their newly formed relations, the parents would get support for the rest of the suffering family members. Reports from the respondents however showed that the parents hopes are always shattered as their daughters usually end up by marrying poor men who are either unemployed or have no proper source of income at all.<sup>13</sup> e) they are unable to educate their children adequately, therefore even the usual alternative<sup>14</sup> open to such parents, of acquiring good support from their children is not practicable. As the respondents openly stated, their meagre and irregular income do not allow them to offer their children a good standard of education (21% widows and 14.5% non-widows said this).<sup>15</sup>

Being unable to stay in school to receive education, many children from these families always end up by dropping out of school prematurely, and consequently join the lot of the unemployed youth and casual labourers. With low standard of education, they do not

possess required skills that can make them gain employment in the modern sector. Mbiti affirmed this for instance, when he said in relation to primary school leavers in general: "A large proportion of school age youth never attend school or even if they do, over 80% never go beyond seven years of education. By this stage they have mastered some basic literacy and numeracy, but cannot relate any specific skills, craft or occupation to their education. They cannot even become poor clerks."<sup>16</sup>

The premature drop-outs have thus very little hope of getting employment. Their state is even worse than those who have several or at least seven years of education.

The relation between poor families and their large numbers of children is also accountable for the vicious circle of low income and low education in these families. Two researchers by the names of Epstein and Jackson<sup>17</sup> found this to be true in another tribe in Kenya. They said:



....."It is precisely within this predicament of scarcity of land, lack of employment opportunities and low levels of education that, the poor perceive their solution in terms of large numbers of children. They assume that more children increases their chances of at least break the poverty-generating cycle. More often than not however, this break through does not occur and the large numbers of children cause the poor to continue to move along the downward spiral of poverty."

Fifty-four respondents of the 116 random sample for example, had a maximum of between 6 - 11 children. This is represented by 72.1% of the total sample. Those with 2 - 3 children constituted 7.4% while those with 4-5 were 16.7%. A very small percentage had however between 12 and 13 children (1.9%).<sup>18</sup> This is implicitly a carry-over from traditional belief towards many children. The view that children are 'assets' in economy is apparently still prevalent.

TABLE 10      NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF THE 116 FAMILIES  
INTERVIEWED.

No. of children	No. of Responses	Percentage
0-1	0	0
2-3	4	7.4
4-5	9	16.7
6-7	22	40.7
8-9	8	14.8
10-11	9	16.7
12-13	1	1.8
No response	1	1.8
Total	54	100.0*

## 5.2 THE CHURCH AND THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT -

### (A) PEOPLES' RESPONSES (118 Laity).

Answers from the laity to the question whether or not the church is helping the unemployed in Kisumu and Siaya districts is shown on the table below. Note that Table 11a. is in the category of positive responses and Table 11b. in the negative responses.

\* Percentage is rounded up to 100.0

CHURCH'S HELP VS. UNEMPLOYMENT

*positive response*

Table 11a.

Responses	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1. Help where it can.	2	3.4
2. Only those who ask for help.	1	1.6
3. Some	1	1.6
4. Create few job opportunities.	1	1.6
5. Those who go to church are	4	6.8
6. Yes it does	44	74.7
7. Others	6	10.3
Total	59	100.0

Table 11b.

Responses *negative response* No. of Respon- Percentage  
dents

1. There are no such kind of people.	1	1.6
2. Very little is done.	1	1.6
3. Programme is still under way/ response is slow.	2	3.4
4. It does not.	34	57.6
5. Others	3	5.1
6. No response.	18	30.5
Total	59	100.0*

Under the laity's positive responses, the highest percentage (37.3%), stated that the church does help the unemployed. This clearly confirms that the church is doing something towards such groups of people. But no mention was made of specific ways in which this is being done. This however became clear in the laity's answers to the question related to the benefits and the "kind of employment" secured after such people have been helped by the church.<sup>19</sup>

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

Other answers received under positive responses on table 11a. include (i) the church helps the unemployed when it can (1.7%).<sup>20</sup> (ii) only those who ask for help are given assistance by the church (0.8%).<sup>21</sup> (iii) some are helped when the church creates a few job opportunities (0.8%) and, only those who go to church are helped (3.4%).<sup>22</sup>

The laity's response shows two sides to the issue. First, there is a deliberate help given to the unemployed by the church (37.3% stated this). This is the help given by the church without being asked. On the other hand, the help is limited, selective in nature and sometimes it lacks initiative.

Comparing the answers to the 'negative responses' on table 11b, 28.8% of the laity categorically stated that the church does not help the unemployed. Only a small percentage attempted to give specific reasons why they think this is so: 0.8% stated that very little help is being given, if any. Another 0.8% stated that there are no unemployed people to be helped, 1.7% said that such programmes have not been started by the church, and that it was still under way. 2.5% were in the 'other category.

Responses from the clergy, however tried to elaborate further, exactly what the church is doing to help alleviate the unemployment problem. Their answers, a synthesis of two questions<sup>23</sup>, fall in two categories: programme for the unemployed youth and those for the unemployed adults.

Statements such as: (i) "by employing young educated", (ii) "create special institutions where they can acquire skills", (iii) "by training them in various skills", (iv) "by teaching them to be self-employed", reflect the concept of village polytechnics and youth groups programmes as was found through the survey.

Another sample of respondents, mentioned those programmes carried out with the aim of helping unemployed adults in the rural community. The respondents answers emphasised the "boosting" aspect of these programmes. Boosting here refers to assisting poor parents to expand their businesses, and for farmers agricultural output produce more and sell more as mentioned earlier in chapter 3.

Through statements like (i) "educating the rural community to become aware of their needs and training them in skill", or (ii) "by giving the adults capital to start business", implies teaching them to be self reliant.

A general comment can be made about the programmes for the unemployed youth and adults: Programmes for the unemployed youth and adults both emphasize self reliance. The approaches to establish this in the two groups, are however slightly different. For the youth, from the above responses, we can infer that the programmes begin with acquiring of skills before they can be helped to secure employment. "Skills before employment", is the motto. Mbiti's report as we have already seen, helps us in explaining why this is the case. Most of the students who leave primary school are rarely skillfully equipped. Thus whoever takes the responsibility to help them, has to keep in mind this limitation otherwise, the youth may not even know what to do if they ever get employed.

Programmes for the unemployed adults unlike those for the youth, tend to begin by creating awareness in the recipients<sup>24</sup>, so that they are able to identify some of

the causes of their unemployment. At the same time, the church makes effort to show those who are already self employed, ways of how to increase their income to raise their living standards. "Creating awareness to causes of unemployment", can be said to be the motto in the case of the unemployed adults.

From our respondents, there were also some clergy who stated that the church is doing nothing for the unemployed because; (i) the church has not started such programmes, (ii) the people of this kind, the unemployed, are far too many to be helped, (iii) the government is caring for this kind of people, (iv) the church is afraid to condemn evils that cause unemployment, (v) the church lacks capital to help such people.<sup>25</sup>

Here again, the data throws light on some of the main factors which some interviewed clergy brought up as contributing to the church's failure to help the unemployed in Kisumu and Siaya districts. There is, like before, an indication that some areas have no programmes run for the unemployed by the church. But perhaps even if such a programme was to be promoted as



some of the respondents said, the vast number of victims of unemployment would hamper its implementation, considering that the church is limited financially. Others think that, this kind of endeavour is not really the responsibility of the church but of the government instead. One individual in particular, brought out a moralistic view point when he stated that the church is afraid to condemn evils that cause unemployment.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the church has failed in her role of being the "conscience of her society" in this respect.

### 5.3 THE CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN HELPING THE UNEMPLOYED.

#### 5.3.1 (B) CASE STUDIES

##### Youth Programmes

##### 1) Village polytechnics

The concept of village polytechnic,<sup>27</sup> originated from the church's concern with the plight of the unemployed primary school leavers. The main aim is to arrest the mass exodus of school leavers from Kisumu and Siaya rural areas to the urban centers. Through village polytechnics, school leavers are being trained for 'rural employment, by making use of rural resources and materials available.'<sup>28</sup> The ultimate goal however, is to integrate school leavers into their society by

making them self reliant and useful members of the community. This is to make them people who can fend for themselves.

Village polytechnics manned by the C.P.K. and the Catholic church, are predominantly for primary school leavers who failed to join secondary school either due to lack of school fees or poor examination results. Training offered, thus aims at enabling such youth to be self employed. From this perspective, it can be argued that early school dropouts or school leavers, the majority of whom come from poor families, may not have access to such institutions as village polytechnics, because they have hardly completed the seven years of primary education. If a parent failed to pay school fees to a child in primary school, it is impossible to imagine that such a parent will miraculously afford a polytechnic fee which is about 300/- k. shillings per year, and is far more greater than that of primary school. The fate of such children is sealed. They continue to be unemployed and very poor.

Subjects taught and activities carried out in the church village polytechnics, vary from one polytechnic to another. For instance, Kokise village polytechnic

run by the C.P.K.<sup>29</sup> has: agriculture, masonry, carpentry, blacksmith, and recently, home science was introduced. Sega village polytechnic run by the Catholic church<sup>30</sup> has tin smith, carpentry, tailoring and cookery. The youth who get training at these village polytechnics, are not only able to acquire skills which they can use later for their own benefit, but they also supply their rural community with cheap services by (i) building new houses and repairing old ones, (ii) making new furniture and repairing old ones, (iii) supplying the community with articles like jikos or cooking stove, buckets, tin lamps and knitted clothes at reasonable prices.

Village polytechnic commodities from tin smith or black smith and wood work have generally found a good market at the local level except that the local people who order things from the students, many times fail to pay as expected.

Another set back, is the fact that the polytechnics although the commodities produced by the students at the village polytechnics are what the community requires, but these are always sold at very low prices because the students are not out to make profit

but to train. This, unfortunately, poses a grave danger to the students, especially when they begin to carry out their own trades, after completion of their training at the village polytechnics. The polytechnic graduates are faced by the sad reality that their customers are the same people the polytechnics allow to buying things at relatively cheap prices. Instead of turning to the graduates to buy articles from, the community continues to buy commodities from the village polytechnic trainees, because they are cheap. A tug-of-war is thus created between the polytechnics and their graduates. As a result, a graduate has to think twice before establishing a business, for there is always the risk of not making profit or to carry on with the business with a hope of eventually becoming self-reliant.

Services rendered by the village polytechnic youth are however quite appreciated by the members of rural communities. Some parents regard village polytechnic programmes as the answer to their unemployed children, particularly when they see the benefits received by those who get trained in various skills for self employment. Unfortunately, this view is not commonly held by a good number of youths themselves.

In both centers<sup>31</sup> a number of youth had left the polytechnics before they could complete their training because of lack of interest. Different views were however held on this. Some said that village polytechnic drop outs leave the polytechnics for they have not been able to ascertain whether the kind of training they were getting would offer them a solution to their unemployment problem. In other words the youth want training that guarantees income.<sup>32</sup> Another reason is that they do not see the training as useful, since the government is not involved in the programme.<sup>33</sup> This belief comes out of the view that, church oriented programmes are second class to the general society.

