

TANGAZA COLLEGE

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

MISSION DEPARTMENT

MUTUNE BENEDICT KISOI, CSSp

THE CHALLENGE OF POVERTY FOR THE CHURCH
IN KENYA: *THE CASE OF KIBERA*

Moderator

GETUI MARY N.

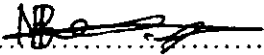
A Long Essay Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Ecclesiastical Degree of
Baccalaureate in Theology.

NAIROBI - JANUARY 2004

DECLARATION:

I hereby declare that the material used herein this essay is an original work achieved through my personal reading, research and pastoral experience. It has never been submitted for academic credit in any other institution. All sources have been cited in full.

Signed:

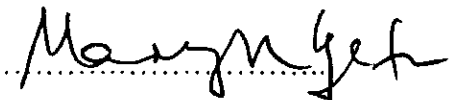

.....

NAME OF STUDENT

MUTUNE BENEDICT KISOI

This long essay has been submitted for examination under my approval as college Supervisor.

Signed:


.....

NAME OF SUPERVISOR

MARY N. GETUI

Date:

.....
20-2-04

DEDICATION:

I dedicate this essay as a part of my contribution to all religious and social workers in various poverty alleviation centers in the slums. Your work does not go unrecognized.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I am very grateful to all my formators in Spiritan House community who have contributed towards completion of this work.

Special thanks go to my moderator Getui Mary N. who generously accepted to help me make my dream a reality. My sincere thanks go too to all my professors in Tangaza College who through their insights and constructive criticisms I managed to produce this scholarly work.

My thanks to all my confreres in Spiritan house that in many ways have made this work a success. Among them I have pleasure to mention Godfrey Mgoja and Adam Mbago who gave their assistance in very special way.

My gratitude again goes to all Kibera slum dwellers who openly shared with me about their life situation. Your contribution helped me a lot.

Thank you all who have helped me in one-way or another though I may not have mentioned your names.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

It sounds ridiculous to get a religious man or woman writing an essay condemning poverty or even researching on poverty. This is because as a religious we have a vow of poverty, whereby reacting against it seems a contradiction. Most of my friends who heard about my topic could not believe it. Their questions were, do you want to give us a new insight on how to live our poverty or you want to show the whole world the meaninglessness of this vow? As for me neither of the presumptions was true.

By the fact that I have freely chosen to live this evangelical counsel (poverty) does not mean that I cannot talk about the negative impacts it has on others. So my point in this essay is to highlight on how poverty oppresses people and how it challenges evangelization.

In the recent years, the increase and effect of poverty has created a lot of anxiety here in Kenya and the whole of Africa. Although quit visible, very little has been done to reduce it.

This essay will be divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I will first deal with various definitions of poverty. Given that poverty is not a new reality in our African continent or to humanity, I will too expose the tradition African view of poverty. Then in the same chapter, we will review various general causes of poverty.

Chapter two will mostly be concerned with Kibera. Its location and causes of poverty in this slum will be covered. Chapter three will cover both biblical and Church's teachings on poverty. It would be of no use to talk about poverty without

giving some recommendations or suggestions on how to alleviate it. So chapter four will carry with it various recommendations, which are geared towards poverty alleviation. Then I will end up with a general conclusion.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The increasing number of people who were and are still coming into my community with diverse needs looking for help prompted my interest in this subject of poverty. It was too precipitated by the state of poverty I encountered in Kibera slum. This created in me that unlimited desire to learn more about poverty and the response of the Church towards this phenomenon. As I deeply reflected on this problem of poverty, I got an insight that this was an area I could research on for personal better understanding in order to contribute something towards poverty alleviation in Kibera slum.

OBJECTIVES.

The main objective of this project is to point out the problem of poverty as it is manifested in Kibera, thus causing a critical pastoral challenge for the Church. I too would like to point out that the Church has for long been concerned with poverty alleviation programs in Kibera, and yet much still needs to be done. I am intending in this essay to remind the Church and the other concerned people of the existing Papal documents, which address this issue of poverty. I mean that she should try to implement them other than putting them in shelves. It is my wish to see to it that both the Church and the state give the issue of poverty proper attention.

I would like also to make the government aware of her role in improving the peoples living conditions. In this essay I also intend to give my contribution on how the Church can get out of this problem of poverty, which challenges her pastoral ministry. My main objective is generally to try to lower the degree of poverty in the society and Kibera in particular in order to make people lead more dignified lives.

CHAPTER ONE.

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY

1.1 Introduction.

Poverty is as old as human history, meaning that it has been part and parcel of humanity through the ages. Despite this reality, poverty has become a cause of concern in the contemporary society and more especially for the church. In this chapter I am going to bring different definitions of poverty and its various causes. This might help to explain why it is worrying humanity.