But drop out, , can largely be attributed to the fear of the youth, learning practical work, especially that which involves manual work. Many students are still academically oriented, and aspiration for white collar jobs still lingers with certain individuals. The Catholic church is attempting to break this attitude through the youth programmes as we shall see later in this chapter.

Enrolment in the church village polytechnics is worth noting too. At Kokise, it was found that the number enrolled at the polytechnic is unproportional to the demand. Enrolment ranges between 20 to 30 students annually. Sometimes, it is not strange to find as few as 5 entrants annually. This can however be explained in several ways. Apart from those students who willfully leave the polytechnic, sometimes students are sent away on disciplinary grounds. The church oriented polytechnics want to instil Christian moral behaviour into their students. Nevertheless, to a great extent, the variance of the enrolment is mainly attributed to the amount of fees each entrant has to pay per year. K. shillings 300/- per year is quite a strain on poor parents.<sup>34</sup>

### 5.3.2 PROBLEMS OF RUNNING CHURCH VILLAGE POLYTECHNICS

Church polytechnics face several problems, some of these are a threat to their very existence. One problem is that, the quality of courses offered is questionable. Then, there is the issue of getting well qualified instructors because church village polytechnics lack attractive salaries. So, unless the government gives

some aid<sup>35</sup>, church village polytechnics will continue to face this problem. The C.P.K.'s village polytechnics for instance, have been depending heavily on the assistance given by the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK).<sup>36</sup>

Accommodation<sup>37</sup> is another problem, particularly where students have to walk great distances to attend classes at the various polytechnics. This is true with the Kokise village polytechnic where the problem of accommodation has created a dilemma for the church administration. There is the fear that if a full boarding is allowed to operate in order to accommodate more students, then the demand in terms of finances would be beyond the reach for most parents who are poor.

There is also the problem of flooding the local market with similar types of commodities. At Sega village polytechnic, one cobbler had a problem of getting market for his business. His complaint, was that people only bring their pairs of shoes for repair, while other leather work is only brought to him on very rare occasions. This typified other cases in the area. The problem of getting materials to use,

is also experienced by a number of village polytechnic graduates, because some of the materials needed tend to be rather expensive for those who are starting their own business.

The problem of getting established in trade after graduating from the polytechnic, is another huddle facing the graduates. At Kokise village polytechnic, this is being tackled with success by the C.P.K. This is done through a system whereby, the center offer tools, materials and supervision for the first two years<sup>38</sup> to the graduates upon completion of their studies at the polytechnic. After two years, the graduates are left under the patronage of a chairman, who is usually a member of the graduated group. During the assistance period, the group is encouraged to open an account where they can save their money, or any profit made in their trade, to ensure self dependence once the polytechnic withdraws its support. This method is not necessarily the same with other village polytechnics in Kisumu and Siaya districts. Since we were unable to get information in line with Kokise, we cannot give comparative notes on how other administrators from other village polytechnics are



dealing with this problem. We were however, able to gather from our interviews that more than often, graduates of the village polytechnics are left to start their own trades or whatever business they may want to undertake, without any initial assistance from the church administration. Extension units in agriculture<sup>39</sup> have also created job opportunities to some students from Kokise village polytechnic. In these units, graduate students are employed as instructors.

#### 5.3.3 11) Catholic Youth Programme<sup>40</sup>

In addition to village polytechnics, the Roman Catholic Church has youth programmes organized from diocesan level, to ensure that the youth are equipped with information of what they are likely to face after school. The youngsters are involved by the church in extra curricula activities like the "4K" clubs. Through these clubs the youth learn good methods of farming. During the schooling period, the programmes aim at making the youth, not only aware of the problem of unemployment, but they are also used to equip the youth with skills that would be applicable in practical life to earn a living, thus avoiding unemployment.

For youth outside the school system, particularly school leavers, the Catholic youth programmes have first to grapple with the problem of negative mentality from some youths who do not want to take self-employment as alternative solution to their unemployment state. To do this, the programmes are first geared to change such negative attitudes towards practical kinds of trades, after completion of their training at is then followed by training on basic skills as a prerequisite to self employment, which is hoped, will enable those who have gone through it be financially independent.

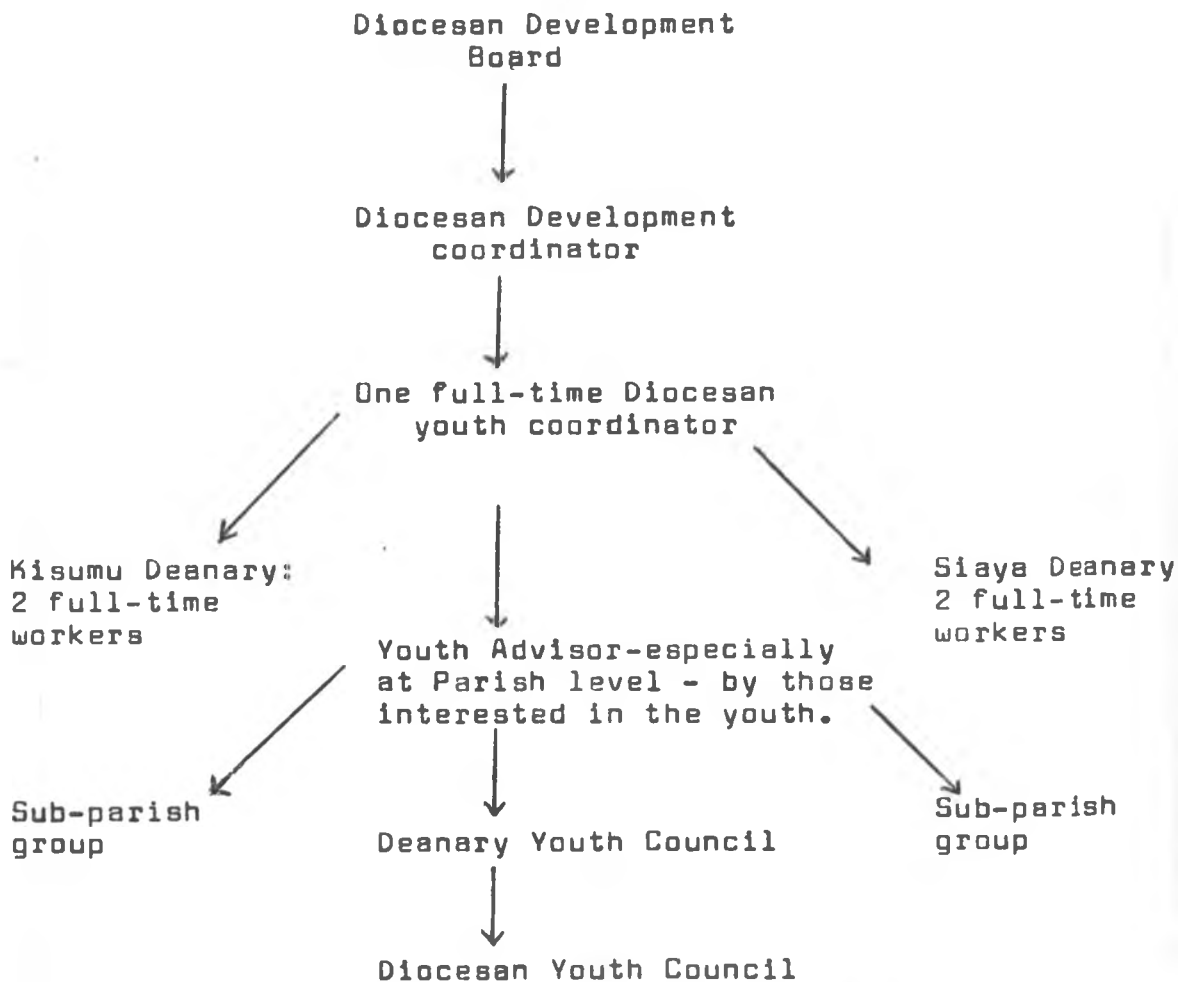
On a broader basis, the Catholic youth programmes have the following as their wide objectives: (i) organizing youth into groups for club activities, (ii) training the club leaders and committee members, (iii) promoting self help skills, and (iv) encouraging participation of youth in church affairs. The whole purpose of the objectives mentioned above is to tackle unemployment problems. As stated earlier, the church is trying to create in the youth first, a sense of social and community responsibility, secondly, good human relations, and thirdly, to help them develop their

belief in understanding Christian values and living.<sup>41</sup>

Thus the Catholic Church's endeavour to assist the youth in Kisumu and Siaya districts, is to develop the whole man by meeting both the physical and spiritual needs.

The organizational structure of how the Catholic youth programme operates from diocesan level is very complicated. The coordinator in the dioceses supports and plans all the activities, to ensure the viability of the projects with the diocese office who passes out the financial and material support needed. For each deanery which is at regional level, there are two full-time workers who coordinate the youth programmes. On the chart shown on the next page, regional level youth group is divided according to sub-parishes. Youth councils, which are at diocesan and deanery levels, are the organisms that manage the youth work at the regional and sub-regional levels.

TABLE 12: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF YOUTH GROUPS



5.3.4 YOUTH PROJECTS<sup>42</sup>

Youth projects vary according to groups and materials available to them. From the list on the

table below, all the activities fit rural life situations. Farming, trading, and practical skills are very common with most of the groups.

TABLE 13: YOUTH ACTIVITIES AT SUB-PARISH LEVEL

Parish	Sub-parish	Project(s)
Kibuye	Buoye	wood-work and moulding
	Chiga	bee-keeping, rope making
	Kuya	farm work
Rang'ala	Rang'ala center	carpentry, sewing, gardening, fish ponds, pottery
	Sigomere center	fish ponds, cookery, sewing, handicraft
	Lwanda center	contracts
	Nguya center	contracts
Mbagu	Umala	bee-keeping, carpentry, needlework, vegetable growing.
	Nyalula	petty trade, rope making
	Pap Okoyo	broom making, table, flower and chair making
	Mbagu	table mats, needlework, contracts, petty trade
	Gangu	papyrus mat making

TABLE 13:

Parish	Sub-parish	Project (s)
Sega	Has 13 groups	farming skill improvement for economic advancement
Lwak	Has 14 groups	farming, poultry and mat making
Madiany	Has 8 groups	cotton and crop farming, table making
Barkolwa	Has 13 groups	agriculture (4K club), skills, has craft center.

For non-agricultural skills, as the ones acquired through the polytechnic trainings, there is potential market in most areas. Demand for good houses and equipment like chairs and tables, demand for masonry, carpentry, tailoring, knitting and tin smith or black smith are common. The only problem faced with this group comes as a result of competition from other rural development groups, and from individuals who depend on the sale of similar commodities for their livelihood, this subsequently inhibits good returns for youth products. On the whole however, these activities have created awareness in most of the youth who are members and they have also promoted a spirit of self reliance and activities amongst them.<sup>43</sup> In some areas, there are youths who have gained self employment,<sup>44</sup> even though other areas still face the problem of unemployment from their trained youth.<sup>45</sup>

Where the biggest problem lies is with agricultural skills. For those youth who train in agricultural skills, there is need for land where they can apply practically, what they have learnt. Considering the size of land for the families represented by these youths, we could say that there is very little chance of youth, from such families to get self-employed on land, unless they get assisted by individuals, the local government, or unless the church gets them a plot of land for their own use.

Like the village polytechnics, youth groups face the problem of insufficient funds for tools, materials, and salaries for skilled instructors. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church is forced to depend heavily, as with the other projects, on foreign aid to operate her youth programmes. Responses of some youth towards these projects have been negative. Shortage of personnel to man youth groups is a problem too. Youth groups in the area are quite scattered and means of transport is a problem in many areas.

#### 5.3.5 PROPOSED PLANS

One of the Catholic Churches in Kisumu Parish has plans to help some of the poor youths become self-reliant by grafting them back to the education system.

Plans were already underway to educate early school leavers of ages 11 - 15. It is anticipated that this programme will bring youths who had left school prematurely back into the mainstream of education in-order to increase their employment opportunities. The school through which this will be achieved, plans to offer both academic and practical subjects relevant to the communities' needs.<sup>46</sup>

#### 5.4 ADULT PROGRAMMES

The C.P.K. has been assisting the unemployed and the under-employed adults through its Family Development Project. By lending money to these adults, the church believes that they would have an increased income. For farmers, the money is expected to help with the improvement of farm produce. We did find that even some salary earners, were receiving this kind of loan to start business because their salaries



are very low to support the families adequately. Apparently, lack of capital has been one of the biggest obstacles to most of these adults in becoming self-reliant. The aim to become self reliant has not been achieved or realised by most of them so far.<sup>47</sup> Several factors have contributed to this. Perhaps this is where the church has failed to 'condemn causes of unemployment' as one of the respondents said.

Group activities which concentrate on 'income generating projects' have not been outstanding with the C.P.K. programmes. There are however, few individual groups who have aspired to start group activities in trade, but due to lack of proper organization and advice, there has been no real involvement yet. There is nevertheless one group which is already engaged, at parish level <sup>48</sup> in fish trade. C.P.K. programmes to a great extent, therefore tend to concentrate on individuals rather than on group activities in promoting income. Group activities are however more prominent in areas where the Catholic church is in operation. An example of this is the women's groups.

Catholic women's groups was established after the church came to realize that the majority of the women in their congregation, were generally un-employed, and as a result were depending solely on their husbands' income. And, since the majority of the women did not have income, the whole family had to depend on the income of the men.<sup>49</sup> To help these women to become self reliant, and more active in generating money to supplement their husbands' income, the church initiated activities which would earn them income. For single parents like widows, the programme aims at instilling in them a sense of responsibility towards the family, without depending on others after the death of their husbands. Members of these groups comprised of old and young women, illiterate and literate, for example, teachers. Teachers are allowed to join the groups to provide leadership since most of the members are old and illiterate.

#### 5.4.1 CREATING AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN'S GROUPS

When a group has already been formed, the work of the coordinator is simply to encourage the members to find out their needs. In other words, the church is trying very hard not to impose its ideas

on these women. Once the group has identified its problems, the coordinator then shows them how to plan for action to solve them. For unemployment problems for instance, through open discussions between the women's group coordinator and members of the group, the former has been able to create awareness by asking the women provoking questions like 'why they are depending on their husbands' income?' 'Why they are not employed?' 'What causes unemployment?',<sup>50</sup>. 'What is employment?'. From these questions, a lot of misconceptions of what unemployment really is or means, have been corrected and motivation to be self reliant has been evoked and group activities strengthened.<sup>51</sup>

#### 5.4.2 ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN'S GROUPS

As a result of groups' ability to identify their problems, many income generating projects are now in operation. The strength of these, however differ from one group to another. The activities include: basket making, bee-keeping, kitchen gardening, pottery, craft, etc. Women groups are always advised to produce those commodities or to carry out those activities, which could easily sell in their local

markets and would not require travelling to other places to sell. Since women's group are producing similar commodities as some of the polytechnic graduates, it is common to find identical goods flooding the local markets. However it is encouraging that the women's groups have made some profit. This shows that their products are of good quality being able to sell amidst competition in the markets. An example of how women's groups work and make profit is seen in the Umala women's group in Slaya district.<sup>52</sup> The group started with a loan of 500/- k. shillings (see Table 24 below). After trading in different commodities (pottery, fish, flour) and after using part of the money in farming, the group was able to make a profit of 1,000/- after only one year.

TABLE 14: ACTIVITIES OF UMALA WOMEN'S GROUP (SIAYA)

Started	No. of members	Loan received	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Total Profit
in April, 1980	24	500/-	traded on flour (maize) used all 500/- profit 20/-	gardening (potatoes) used 40/- profit 400/-	traded in fish no profit mentioned	traded on pottery no profit mentioned.	From all the activities the group was able to pay back the 500/- loan in 1981, and remained with a profit of 1,000/- which, at the time of our research, individuals were using in their own businesses.

Part of the success of some of the women groups can be attributed to the government's aid.<sup>53</sup> Evidence of success is also reflected on reports from some members. A number of them have indicated that they are enjoying what they are doing, and that, they have been able to help other needy members in the communities. The above report was verified by the 118 sample of laity. Answers to the two questions bring this out.<sup>54</sup>

TABLE 15: BENEFITS OF THE UNEMPLOYED AFTER THE CHURCH'S ASSISTANCE ACCORDING TO LAITY

Benefits

Responses	No. of respondents	%
res.		
1. Self employed. (earning).	9	7.6
2. Living standard raised.	13	11.0
3. Became independent	11	9.3
4. Carrying family responsibility on their own	1	0.8
5. Got converted, moral and spiritual standard raised	11	9.3
6. Others	6	5.1
7. They did not get employed	2	1.7
8. The church can not meet all their needs.	1	0.8
9. There is no effort made to help.	1	0.8
10. Others	2	1.7
11. No response	61	51.7
Total	118	100.0*

TABLE 16: RAISED LIVING STANDARD ACCORDING  
TO LAITY

Living Standard Raised

Responses	No. of respondents	%
Yes.		
1. To some extent	13	11.0
2. Not all	1	0.8
3. Raised their total income.	9	7.6
4. Have become self reliant	11	9.3
5. Eliminated their ignorance.	7	5.9
6. Not very much.	3	2.5
7. Others	4	3.4
8. No response	70	59.3
Total	118	100.0*

Benefits according to the laity in the first table, is having the women's living standard raised. This may be explained by the 7.6% and 9.3% responses. The improvement of living standard comes about, when the adult members of the family begin to earn and hence become independent and ultimately, is able to carry out their responsibilities without anyone's assistance. The response for the improved living standard attest the benefits stated.

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

#### 5.4.3 ATTITUDES OF MEN TOWARDS WOMEN'S GROUPS

Attitudes of men towards women's groups vary, some feel their position as bread winners challenged, since they hold that 'women are to be given and not to give'. In other words, such men believe that, it is the responsibility of the men to support the family, thus women are to depend on them. Another group of men have a more positive attitude. They in fact admire the effort of women's groups alot because it helps them to become self reliant, and they have even expressed the desire to join them if possible.

#### 5.4.4 RURAL SAVINGS AND CREDIT

Rural savings and credit is<sup>55</sup> another way the Catholic church is attempting to 'increase income' for poor families. Through savings and credit, subsistence farmers are encouraged to save with and borrow from the church, inorder to develop their land for better production. Employed agricultural advisers are available to promote and advise farmers. The problem against this has however been that, many of the people do not see this as a way of minimizing their unemployment problem.<sup>56</sup> When they get money,



most of them quickly use it and then they go to look for jobs in towns.

#### 5.5 CONCLUSION.

Unemployment tends to aggravate the poverty state of the families involved. They eventually have the organization and stability of their family unit also affected.

Youth from poor families end up by remaining unemployed because they leave school prematurely and have very little chance of joining even a village polytechnic for better future because their parents cannot afford the fees charged.

The church's effort to alleviate unemployment of the rural unemployed in Siaya and Kisumu is greatly hampered by lack of funds and shortage of personnel to train the people in skills for self employment.

Trades taught to the youth only offer employment to those youth who are keen, but those who are not, still find themselves unemployed and lacking in skills. Adults who have been assisted by the church to start business, or to boost their already existing ones, have had their living standard slightly improved. But male adults tend to aspire for wage employment in the urban areas

FOOTNOTES

1. Reference - chapter 2, p. 86 - 87.
2. Subsistence Economy operated mainly on three areas: herding, agriculture and fishing.
3. Concept of unemployment, strictly means lack of access to wage employment.
4. "The missionaries established schools because they believed that education was a vital tool for evangelization, and they undertook the schooling of their converts because it was necessary for them to read the bible and catechism. Ref: Iemu p. 140, Muhoho, p. 67.
5. These are the places where the Africans got wage employment.
6. G.S. Fields, The Private Demand for Education in relation to Labour, market conditions, Economic Growth Centre, Yale University, 1973.
7. Types of corruptions commonly quoted include: tribalism and nepotism.
8. A. Mayoya, The Primary School leavers problem in Kenya, B.A. Dissertation, Dar-es-Salaam, 1972, p. 2.
9. Over 60% of the respondents brought up this point.
10. L. Browstein, Education and Development in Rural Kenya; A Study of Primary School Graduates, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1972, p. 75.

11. Out of 62 clergy interviewed, less than 30% responded to the question related to unemployment.
12. E.H. Odwako, The Contribution of Church Missionary Society to Education in Western Kenya 1905-1963, Nairobi, University of Nairobi, M.A. Thesis, 1975, p. 54.
13. This information was received through interviews of the 116 poor parents in the C.P.K. Family Development Project. Such parents are now becoming aware of the futility of forcing their daughters to marry with a hope of getting some help from their in-laws.
14. Generally, parents would make efforts to uplift their financial status through their working children. To do this, parents would sacrifice all they have to educate their children. When young persons from such families begin to work, their parents would in one way or another transfer the responsibility of the family to them.
15. The 116 adults in the C.P.K. Family Development Project were divided into widows and non widow categories for the sake of comparison and emphasis.
16. P. Mbiti, Youth Employment Problems: A Discussion of Policy Issues with Special Reference to the African experience, Nairobi, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1975, p. 3.
17. "The Feasibility of Fertility Planning", ed. by T.S. Epstein and D. Jackson, Oxford and New York, Pergamon Press, 1977, p. 176.
18. Reference to one respondent out of the 54. See Table 10.