1.2 POVERTY: A DEFINITION.

Poverty has many definitions varying from one society to another and from one given period of history to another. This means that poverty can be defined depending on or in line with one's environment. To some it is defined as,

The denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development, for example, denial to lead long healthy creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self respect and respect for others.¹

¹ Mary N. Getui, Mathew M. Theuri ed., *Quests for Abundant Life in Africa*. 7

This shows a more encompassing concept to understanding of poverty though still it is not exhaustive.

According to the study reports of the World Bank in 1994 and AMREF-GOK in 1997, poverty is defined as a

Multidimensional phenomenon comprising economic, political, psychological and deprivation. Its manifestations are vulnerability, powerlessness, humiliation, social inferiority, physical weakness, isolation, lack of assets, and inaccessibility to basic needs.²

The World Summit for social development gave a more detailed, inclusive and rather universal definition of poverty.

Poverty has various manifestations including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihood, hunger, malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increase in morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness and inadequate housing, unsafe environment, and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by lack of participation in decision-making and civil, social and cultural life.³

A well-known liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez defines poverty as "... a subhuman situation. Concretely, to be poor means to die of hunger, to be illiterate, to be exploited by others, not to know that you are being exploited, not to know that you are a person."⁴ On the same concept of poverty, Chukwudum in his turn says that, "poverty is not an innocent social fact; it is the result of structures of exploitation and domination. Much of it stems from centuries of colonial rule and is reinforced by the international economic system."⁵

² Aloys Ayako, *Review of Poverty in Kenya*, 6

³ United Nations, *Report of the World Summit For Social Development*, 41

⁴ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 288-289

⁵ Chukwudum B. Okolo, *The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today*, 60

In the Bible the word poor from which the term poverty takes its roots. in Greek is *pros*, which is a translation from the Hebrew word *anawim*. It refers to the “ afflicted, oppressed, poor humble and socially outcast”⁶

As we have already seen, there are different definitions of poverty and they all are referring to the same subhuman reality. Each one tries to define poverty depending on its causes and surroundings, meaning that the concept of poverty in Europe is different from the understanding of poverty in Africa. For example a person in Europe who lack personal means of transport like a car is termed as poor. While here in Kenya the economy makes us to look at personal cars as a luxury. And again the poor or definition of poverty in rural areas is not the same definition as in urban setting. This is because the things which people lack in rural areas like animals leading to poverty, is not relevant in towns because the source of income in towns is money. Again if one lacks school fees in rural areas does not disturb much as is in towns for the value of education due to the exposure is not the same.

No matter how diverse these definitions are. one thing is sure from the various ones we have already encountered that generally poverty worldwide is human-made. Taking for instance ‘social discrimination and exclusion,’ it is very clear that only human beings can exclude and discriminates against fellow people, thus putting the one discriminated against in a state of poverty.

⁶ Dawyer Judith Ed. *The Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, 688

1.3 AFRICAN VIEW OF POVERTY.

Poverty according to traditional African beliefs was termed as an evil thing. In traditional Africa, poverty was defined as lack of material things, like animals, boats for those who relied on fishing and farming land for the crop farmers, lack of economic ability to have a family and lead a decent life. Anyone who lacked animals, farming land and boats could not be given any leadership post in the society. People believed that lack of these material things was caused by curses from the ancestors; hence a person living under a curse could not lead them. He or she too could not be requested to give any suggestion when it came to decision-making. For the Africans, it is like a poor person never had anything to contribute towards the welfare of the society.

Poverty could also be defined as lack of a wife and children or in short lack of a family. African society highly valued a person who had children but not material wealth. That is why a married woman who could not give birth got another woman to bear children on her behalf. Men also on their side opted for polygamy so that they could have children. Children in African traditional society made their parents to be respected and termed as rich because family lineage was not cut but continued.

The third perspective of poverty in the African traditional society was lack of good interpersonal relationships. Although highly valuing material things, a rich person who never related well within his family or with other families and clan members was defined as poor. The reason being that he or she lacked that continual family education or community relationship which is very vital for normal human existence in any given society. For example, a woman who never related well with her mother-in-law lacked

someone to take care of her baby whenever she gave birth. As a result she could not have an opportunity to attend crucial meetings with other women where she could learn many things about normal society living, thus she ended up in poverty of ideas. She could not even go to the farm or attend to other productive functions hence material poverty too. This type of poverty, that is lack of good interpersonal relationship not only affected the parents but also their offspring. The children of the antisocial parents were deprived of the privilege of traditional community education. According to Bujo, "there is no worse degree of alienation and 'poverty' that affects a person more than the loss of one's cultural identity."⁷ So the children of these particular families grew up poor both in developmental and relational skills. They were regarded as aliens, people who had nothing constructive to offer to the society. This brings us down to reviewing the general causes of poverty and more especially here in Africa and Kenya in particular.