19.  
This is related to question no. 39 in the laity's questionnaire.
20.  
Because the demand is high, while financially the church is limited.
21.  
The unemployed sometimes go to the church welfare officers when they become aware that they can be helped to start their business (Interview, Aoko, NCCK field officer), Kisumu town, February 8th, 1981.
22.  
In most cases those who attend services tend to get priority whenever there is assistance to be given to the needy people.
23.  
(i) Does the church help such people, (ii) what kind of help does the church offer to these people,
24.  
Both the Roman Catholic Church and the C.P.K. strive to make their recipients aware of some of the causes of their poverty state. This goes hand in hand with assistance that they get.
25.  
These were the responses from some of the clergy men. Most of them however did not give answers to questions related to the "unemployment problem". It was not clear why this was the case though.
26.  
This point is very significant, although only one person brought it up. N.Y. Best, a Christian writer, for instance, in his book entitled "African Challenge", is quite emphatic on this point. Best is unhappy with the clergy who shun away from being the "prophetic voice", or the "conscience of society". He reminds the clergy that theirs is an obligation, not an option.

27.  
P. Mbiti, p. 15.
28.  
Ibid., p. 15.
29.  
Kokose is in Siaya district at a place called Asemoo. This village polytechnic is being run by C.P.K., Diocese of Maseno South.
30.  
Sega is one of the several polytechnics run by the Roman Catholic Church. It is in Siaya district too.
31.  
This is referring to both Kokise and Sega Village Polytechnics.
32.  
D. Okello, Siaya Youth group coordinator for the Catholic Church, Interview, Sega township, January 29th, 1981.
33.  
Interview, Ibid.
34.  
A lot of poor parents find it difficult to afford payment of this amount.
35.  
Catholic Village Polytechnic at Sigot has been getting government aid.
36.  
NCCK has been aiding most of the Church Village Polytechnics by giving them instructors, usually they get two.
37.  
At Kokise, students are boarders.

38.

Finance used for this actually comes from the students' school fees. Out of the Ksh. 300/-, a third of it (ksh. 100/-) is often kept from each student to use as soon as the training is over. Interview, Kokise.

39.

Reru and Rae (Kisumu), Malela, Ogande (South Nyanza, Ramba (Siaya). In these areas, ex-students train young and old farmers as trainers in their farms.

40.

Youth programme is an integrated programme of all the youth programmes including Young Christian Students (NYS) and Young Christian Workers (YCW), into the whole Diocesan structure.

41.

V. Awiti, Diocesan Youth Coordinator, Interview Kisumu town, January 14th, 1981.

42.

Interview, Ibid.

43.

Report of youth meeting held at Bishop's residence, Kisumu 3rd October, 1978.

44.

At Kabonyo location in Kano Plain - Kisumu, four Form 4 leavers were actively engaged in fish farming. The project had reached a level of national recognition by the time we were carrying out our research.

45.

Barkolwa's (Kisumu district) trained youth had problem of getting employment.

46.

Van Doon - priest at Panpier centre. Interview, Pandpier Centre, November 18th, 1980.

47.

Ref. Chapter 3.

48. One group in Ramba parish has started business in fish - Interview J. Okeno (C.P.K. Pastor in Siaya district), and Masiga, Rural Development Coordinator, Kisumu town.
49. R. Ogwel, Women's Group coordinator, Interview, Kisumu town, January 17th, 1981.
50. Interview, Ibid.
51. Interview, Ibid.
52. Women's Group leader, Umala group, Interview, Umala, February 6th, 1981.
53. Women's Group which are government aided are run by Community Development Office (CDO). Some of the members in the Catholic Women's Group are also enrolled with CDO. By virtue of their enrolment, these women get a share of the government's aid, and as it happens, they often take this back to their church for their women's group, and it is this money which if used properly, can boost the activities run by the Catholic Church.
54. The two questions are: (i) Do the people get benefit from the help, (ii) Are their living standards raised.
55. Reference, Chapter 3 section on the Catholic Church programme, p. 96 - 97.
56. Ibid., p. 96.

## CHAPTER SIX

### AN APPRAISAL OF THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN ALLEVIATING POVERTY AND THE SUFFERING OF THE POOR

In this Chapter, the findings of the church's role in alleviating rural poverty and the suffering of the poor are evaluated. Both their strength and weaknesses are noted. In addition, recommendations are given to help the church and the government to improve their plans for future involvement with programmes designed to fight the suffering of the poor.

#### 6.1 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

##### 6.1.1 RESPONSE, LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

An authority on the subject about the church and the poor, Ana De Santa says in his books, Towards a Church of the poor,

"in many parts of the world, several groups and movements have heard the cry of the poor. Many of these operate outside the churches. However, a growing number of them can nowadays also be found within the church. These groups have become sensitive to the situation of the poor today and their demands and hope. It is as if the wind is blowing at the same time in many places, clarifying the situation and helping the churches to realize that they cannot remain passive once they see the implication of the situation of the underprivileged in our time".<sup>1</sup>



From what the Roman Catholic Church and the C.P.K. are doing through their programmes designed to help the various categories of the poor, it is evident that alleviation of poverty and the suffering of the poor is an integral part of the mission of the church today. The need to minister to people's material and spiritual needs is no longer an issue of debate as had been in the past.<sup>2</sup> The first reason for responding to the needs of the poor is that, some of the church members themselves are poor, and secondly, the church has caught a new awareness due to challenges arising out of theological discussions that are related to the problem of poverty. Some of the proposals made during theological discussions, have actually formed the basis of the modern mission towards the poor among the Catholic church and C.P.K. Plans geared towards helping the poor, have been imparted to the church workers through seminars and in-service courses.

The need to improve the welfare of the poor, however, has not received desired response among the clergy and their laity. Opinion is divided on the issue. There are those clergy and laity who still perceive a conflict between serving the total man by both spiritual and material help.

According to some respondents efforts made towards the improvement of the material and spiritual needs of the poor are not complimentary. A section of church leadership feels that the church's involvement in the social activities is wrong. There is another group who, although they are well informed about the church's enterprise, yet they regard it as an interference with the involvements of the secular world. They argue that, the church's sole role is that of evangelization.

However, those who have understood the real essence of the church's endeavour, are actively involved in promoting it. This group of the clergy and the laity, have been of great help in accelerating the process of alleviation of the suffering of the poor, particularly, where they attempt to manipulate scriptural exegeses in interpreting the hard situations and experiences of the poor. Scripture has thus proven to be a valuable tool in mobilizing the poor in the Christian congregations, towards betterment of their lives.

The church's realization of its past shortcomings in making decisions for the people, whenever attempts were made were made to help the rural poor

to solve their problems, has changed the attitude of church leaders today. There is now a deliberate attempt made by the church hierarchy to tackle people's pressing needs, by using ideas from the people.<sup>4</sup> Church workers, for instance, now make use of decisions made by the people themselves, relating to community's needs. Church workers also make use of the suggestions the people make on ways they think they can progressively participate in programmes like development. Dialogue between the people and the church workers has produced remarkable results. People have become more open to participation in development programmes in general, as well as on personal development, than was the case before in the church history. Consequently, groups have been formed in various places in the two districts, and through these groups people discuss their needs, share ideas and make decisions about things that affect their lives. On the part of the church, this has been beneficial, because the church can now share, to some extent, its responsibilities with the people (as in the case of Baby Home), rather than shoulder it all by itself, as it has been the tradition.<sup>5</sup>

As we stated in Chapter 1, for the church to have effective participation in assisting the under-

privileged in the society, it requires to establish structures that will allow active involvement with the people, both inside and outside the church structure. The awareness of this, has led to the establishment of subsidiary departments within the Diocesan structure. For instance, both the Roman Catholic Church and the C.P.K. have established, first, Diocesan Integral Rural Development Departments through which they can reach out to the rural community with their rural development programmes. Secondly, they have Family Development/Family Helper Projects to have affective outreach to the poor families. Other examples are women group departments (Catholic) and Youth group departments (Catholic). These departments have notably come to form the integral part of the life of the Diocese, furthermore, they have also been used to bridge the gaps that used to exist between the clergy, the laity and the church administrative workers.<sup>6</sup> Through such arrangements too, the church's efforts to minister to the "whole" person is made possible, for the church is now able to give equal attention to both the material and spiritual needs of the people. Evangelistic work, however, is still the primary concern in the eyes of the clergy, though church social workers

do help in this to a considerable extent. The method of synchronising evangelism with service, evidently occurs from the clergy and the church social workers. In other words, while the clergy is predominantly engaged in the spiritual development, the church social workers are largely engaged in the material development of the people.<sup>7</sup>

## 6.2 THE CHURCH'S APPROACHES IN ALLEVIATING THE SUFFERING OF THE POOR

### 6.2.1 FAMILY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

In Chapter 1, it was stated that during the missionary era, the church's interest in the welfare of the nucleus family was basically to ensure that Christian homes, lived according to the teaching of the Gospel. The C.P.K. (formerly C.M.S.), invariably used this method in its Gospel outreach in the past to form Christian families who were isolated from the rest of the traditional Luo community.

Today, the application of Family Development approach has enabled the church to identify specific needs of the poor families in order to alleviate their

suffering and poverty. Thus, to a great extent, assistance offered to help poor families is quite relevant to the needs of individual families concern.<sup>8</sup> The uniformity of the assistance is nevertheless inevitable, because common problems dictate common solutions.

Apart from aiming at meeting specific needs of individual families, the church programmes also attempt to cater for every segment of these individual families. Children from poor families are, for instance offered education, for this is the outstanding need of the children from poor families or homes.<sup>9</sup> Parents on the other hand, have their help based on either farm-activities, in order to improve their income, or have their deteriorating trade(s) boosted through church's financial loan assistance. These kinds of assistance aim at long term solutions which in the end are supposed to make members of poor families self reliant. This is opposed to the dehumanizing approach of dishing out charitable provisions. One of the positive results that this approach is making is the maintenance of family integration. Poverty, observed in Chapter 3, has in several ways disintegrated the family unit. This occurs

especially where the poor parents force their daughters to marry at very early ages with the hope of getting help from their in-laws.

#### 6.2.2 SELF RELIANT APPROACH

The church has taken a step to eradicate dependency tendency which has developed through the assistance it gives to its recipients, by placing emphasis on the concept of self reliance. The magnitude of present poverty reinforces this emphasis. The many needs of poor families is a further eye-opener to the church, as in the case of other agents of rural development who are trying to help the poor, that mere provision of materials in the form of food and clothes, fall short from meeting life long needs such as the education of the younger members of the poor families. In their present programmes, the church positively voices the significance of self reliance. Much time is therefore being given to impart this message to the people. By training the people to save little out of the profit they make in their petty businesses, the church has been able to help some of its recipients to open small accounts. The hope to make them totally self reliant in this way, however, remains to be seen.

This is an area where future research will be needful to bring out an evaluation showing the extent to which the church is making its recipients truly independent.

From the research data however, it is evident that the assistance given to the poor families by the church only enables them to meet some of their basic needs. Generally, these people have so many needs that make it difficult for them to save money that they earn from their business or farm products. To a great majority then, the money which the church loans to them, and the subsequent profit they might make is so meagre, that it cannot meet all their basic needs. As a result, as was stated in Chapter 3, for most of these adults, the best way the church can help them alleviate their suffering, is to have the church give them direct provision of material assistance. It is therefore clear why in the minds of the majority of the poor people, self reliance is still superceeded by the giving of material things by the church, for the poor, this meets their immediate needs.

This, however, is not an isolated attitude because some of the assistance being given by both the Roman



Catholic Church and the C.P.K., though unintentional, have injected in the minds of the recipients and the general public that, the church is rich and is out to "give free things", and can carry the burdens of the poor. Obviously the people cannot be totally blamed for this attitude. The monthly provision of food and occasional distribution of clothes undoubtedly must have led to this assumption. This view of total dependence is strongly affirmed by the 58% Roman Catholic laity who categorically stated that the best way the church can help the orphaned and destitute children is by an extension of the already existing orphanages,<sup>10</sup> and the 116 adults in the C.P.K. Family Development Project, who felt that since the church was educating their children, they had no longer any part to play in it.

The stated illustrations indicate that, the people are still in favour of the traditional method of "charity". Traditional approaches likewise, are also still being carried out by the Roman Catholic Church, through orphanages and the aged homes. The Roman Catholic Church is however becoming aware of the problems posed by these programmes. This awareness, has actually

been reinforced by the fact that services rendered in this way fails to reach a wider segment of the people facing similar predicament. It is also reinforced by the realization that institutionalization of recipients not only disorient them, thus making them maladjusted when they are taken back, in the case of orphans, to their communities, but it also exposes them as symbols of poverty, charity and pity. This dehumanizes the recipients.

From the foregoing arguments, it can be said that real attainment of self reliance has not yet been an experience of most adults, who are being assisted by the church programmes.

#### 6.2.3 EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Education is, indeed a priority in the church programmes. For the poor who are faced with difficulties to educate their children, the church's intervention comes as a great relief, especially to all the parents whose children are being sponsored by the church to get formal education. Although primary education is now free in Nyanza as in the rest of Kenya,

poor parents still find it difficult to send their children to school, because they cannot afford to buy them school uniforms, or even to raise enough money for school funds, for example building funds. In this aspect the church is contributing to the welfare of the education of poor children greatly. However, if these children end only by attaining primary education, they will eventually end up being replicas of their parents, having low standards of education, being unemployed and therefore having poor income, unless they also get sponsored to receive secondary school education as well.<sup>11</sup>

In the area of conscientization, which is the area of creating awareness in people in relation to causes of their poverty, the church has greatly ignored the problem of large families. One may argue that this should not be considered as a problem in the African context, but as we have already said, there is a very clear reciprocal relationship between the size of the poor families and poverty in the 116 adults who we interviewed. Conscientization can be a useful tool in creating awareness in the people, of this reciprocal relationship. The church has however succeeded in creating awareness of the importance of being self

reliant. As a result of this there are now women who are actually involved in activities that enable them to supplement their husbands' incomes.

#### 6.2.4 CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY APPROACH

As the C.P.K. Diocese Rural Development Report (1980) attests, 'during the last decade, political atmosphere in Nyanza, did not encourage participation by the people in their own development. People lived a life of suspicion which resulted into a motto of 'let it be'. On this context the church has no alternative but to use its fellowship groups, i.e. the Christian communities or the congregations, to promote its programmes. Worship communities thus form nucleus groups from which the church steps out to reach the poor both in the church and outside the church. In 1980, the C.P.K. recorded 46,960 active participants from 38 parishes with 546 worship places in its Rural Development Project.<sup>12</sup>

An underlying factor in the success of the church groups, is basically the use of congregations to start programmes. Church members have a "spiritual" bond that

cuts across clan or regional affinities. Furthermore, church members need no preliminary introduction to each other before they can start to work together. The church has therefore been using the strength of its membership to initiate programmes, however, whenever the programmes are off the ground, the church begins to include other community members outside the church as well.<sup>13</sup>

#### 6.2.5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The concept of development is not something new as a church activity. Participation in the areas of health, education and agriculture have been consciously or unconsciously part of church ministry in Kenya as a whole, as it is in Nyanza Province, since the missionary era. To a great extent, the church was able to reach the people through its involvement in the development work, than it was through pure evangelization. The significance of the church's participation in the area of development today, has been boosted by the challenges from the plight of the poor in the society. Governing the church's ministry in the areas of health, agriculture and education, is the aim to uplift the living standards of the rural population, especially among the poor segment of the society.

Since the government is also interested in rural development, the church inevitably occasionally may find itself working concurrently with the government rural development agents, in promoting the living standards of the rural people. Occasionally too, the church is given assistance by the government in the form of aid and/or grants and personnel, where the church is limited in specialization. Needless to say, joint participation has its short-comings. In one way, the church finds itself limited, for it has to face conditions laid down by the government due to the assistance it receives from the former. Nevertheless, church development projects are having great impact in the lives of the people of Nyanza. Several projects have been established by the Catholic Church and the C.P.K. Below are some of the outstanding projects already going on in the area:

1) village technology programmes: The C.P.K. is conducting a series of practical training aimed at producing local artisans (fundis). Learning through observation and practical involvement are effectively taking place amongst the people. Items like storage and fuel tanks, have been built by the local people.

and artisans.<sup>14</sup> C.P.K. village technology at the time of our research, was concentrating on water supplies, particularly attention was being given to rain water tanks (dero). The church was also in the process of considering expanding its work in village technology, to include grain storage, food conservation, home improvement, health and sanitation, and energy conservation. Ox power had already been started. Through hired ox power technologist, the C.P.K. has had representatives from other organizations receive training on the use of ox power. Being at initial stage, emphasis still lies on the training of trainers, trainees, and farmers. Another dimension of this programme, has been treatment of animals to make them healthy for use.

ii) Local industry (maendeleo), has rapidly mushroomed in various areas where local people have had some kind of crafts taught to them by the church agents. Some of the finished products have been sold to local people or sent to the urban areas for sale. Although the people who are part of 'maendeleo group' struggle to make ends meet for themselves and their children from the little money they make, yet they are happy because they are self supporting to some extent in their own

community. The majority of the members are still women in these projects.

iii) Departure from traditional health services is helping the church to render its health services to a wider segment of the population. Health education aims at bringing improvement in all areas in the peoples lives. Results of the church's activities through her health programmes, is an area where assessment is needful for we were unable to do this in detail. Coupled with the health services, improved feeding habits started to manifest in many families.

Agricultural projects are varied, but each is being used to either generate income for the people involved, or simply to subsist. The range of activities are thus wide, this includes raring of sheep and goats, afforestation, growing of citrus fruit trees, poultry farming, bee-keeping, fish farming , vegetable and maize growing, animal husbandry and soil conservation. There are however, alot of duplications in these areas by both the Catholic church and the C.P.K. By giving instructions on agricultural methods, members of the rural communities had started to apply modern techniques in agriculture on their own farms.



o.2.6 EVANGELISM APPROACH

Spiritual promotion of the recipients, is part and parcel of the church's mission towards the welfare of the poor. At every stage, therefore, the church social and field workers attempt to draw the people into spiritual awareness. Visiting times are usually used not only to meet the needy families in order to discuss their welfare, but these are also times when the church agents reach the people with the gospel. Bible studies and prayers are always incooperated in the discussions. Those who have been reached in this way are the aged and the disabled, who cannot go to the church on their own, as well as those who usually do not go to the church at all.

Attesting to the impact the church has made on the lives of the people in this respect, the data shows that 23.2% of the 118 laity said that, because of the church's involvement with the people, many have began to go to the church. They gave three reasons why they think this is the case. In the first place, they said that the people now go to the church for they have become Christians, (converts), as a result of the church's social involvement with them,

secondly, the people go to the church as a sign of gratitude to what the church has done for them, and thirdly, the people who have been helped, go to church because they have come to realise God's love for them, by the way in which the church leaders and members have shown their concern towards them in providing for their material needs.

There is however another side to the emphasis given to the spiritual aspect in the church programmes, as it tries to promote the living standard of the poor. As 16.9% laity said, some of the people who have been getting help from the church go to the church not for any spiritual reason, but they do so in order to get more help from the church. This has been reinforced from the observation made by the people, that the church tends to give assistance to those who attend the services regularly.

At other times, the church agents do not promote spiritual life of the people at all, or when they try it, it is carried out simply as a duty, thus it is artificially reinforced, making it difficult for people to relate the two sides of the church's mission

properly. This happens more often when the church finds itself becoming more of a social welfare agent rather than a spiritual agent. As a reminder to the church of the danger of leaning too much on the social activities in its involvement with the people's welfare, Pope Paul VI had rightly warned in his address entitled 'Evangelization in the Modern World' (1976):

And so does not remain within merely political, social, economic limits, elements which she must certainly take into account, but leads towards freedom under all its forms - liberation from sin, from individual or collective selfishness - and to the full communion with God and with men who are like brothers. In this way the church in her evangelical way promotes the true and complete<sup>15</sup> liberation of all men, groups and peoples.

It is however, encouraging to note that groups like "Joot" fellowship groups are involved in social activities but still they maintain their spiritual activities through regular worship. To them, the material aspect of their ministry is not more important than the spiritual.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

Throughout the chapters in this thesis, it is repeatedly pointed out that things like lack of land,

poor agricultural yields, lack of basic skills, few, or lack of factories and high population, are major causes of poverty in the rural areas of Siaya and Kisumu districts. The church's efforts to alleviate poverty of poor families first, through development of agricultural output, overlooks the problem of land. As we saw in Chapter 3, most of the poor families have inadequate land or no land at all. In reality they depend much more on pieces of land that are loaned to them by kind neighbours and relatives. It is therefore clear, that those without land cannot participate effectively in agricultural projects.

Secondly, the church's efforts to promote self-reliance among the rural poor through trade has not dealt directly with some of the obstacles which hinder the achievement of this aim. An example of this is related to the problem of getting trade licences by poor adults who are being helped to establish their trades by the C.P.K's Family Development Project. As a result, most of these poor people are forced to trade, without licence, in the type of commodities which do not generate them income. Thus their state of poverty continues to plague them.

In Chapter 5, it is evident that unemployment aggravates the destitute state of the poor families involved. This comes out in various ways: i) some of the poor families have their family organizations and unity disintegrated, ii) the church's efforts to alleviate unemployment of rural people in Siaya and Kisumu is greatly hampered by lack of funds and shortage of personnel to train the people in basic skills for self employment, iii) youth from poor families end up by remaining unemployed because they tend to leave school prematurely and have thus very little chance of joining even a village polytechnic to acquire basic skills as their parents cannot afford the fees charged, iv) trades that are taught to the unemployed youth only offer employment to those youths who are keen to apply them, but for those who are not, are still faced with lack of basic skills and unemployment. There is however, slight improvement among adults who have been assisted by the church to start business or to boost their already existing ones. But male adults tend to aspire for wage employment in the urban areas. They therefore shun working in the rural areas however promising the jobs may be.