1.4 CAUSES OF POVERTY.

1.4.1 Socio-Cultural Factors.

Cultural belief is one of any ethnic community's most unifying aspects. It too brings out the distinguishing characteristics from one ethnic community, group of people or nation from another. It affects the way people think and do things. And that is why we find that in particular cultures given jobs and decisions are taken by men not women and vice versa. Then we find that in the absence of those who can carry out those particular duties the other cannot perform them even when they are capable. Hence

⁷Benezet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of the Community*, The African model and the Dialogue Between the North and South, 137

culture in one way or the other incapacitates its members because it makes it look like a taboo carrying out duties set for the opposite gender. This explains the reasons to why one ethnic group lives under biting poverty and not another. For example a Samburu woman cannot go to work while leaving her husband at home. On contrary, among the Kikuyu a woman can leave her husband at home while she is working far away from home, thus making the Kikuyu materially more well up than the Samburu. Hence some of these cultural values become causes of poverty, as I will show below.

In most African communities, culture does not allow women to take part in any public function, just as it was true with the Jewish patriarchal society. "The existence of male led families where man owns all the property is a strong foundation,"⁸ of these unjust societal structures which cause or contribute to the increment of poverty due to discrimination. It is true that, " women in Africa, as in other places, suffer a lot from male prejudices and from many customs and rites which do violence to the womanhood and dignity."⁹ Silently they become implementers of the decisions, which are taken by men largely found among the Maasai as is applicable to some other communities. The females, "are both subtly and overtly taught to think of themselves as entirely vulnerable and in need of the protection of the male."¹⁰ Such beliefs and teachings leave women with no choice other than remaining at home whereby, they are generally overworked, and discriminated against. In patriarchal societies men too undergo the same oppression

⁸ League of Kenyan Women Voters. *Women and Democracy*, 5

⁹ Chukwudum B. Okolo, 64

¹⁰ Mugambi, Nasimiyu Wasike, eds.. *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity*, 140

and discrimination. This implies that culturally women too oppress and discriminate against men

When it comes to economic development, women contribute a lot and more especially in the agricultural sector. Yet in the different African communities, women efforts and contributions go unnoticed or unappreciated and this has highly affected the economy because women are not motivated. This is in both subsistence and cash crop level for once women do not produce food crops for the family use, then it means that a lot of their husbands savings will go to the buying of food. Likewise in cash crop level, if whatever is produced does not benefit the family, then she gives up and this leads to drop in the level of production, thus leaving their developmental capacities un-exploited since nobody recognizes them, hence poverty.

Another thing, which contributes to poverty, socio-culturally is that women have no authority over what they produce. Their husbands or the male folks may take and sell almost everything thus leaving their families without material support like food. This subjects the wife and children to hunger (poverty). Such a cruel action demoralizes them and makes them to just watch helplessly at things happen

In line to the above concern is that, in other cultures, when the father of the family or the breadwinner dies, the widow has no power over the property that he leaves behind. After the burial, the whole family and even the distant relatives of the deceased come together and share among themselves everything that the man owned. This leaves the widow and the orphans in biting need of both moral and material support, which they rarely get from their relatives.

In other cultures like in southern Madagascar, the relatives come “with their cumbersome rituals of over-feasting at the expense of the bereaved family.”¹¹ They do not leave the family of the deceased before they have finished looting all what the man had accumulated during his lifetime through “pretense of respecting of customary rites.”¹² As Mbiti notes,

The world of the spirit, whenever it might be situated, is very much like the carbon copy of the countries where they lived in this life. So their activities of the spirits are similar to those of human life here, in addition to whatever other activities of which men may not know.¹³

They hold and teach that the spirit of the dead man is hovering over his property; meaning that he still had power over it. And given that the women had no say over anything it became a taboo for her to keep her deceased husband’s property. This action was supported by the belief that this could bring misfortune like death, not only to her own sons but also to all the male in the family or the entire clan. For them, a woman to own any material property implied that all men were dead. All these inhuman customs had poverty as their end result.

In addition to what has been highlighted above, “Single women engaged in business are looked at with suspicion by the community. Consequently community support is not always forthcoming. This is especially in rural areas.”¹⁴ The end result of this is subjecting these families to a very high degree of poverty, in the name of

¹¹P. N. Wachege, *Living to die Dying to live*, African Christian Insights, 67

¹² Wachege, 144

¹³ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 80

¹⁴ Women and Democracy, 11

remaining faithful to culture. Briefly, this is how socio-culture can be a contributing factor or cause of material poverty and oppression.