Among the categories of the poor in this study, the physically disabled tend to suffer more than the others, even after receiving help from the church to become self reliant. Though the church is aware of the demand and need to help the physically disabled, she is limited in her financial resources and thus the help offered has not been extensive. Where the church has shown great success in rehabilitating the disabled children, is mainly because of the assistance received in the form of aid from abroad. The local people have made very little contribution towards the welfare of the disabled. At another level, the effort that the church is making to alleviate the suffering of the physically disabled is being thwarted by the fact that the majority of the disabled usually find it more difficult to secure employment after school unlike their normal counterparts. On the other hand, almost all the disabled adults, have been neglected by the programmes designed to alleviate the suffering of the poor. A number of these were found to be widows, who have families to maintain. Apart from the ones who have their children registered on the church programmes to receive help in the form of education, the others have to depend alot on others for their livelihood. When such help fails then the

disabled adults resort to begging.

A number of young physically disabled have however been helped to overcome their dependency through earnings, they make in businesses they have established after being trained by the church's established institutions. The church's mission to rehabilitate and educate the disabled, especially the children, has greatly revolutionalized the attitude of the people towards the disabled. The church in this respect, is doing a highly recommendable work towards helping the young physically disabled.

Though the church is trying to make widows more self reliant by assisting them to start to develop their already existing petty businesses, and to develop their farms when they have a plot, for better yields, but to a great extent, the church has not been providing much solution to the widows' physical needs. For those widows who prefer to remain independent as single parents as we saw in Chapter 3, the church should accept their choice. For those who would like to remarry, they should be given a right by the church to do so.

In terms of resources to alleviate rural poverty, it is evident that the church is limited financially. The running of the Roman Catholic Baby Home, at Kisito Home, C.P.K. and Catholic schools for the physically disabled, are limited in what they offer because of the financial demand to cater for the various groups of the poor. The demand is much greater than the financial income which the church often receives from its own financial resources, such as aid and grant-in-aid from both voluntary organizations and the government.

Most of the church's programmes which are definitely geared towards the alleviation of poverty and the suffering of the poor, were established between the late 1960s, the 1970s and the early 1980s. Among these are the Family Development/Helper Project, youth and women groups. The other programmes had their beginning during the missionary era. These include, special schools for the physically disabled, health, agricultural programmes and the teaching of basic skills. The last two categories have however been given a new thrust in the face of a new challenge, to help the church improve the poor people's eating habits and health standards.



Because of charitable gestures that have come up through the church's monthly provision of food and occasional distribution of clothes, some parents feel that it is the church's responsibility to provide for their needs in this way. On the other hand, they see it as their right to be helped. In cases where the church still is institutionalizing the physically disabled children and the orphans, the church institutions are taking over the role of parents in keeping these kinds of children away from their homes and caring for them without motivating parents to show concern, or the rest of the community to assist them in the upbringing of the disabled and orphans.

#### 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 6.4.1 THE CHURCH

One practical way the church can deal with the problem of lack of land or inadequate ownership of land among the poor people, is by acquiring several pieces of land that can be loaned out to the poor families to use for their own benefit.

- For those adults who need licences to trade, the church can negotiate with the local authorities on their behalf, as far as licenses and transportation arrangements are concerned. One way of doing this is by asking the government to subsidize the money paid by the poor towards getting license.

- Another way of promoting self reliance through trade is for the church to diversify its activities. Instead of having the Roman Catholic Church youth group and women's group involved in identical projects, different project coordinators should encourage their groups to start different activities that are income generating. The same thing should be encouraged at inter-denominational levels. This is to avoid the tendencies of flooding local markets with similar commodities.

- In addition to training the physically disabled in practical skills, the church should also help them to look for employment opportunities actively, before they leave training institutions. To do this, the church needs to appoint a full-time rehabilitation employment officer..

- To avoid having the Roman Catholic's Baby Home at Rang'ala from being used as a dumping ground for babies whose mothers are still alive, but at large, the church ought to formulate strict admission regulations rather than the ones which now preside, in order to overcome the present predicament of having abandoned children in the home. However, in order to overcome the financial strain of running Rang'ala Baby Home, the Roman Catholic church needs to generate more interest in the community, so that they in turn can assist the church in its attempts to cater for the needs of orphaned babies. Data suggest that this is an area of great potential.

- Though the church's financial resources are limited, it should however make maximum use of "conscientization" approach, whereby the people are not only made aware of the causes of their poverty state, but are also made aware of some ways they can help the church to alleviate their poverty and suffering by becoming actively involved.

- The church needs to realize that some of the causes of poverty are deeply embedded in the social,

economic and political structures of the society. As such, attempts to alleviate poverty and the suffering of the poor calls for some dealings with those socio-economic and political factors that tend to deny masses good living standards. This will entail for instance, the church representing the poor by voicing their grievances, oppression and injustices to those in charge of the welfare of the masses. Without doing this whenever necessary, the church's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the poor through creation of self employment will be met with alot of frustration. Moreover, even efforts to make their recipients self-reliant will remain unrealized in many ways. Though the above is not explicitly realized in the Roman Catholic Church and the C.P.K. endeavours, some of it is indirectly hindering the efforts geared towards helping the poor, by making them ineffective to some extent.

- The church should encourage men to be more involved in rural development programmes in Siaya and Kisumu Districts. It was observed during field trips that most groups that are actively involved in attempts to alleviate poverty and the suffering of the poor, and

general rural development programmes are women.

- Since the church's present endeavour to alleviate rural poverty is still relatively new to most members of the community and the clergy, it is suggested that leading clergymen at the top of the church hierarchy, who are well versed in what needs to be done to help the poor improve their living standards, should continue to create awareness among the clergy and laity through seminars at both parish and sub-parish levels.

- More evaluative surveys should be carried out by the church to know progress being made. There should also be publication of the findings so that the public and the government are made aware of what is going on.

- Joint seminars on rural development, notably between the C.P.K. and the Roman Catholic Church should be held more frequently to review what each denomination is doing to avoid duplication of projects among church groups in the area. The amazing thing is that duplication is not only occurring between denominations but it is also a fact within denominational groups in churches neighbouring each other. Constructive

recommendations to eradicate this can only come out of mutual agreement between those involved in establishing church programmes geared toward alleviation of rural poverty.

Further research needs to be conducted to establish the number of denominations and churches within each denomination who have programmes geared towards the alleviation of rural poverty. Along this line too, it would be helpful to find out the extent to which the poor people in church programmes have benefitted.

Also further research would be of great benefit to assess the programmes that this study pointed out, were taking off the ground at the time of the survey.

#### 6.4.2 THE GOVERNMENT

Recently, the government decentralized its rural development department in order to be operative at region levels. This move has more potential in enhancing rural development programmes. Undoubtful, if the government begins to establish its own rural development programmes, these would be mere duplication

of what the church is already doing. To avoid this, it is suggested here that the government should, in the first place, try as much as possible, to incooperate in its regional rural development programmes, the already existing church programmes. Secondly, where the church has constantly faced financial limitation, the government should come in to sponsor such programmes. Thirdly, where new programmes are to be established, the government can use the church to mobilize the rural community because the church is working at the grassroot level.

- The government needs to assist the church in its efforts to educate children from poor families. The best stage where this can be done is at secondary school level, since this is where much is needed for school fees. With so many children from poor families, sponsorship at secondary school is too heavy for the church to shoulder alone. The government should find more ways on how to offer more bursaries to such children.

- Assistance that the government has been giving towards the running of church village polytechnics, should be increased. More teaching personnel and tools are required in church sponsored village polytechnics.

- Government personnel working in the rural areas need to keep in constant touch with the church activities so as to know when and how to assist the church's activities geared towards alleviation of rural poverty.

- Where the government is involved in giving assistance towards church programmes, there should be no hinderance or conditions of any kind laid down for the church by the government. Assistance or sponsorship of church programmes should be mutually given thus, allowing both the church and the government, to operate independently yet having one objective, "to alleviate rural poverty".

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FOOTNOTES

1. Towards a Church of the Poor, ed. by J.D.S. Ana, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1979, p.4
2. Traditionally, the church saw evangelization as the mission of the church. Social concern towards people to get more converts.
3. On several occasions, church leaders incooperate scriptural teachings and examples to illustrate their activities - at a ceremony on the opening of a new fish pond at Kabonyo in Kano Plain, Kisumu district, the Catholic Bishop used the example of Jesus helping the disciples to catch fish to show the significance of fish farming.
4. By encouraging people to be involved in identifying causes of their poverty, the church and its social and field workers, have aroused interest in the people, especially when they witness their ideas or proposals implementing in the church's programmes.
5. Alot of times, the church carry out its programmes without involving the people, and due to this many community members see the running of church initiated programmes as the church's responsibility, thus they rarely involve themselves.
6. People's opinion are regarded as important.
7. At times, the two roles are combined in order to reinforce the work of each group. However, the end results attempt "to bring a balance in the church mission to the whole man".
8. Needs of individual families are discovered through visits by the church welfare agents, and through their discussions with adults in these homes. In this way, they are to get information on the state of individual homes.

9. Reference to data in Chapter 3.
10. Cross tabulation, Appendix p. 285.
11. At the time of the field survey, some of the children in C.P.K. Family Development Project had earned places in Form I in various schools. We got information affirming that, these students were going to continue to get assistance from the church in order to get through their secondary education. But these were just a few cases. There are other children from poor families who need to be assisted through their secondary school education.
12. "Integrated Rural Development", Report, 1980, p.4.
13. Interview.
14. C.P.K, I.R.D. Report.
15. Pope Paul VI, "Evangelization in the modern world I to II; Christ to the World" Vol. I XXI No. 1 and 2, Gaba publication, 1976, p. 15.

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APPENDIX A - OTHER RELEVANT TABLES  
DEFINITION OF POVERTY

TABLE 1

LAITY'S RESPONSES		Number	Percentage
1.	Lack of basic needs.	44	37.3
2.	Lack of property.	14	11.9
3.	Spiritual poverty.	5	4.2
4.	Lack of income.	27	22.9
5.	Dependability.	24	20.3
6.	Inability to own wife and children.	3	2.5
7.	Absence of head of family (widows/orphans).		
8.	No or low education.	1	0.8
Total		118	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

DEFINITION OF POVERTY

TABLE 2

CLERGY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
1. Inability to support self (dependence),	24	38.7
2. Lack of basic needs.	18	29.0
3. Having no income (capital).	13	21.0
4. Low standard of living (limited resources of income).	2	3.2
5. Lack of spiritual knowledge.	2	3.2
6. Any other.	1	1.6
7. No response.	2	3.2
Total	62	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

IDENTITY OF THE POOR

TABLE 3

LAITY'S RESPONSE

Number

Percentage

1.	Living in poor conditions.	23	19.5
2.	The kind of properties they own (lack property).	36	30.5
3.	Undesirable behaviour (begging, lack confidence, etc.)	18	15.3
4.	No source of income.	22	18.6
5.	Low social status poor background.	3	2.5
6.	Geographical area: poor climatic conditions/soil.	-	-
7.	Physical conditions (physical disability, poor health, etc.).	6	5.1
8.	Cannot be identified.	4	3.4
9.	No response.	6	5.1
Total		118	100.0

IDENTITY OF THE POOR

TABLE 4

CLERGY'S RESPONSE	Number	Percentage
1. The physically handi- capped, sick.	21	33.9
2. Those without source of income (unemployed)	21	33.9
3. Orphans and widows.	5	8.1
4. Lazy people	2	3.2
5. The aged	0	0
6. The landless (lack of property).	1	1.6
7. Those who are not self reliant/illiterate etc.	2	3.2
8. Any other	10	16.1
9. No response.	-	
Total	62	100.0

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CAUSES OF POVERTY

TABLE 5

LAITY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
1. It is inherited (fate, culture of poverty).	7	5.9
2. Poor financial conditions (no income or work).	26	22.0
3. Educational standard (illiteracy, low standard of education, ignorance).	11	9.3
4. Physical conditions, sickness, handicapped, old age.	22	18.6
5. Acquired habits (negligence, extravagancy).	26	22.0
6. Population (money, children).	1	0.8
7. Climatic conditions	-	-
8. Infertility of land, lack of land.	15	12.7
9. No response.	10	8.5
Total	118	100.0*

\*Percentage is rounded to 100.0



CAUSES OF POVERTY

TABLE 6

CLERGY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
Poor are poor because:		
1. They are unable to work.	7	11.3
2. Are unable to support themselves.	23	37.1
3. They have no money/ income.	3	4.8
4. Their living conditions are poor.	3	4.8
5. They don't know God.	2	3.2
6. Behaviours - Laziness, idleness.	4	6.5
7. No skills, therefore no jobs, no education.	2	3.2
8. Others: old age, etc.	7	11.3
9. No response.	11	17.7
Total	62	100.0*

\*Percentage is rounded to 100.0

ASSISTANCE TO THE AGED

TABLE 7

LAITY'S RESPONSES		Number	Percentage
1.	Members help with manual duties	5	4.2
2.	Provided with necessary things in life.	45	38.1
3.	Provided financial assistance.	3	2.5
4.	Give spiritual help.	28	23.7
5.	Most churches do not help.	1	0.8
6.	Visit.	3	2.5
7.	Somebody to look after them.	1	0.8
8.	Others.	23	19.5
9.	No response.	9	7.6
Total		118	100.0

\*Percentage is rounded to 100.0

ASSISTANCE TO THE AGED

TABLE 8

CLERGY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
1. Material help, (food, clothing, etc.).	4	6.5
2. Moral support.	1	1.6
3. Settlement (shelter and land).	1	1.6
4. There are very many, hence only a few are helped.	-	-
5. Spiritual help.	1	1.6
6. Manual.	-	-
7. Others.	-	-
8. No response.	55	88.7
Total	62	100.0

ASSISTANCE TO THE ORPHANS

TABLE 9

LAITY'S RESPONSE	Number	Percentage
1. Educated (fees, uniform)	45	38.1
2. Provided with basic needs	17	14.4
3. Accommodated in the orphanage/provided with shelter.	23	19.5
4. Provided with foster parents.	4	3.4
5. Given spiritual help.	2	1.7
6. Nursing	3	2.5
7. Others	14	11.9
8. No response.	10	8.5
Total	118	100.0

ASSISTANCE TO THE ORPHANS

TABLE 10.

CLERGY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
1. Education	1	1.6
2. Food and clothes	4	6.5
3. Shelter/accommodation for example (in an orphanage).	1	1.6
4. Any other	-	-
5. No response.	56	90.3
Total	62	100.0

ASSISTANCE TO THE WIDOWS

TABLE 11

LAITY'S RESPONSE	Number	Percentage
1. Given employment (business, etc.)	15	12.7
2. Basic needs.	45	38.1
3. Some churches settle them at the mission centres.	5	4.2
4. They are too many, so the church has not been able to take care of them/ help themselves	5	4.2
5. Education of their children is created for.	4	3.4
6. Only when they ask for help.	1	0.8
7. Manual work.	4	3.4
8. Others (spiritual help).	25	21.2
9. No response.	14	11.9
Total	118	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

ASSISTANCE TO WIDOWS

TABLE 12

CLERGY'S RESPONSE	Number	Percentage
1. Given basic needs (food, clothing, shelter).	1	1.6
2. Provide school fees for the education of their children.	1	1.6
3. The church built them houses.	15	24.2
4. Given capital	-	-
5. Manual assistance	-	-
6. Not much help given	-	-
7. Others	-	-
8. No response	45	72.6
Total	62	100.0

WAYS TO HELP THE AGED

TABLE 13

RESPONSES	CATHOLIC LAITY		CPK LAITY	
	No.	%	No.	%

1. Pension scheme be introduced for them	1	2.3	3	7.1
2. Church should hold harambee to house old people	4	9.3	12	28.6
3. The old people who have served the government should be provided with a house.	-	-	-	-
4. Home visits should be en- couraged more spiritual.	25	58.1	12	28.6
5. The church should set aside funds for them.	1	2.3	1	2.4
6. Manual work	1	2.3	3	7.1
7. Food, clothing shelter.	8	18.6	8	19.0
8. No response	3	7.0	3	7.1
Total	43	100.0*	42	100.0



WAYS TO HELP THE ORPHANS

TABLE 14

RESPONSES	CATHOLIC LAITY		CPK LAITY	
	NO.	%	No.	%
1. Those with relatives should be given financial assistance at their homes.	-	-	1	2.3
2. Be educated.	8	18.6	12	28.6
3. Should be employed after school.	-	-	2	4.8
4. Orphanage should be built/given shelter.	20	46.5	8	19.0
5. To be taken care of by big social associations.	-	-	3	7.1
6. Should be taught to be self-reliant.	1	2.3	3	7.1
7. Example: food, clothes, spiritual care should be given	8	18.6	9	21.4
8. No response	6	14.0	4	9.5
Total	43	100.0	42	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

WAYS TO HELP WIDOWS

TABLE 15

RESPONSES	CATHOLIC LAITY		CPK LAITY	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. To be encouraged to work hard/be given employment.	3	7.0	5	11.9
2. Adviced to take full responsibility over the family matters.	-	-	1	2.4
3. Given capital to start business.	3	7.0	6	14.2
4. Those unable to help themselves should be allowed to remarry.	-	-	1	2.4
5. Have houses built for them.	31	72.1	21	50.0
6. Be taught skills for self employment	1	2.3	2	4.8
7. Form widows' society to enable them to get funds from the government.	-	-	-	-
8. Have their children educated.	1	2.3	1	2.4
9. No response	4	9.3	5	11.9
Total	43	100.0	42	100.0

ACTIVITIES THE POOR CARRY OUT AFTER THEY  
HAVE RECEIVED HELP FROM THE CHURCH

TABLE 16

RESPONSE	Number	Percentage
1. Become good church members.	35	29.7
2. Work hard and become self reliant/raised standard of living.	18	15.3
3. The help is limited, therefore the poor continue to be dependent.	3	2.5
4. The programme is relatively new - no activity yet.	1	0.8
5. Some orphans help their parents/relatives.	4	3.4
6. Some become lazy.	2	1.7
7. Can do any work but the assistance is limited.	2	1.7
8. Any other (example, help the church, built houses for other poor members of the community).	25	21.2
9. No response	28	23.7
Total	118	100.0

IS POVERTY A CHALLENGE TO CHURCH'S MINISTRY?

TABLE 17

CLERGY'S RESPONSES	Number	Percentage
Yes:		
1. The church is concerned with both spiritual and material well being of man	11	17.7
2. It is a hinderance to the church's ministry.	10	16.1
3. It is her mission (Jesus showed concern to the poor), that is, it is biblical.	19	30.6
4. The poor are in the church.	-	-
5. The number of the poor is increasing.	1	1.6
6. Others.	1	1.6
No:		
7. It does not interfere with her ministry	1	1.6
8. The church is also poor.	2	3.2
9. Does help the poor on humanitarian basis.	3	4.8
10. The church leaves the responsibility of the poor to their relatives.	5	8.1
11. No response	9	14.5
Total	62	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CHURCH IN HELPING THE UNEMPLOYED

TABLE 18

RESPONSES		Number	Percentage
1.	Lack of industries in the rural areas.	5	4.2
2.	The number of the employed is very large, yet there are only a few centres.	18	15.3
3.	The education standard is generally low or the recipients have no education at all.	-	-
4.	The church's resources are limited - cannot start a project as such.	23	19.5
5.	Most of these people do not like skilled or manual work for self employment.	5	4.2
6.	The local authority has not given the church room to solve this problem.	-	-
7.	There is lack of cooperation among the local people.	7	5.9
8.	Others (example: lack of land, coordination, no problem, bribery).	13	11.0
9.	No response.	47	39.8
Total		118	100.0*

\* Percentage is rounded to 100.0

APPENDIX ■ - QUESTIONNAIRE

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR:    Confidential Questionnaire  
   Laity

Information given will be treated as strictly confidential.

My name is Nereah Okoyo, I am a student at the University of Nairobi. I am doing a research on the role of Church in helping the poor, as a partial fulfillment of my M.A. course. This research has permission of the Office of the President. I would therefore be very grateful if you would answer the following questions:

Sample Number..... District .....

Name .....Location.....

Marital Status .....Sub-location .....

No. Children ..... Village .....

Religion ..... Education .....

Denomination ..... Occupation .....

Age .....

Poverty

1.        What do you understand by poverty?  
.....  
.....  
.....
2.        How do you identify the poor in this area?  
.....  
.....

3. What do you think causes people to be poor?

(1) .....  
.....

(11) .....  
.....  
.....

3.(111) .....  
.....  
.....

(1v) .....  
.....  
.....

4. Do you think that poverty is a problem to the society?

If so why? .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

5. Do you think that poor people should be given

assistance? If so why? .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

6. Do you think that poor people like remaining poor?  
If so why? .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

7. What problems are caused by poverty to:  
(i) individuals .....  
.....  
.....

(ii) Society .....  
.....  
.....

8. Do you think that there are more or less people  
today than in the past?  
.....  
.....

If more why? .....  
.....  
.....



If less why? .....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you cooperate in this area to help the poor?  
.....  
.....

If so in what ways .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

10. Do you think there is interdenominational conflict  
in this area in helping the poor?

.....

If so why? .....  
.....  
.....;

11. Do you think that the church's involvement in helping  
the poor should be restricted to material things only?

.....

If so why? .....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

12. Has the churches' involvement helped in making more people attend services or not?

If so why? .....

.....

.....

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

SECTION II      THE CHURCH AND THE DISABLED

13. Do you consider the disabled poor? .....

If so why? .....

.....

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

14. What are the causes of handicap in this area?.....

.....

.....

15. Has the church helped in eradicating these causes?

.....

If so how? .....

.....

15. If not why? .....

.....

.....

16. (a) In what ways has the church helped the disabled  
in this area? .....

(i) .....

.....

.....

(ii) .....

.....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

.....

(iv) .....

.....

.....

(b) How successful has the church been in helping  
the disabled in this area?

.....

.....

.....

17. What are peoples' attitudes toward the handicapped  
in this area?

.....

.....

.....

18. Do the people assist the church in its involvement with the disabled? .....

If so how? .....

.....

.....

SECTION III

THE CHURCH AND THE AGED/ORPHANS/WIDOWS

19. What assistance does the church offer to

(i) the aged.....

.....

.....

(ii) the orphans .....

.....

.....

(iii) the widows .....

.....

.....

20. In what ways do you think these people should be helped?

(i) .....

.....

.....

(ii) .....

.....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

.....

(iv) .....  
.....  
.....

(v) .....  
.....  
.....

20. (vi) .....  
.....  
.....

(vii) .....  
.....  
.....

21. (a) Do you know of any institution for the aged  
in this area? .....  
.....

(b) Do the aged like staying in this institution?  
If so why? .....  
.....  
.....  
If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

22. How successful has the church been in helping the  
(a) the orphans .....  
.....  
.....

(b) the aged .....

.....

.....

(c) the widows in this area? .....

.....

.....

23. What kind of activities do these people carry out  
after the help has been given to them by the church?

.....

.....

.....

24. What is the attitude of refugees towards the help  
given to them by the church? .....

.....

.....

25. Does the government approve of this assistance  
by the church?

.....

If so why? .....

.....

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

26. What role do the refugees play in helping themselves?

(i) .....

.....

(ii) .....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

(iv) .....

.....

Section IV      THE CHURCH AND THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDER-  
EMPLOYED

27. (a) Does the church help this kind of people?

.....

(b) What problems does the church face in helping the unemployed and underemployed?

.....

.....

.....

28. (b) (ii) .....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

.....

.....

(iv) .....

.....

.....

(v) .....

.....

.....

(vi) .....

.....

29. Do these people get any benefit from the help they are given by the church?

If so how? .....

.....

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

30. What kind of employment do they get afterwards?

.....

.....

.....

31. Do you think the church has helped to raise the living standard of these people?

If so how? .....

.....

.....



32. If not why .....  
.....  
.....,

33. How often do the pastor, padre, priests nuns or  
bishops visit the homes of these people?  
.....  
.....

What do you think causes unemployment/underemploy-  
ment?

.....  
.....  
.....

34. Is there anything you would like to add to this  
interview?  
.....  
.....  
.....

35. Interviewer's general assessment  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

36. Interviewer's Name .....  
Date .....

THE CHURCH AND THE POOR:

CONFIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE  
FOR LEADERS AND CHURCH  
WELFARE PERSONNEL

Information given will be treated as strictly confidential

My name is NEREAH OKEYO, I am a student at the University of Nairobi. I am doing a research on the role of church in helping the poor, as a partial fulfilment of my M.A. Course. This research has permission of the Office of the President. I would therefore be very grateful if you would answer the following questions:

Sample Number ..... District .....  
Name ..... Location .....  
Marital Status ..... Sublocation .....  
No. of Children ..... Village .....  
Religion ..... Education .....  
Denomination ..... Occupation .....  
Age .....

CHURCH LEADERS

SECTION I    Poverty

1. What do you understand by poverty?

.....

2. (a) What kind of people do you consider poor?

.....

(b) why? .....

.....

3. Do you think that poor people can be helped to overcome their poverty effectively?

.....

If not why? .....

If so how? .....

4. (a) What problems result from poverty?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

(v) .....

(vi) .....

(b) How does the church deal with these problems?

.....

5. Does the church regard the existence of poverty as a challenge to its ministry or not?

.....

If so why? .....

If not why does the church help the poor?

.....

6. Does the church make any attempt to find causes of poverty and deal with them?

.....

If so how does it deal with them?

.....

If not why? .....

7. In what ways does the church identify with the poor from its attempt to alleviate poverty or in rehabilitating the poor?

.....

- (i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....
- (iv) .....
- 8. (a) What kind of aid does the church give to the poor?  
.....  
(i) .....
- (ii) .....
- (iii) .....
- (iv) .....
- (v) .....
- (vi) .....
- (b) How effective are these to the poor?  
.....
- 9. Does the church train her clergy to help cope with the social problems in the society?  
.....  
If not why? .....
- 10. How effective is the evangelization of the church through this kind of involvement?  
.....
- 11. What changes have you noticed in the lives of the people you have been helping?  
.....
- 12. Where does the church get money to help the poor?  
.....

13. Has the number of people you are helping increased or not, since you began this endeavour?

.....

If increased how do you cope with them?

.....

14. Do you think that there is denominational conflict in this area, in helping the poor?

.....

If not, do you encourage working with other denominations?

.....

If so why is there a conflict?.....

.....

## SECTION II     Christian Welfare Personnel

1. What do you understand by poverty?

.....

2. (a) Who are the poor in our society today?

.....

- (b) What do you think causes poverty?

.....

3. Why do you help the poor?

.....

- 4 (a) What do you think is the best way to eradicate or combat poverty in our society?

.....

(b) How do you, as a Christian organization actually deal with the problem of poverty?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

5. (a) What problems result from poverty?

.....

(b) How do you deal with these problems as Christian Social workers?

.....

6. Do you think the church is in a position to prevent causes of poverty in our society?

.....

If so how? .....

If not why? .....

7 (a) What kind of problems do you encounter in rehabilitating the poor or in alleviating their poverty?

(i) .....

(ii).....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

(v) .....

(vi) .....

(b) How do you deal with them?

.....

8. Is there a conflict with the government in the church's involvement with the poor?

.....

9 (a) How do you select the people you help?

.....

(b) How reliable is this method?

.....

10.(a) In what ways have you helped the poor?

.....

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

(v) .....

(b) Do you think this kind of assistance is effective?

If so how? .....

If not why? .....

11. What is the attitude of the society towards the church's involvement with the poor?

.....

12. What do you think is the best way to mobilize the poor?

.....

13. Do you regard helping the poor

(a) A call from the government?

(b) the mission of the church?

(c) Christian sympathy? .....

(circle your answer).

- 14 (a) How did the church solve the problem of poverty in the past?  
.....
- (b) What problems do you encounter today in helping the poor?  
.....
- (c) How do you deal with these problems?  
.....
15. In what other ways, apart from rehabilitating the poor and alleviating their poverty, does the church identify with the poor?  
.....
16. Do you present the need of the poor to the government?  
.....  
If so how? .....  
If not why? .....
17. Does the church train her clergy to cope with social problems?  
.....  
If not why? .....
18. What role do the poor play in improving their condition in this area?  
.....
19. Do you minister to the spiritual needs of these people?  
.....  
If so how? .....  
If not why? .....



20. Do you see any changes in the lives of the people you are helping?

.....

If so how is this manifested?

.....

If not why is this so?

.....

SECTION III.      The Church and the Disabled

21 (a) What are the causes of handicap in this area?

.....

(b) Has the church made any attempt to eradicate them?

.....

If so how? .....

If not why? .....

22 How does the church help the disabled in this institution?

.....

23. How has the help affected the lives of these people?

.....

24(a) What is the attitude of the community towards the role of the church in helping the disabled?

.....

(b) Do the people in this area give any support to the church in helping the poor?

.....

If so how? .....

If not why? .....

25. To what extent does the church cater for the disabled?

.....

26. Where does the church get money for helping the disabled?

.....

27. Do you get any government assistance?

If so, do think whether it helps or hinders the work of the church in this ministry?

.....

28. (a) When was this institution opened?

.....

(b) What achievements have you rewarded from your involvement with the disabled?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

29. (a) How many disabled have you enrolled here since the institution began to operate?

.....

(b) Does the present number create any problem?

.....

If so what are these problems?

.....

(c) How do you cope with them?

.....

How do they get employment after their training?

.....

31. In what ways have the disabled, who/through your institution - go benefited?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

32. (a) What kind of attitude do the disabled show towards the help you give them?

.....

(b) How do you cope with negative attitudes from the disabled if any?

.....

SECTION IV      The Church and the Aged/Orphans/Widows

33. How many: (i) Aged

(ii) Orphans

do you have in this institution? (answer where applicable)

34. How do you select the (i) aged

(ii) orphans, into your institution?

(Answer where applicable.)

.....

35. What kind of help do you give?

.....

(i) the aged?.....

.....

(ii) orphans? .....

.....

.....

(Answer where applicable)

36. How do they react to the kind of help they get from your organisation?

.....

.....

.....

37. What kind of activities do they carry out while they are here?

.....

.....

.....

38. How do you come to know where these kind of people are?

.....

.....

.....

39.(a) At what age do you take (i) orphans .....

(ii) aged .....

In your institution? .....

(answer where applicable)

(b) Who looks after the orphans/aged in your institution?

.....

40 (a) Are these people who look after the orphans/aged trained for the work?

.....

If so what kind of training do they get?

.....

.....

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

(b) Who pay their salary? .....

.....

.....

41. Who cares for the orphans when they grow up?

.....

.....

.....

42. In what ways do you think these people should be helped more effectively?

(a) Widows .....

.....

(b) Orphans .....

.....

(c) aged .....  
.....

43 (a) Does the church give any help to widows in  
this area?

.....  
.....  
.....

(b) If so, what kind of assistance does it give?

.....  
.....

(c) If not why? .....

.....  
.....

44. How effective is the assistance given to the  
widows?

.....  
.....

45.(a) For how long has the church been involved with  
the widows in this area?

.....

(b) Has the church any institution established for  
widows?

.....

46. When did you open the institution for the

(a) aged .....

(b) orphans .....

(answer where applicable)

47. Are people aware of the help you are giving these people?

.....

If not why? .....

.....

.....

SECTION V: The Church and the Unemployed and Underemployed

48. Who do you consider underemployed or unemployed?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(iii) .....

(iv) .....

49. (a) What do you think causes unemployment and underemployment in this area?

.....

.....

.....

50. (b) Does the church deal with these causes?

.....

.....

If so how? .....

.....

.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

51. (a) Does the such help such people? .....

If so how? .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....  
.....

(b) What kind of help does the church offer to these people?

..... )  
.....  
.....

52. (a) Do you have institutions or projects designed to help these kind of people?

.....  
.....  
.....

If so where are they situated? .....  
.....  
.....

If not why? .....  
.....



53. (b) How do you get the people you admit in these institutions?

.....  
.....  
.....

(c) When did you open this institution?

.....

54. In what ways has your assistance helped the poor if any?

(i) .....

.....

(ii) .....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

(iv) .....

.....

55. (a) What is the attitude of these people to the help you are giving them?

.....  
.....  
.....

(b) Do you think the church has help to raise their standard of living?

.....

56. Is there anything you would like to add to this interview?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

57. Interviewer's general assessment:

.....  
.....  
.....

Interviewer's Name .....

Date .....



- who, unable to fend himself, would offer his services to the members of the community to get the basic needs. At another level, misumba refers to a bachelor. Due to his state of poverty, a poor man finds it difficult to pay dowry for a wife.