1.4.2 Socio-Economical Factors.

Generally when we talk about poverty, what rings in the mind of many is the idea of lack of material things. When it is held that lack of employment is the only cause although as I have shown above it is only a part of it. This makes many to close their eyes to underpayment meaning that those employed and are poorly paid are not seen as poor. Demand for bribes in order to get jobs for those who are looking for them is also another cause of poverty in that most people sell all what they have. For instance, a certain man who comes to our community sold his only piece of land to bribe for a job. Then after two weeks he lost the very same job due to lack of qualifications. This is only a single case among many.

When one is not working, we say that he or she is not in a position to feed him/herself, has no shelter or has poor shelter; he/she cannot meet health care expenses. In summary he/she cannot afford the most basic human needs.

Under payment for those who have jobs too gives way to poverty. This is because too one cannot afford the essential human needs. Connected to this is exploitation. Otherwise, job availability calls for just wages as advocated for by pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* “give to every one that which is just”¹⁵, contrary to which is material poverty.

¹⁵ Leo XXIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 9

In the agricultural sector, the contrasting factors between the cost of production and market price stands as a witness to the increase of poverty in our countries. When the market prices are not determined by the cost of production, the farmer is forced to take what is less. In the recent years, coffee and horticultural farmers have been complaining of the high cost of pesticides. This caused them to increase the prices of their produce in order to recover their money. On the other hand, many Kenyans and the outside world could not afford thus making them to still sell at a loss. So the instability in this sector, leads to despair thus making the farmer become poor and poorer every new day for they prefer not to work to being exploited. So lack of employment, unjust payment of workers and poor returns for agricultural products are some of the socio-economic causes of poverty.

In addition, a lot of corruption in the agricultural sector like, paying for the machinery and other agricultural equipment's, which never exist, broke the farmers spirit. So the production kept on falling because most of the farmers opted to doing other things like looking for white-collar jobs which they do not easily get.

1.4.3 High Costs Of Living.

Provision of employment is one of the ways of reducing poverty. This does not seem true with living standards of Nairobi. This is because the house and transport owners set their own charges, which makes one to wonder whether the government has any control. These two industries enjoy an uncontrolled business thus making life for others unbearable. This sort of exploitation makes those who are employed to spend half

of their salaries in paying house rents and transport. Their children have not yet eaten and gone to school. Hence it can be said that high cost of living is also a cause of poverty, something, which makes many people to flock into Kibera slum. In this way poverty threatens not only those who are not working but every Kenyan citizen.

1.4.4 Ethno-Political Conflicts.

The third cause of poverty is ethno-political conflicts, which can be defined to mean, “ethnic identity activated and used for the purpose of political mobilization.”¹⁶ Here in Kenya it has been termed a tribal clashes, as was witnessed in Rift valley and the Coastal region in 1992 and 1997. During such periods, the able bodied people are the main target and more especially men. They are either killed or disabled. Under such circumstances the rest of the people escape for their lives. They leave behind all their property like foodstuffs in the stores, farms, animals, and cars and what for years they knew as their homes. “In addition, the ethnic clashes have led to destruction of communities and deepening ethnic hatred, food shortage and creation of refugees.”¹⁷ This subjects them to poverty: they could not be poor if the peaceful conditions prevail.

¹⁶ Getui-Theuri, 164

¹⁷ Getui-Theuri, 168

1.4.5 Natural Disasters.

Most of the African countries depend on agriculture for their livelihood. They rely on the mercy of God to send them rain so that they can grow food crops. Sometimes, however the rains are prolonged and they destroy the crops, or the floods wash away the farms. They break the bridges or make the roads impassable, making most of the agricultural produce to get spoiled before reaching markets. This becomes a very great loss hence leading to poverty.

On the other hand, the rains may not be sufficient or may not fall at, whereby the animals and crops start to die. It is not an uncommon problem with the Turkana and Pokot people. That is to say, somewhere in life these farmers will lack food and money to cater for their other needs like health care and school fees for their children. This aspect shows that surely poverty attacks from every side.

1.5 CONCLUSION.

Poverty accompanies humanity in the journey of life. Sometimes people find themselves trapped in it or others contribute towards its acceleration. Poverty has various causes and weighs differently on those it attacks. The environment in which one finds himself also determines the definition we give to poverty. Despite all these poverty is an in-human state of life, which affects the other areas of human development and so it should be alleviated.

CHAPTER TWO.

2.0 POVERTY IN KIBERA.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is very easy to talk generally about poverty without having been in touch with it, since we can read from books or participate in discussions about poverty. Not to talk from the air, in this chapter I am going to present the reality of poverty as I experienced it in Kibera slum. First I will talk about the location of this slum, its occupants, its state and the causes of poverty there in.

2.2 LOCATION OF KIBERA SLUM

Kibera slum is situated in the south- west part of the city of Nairobi. It is sandwiched between the classic Nairobi City tall buildings to the east, then to the west is found the Langata residential estate mostly occupied by different religious congregations and other rich people. Kibera slum is a valley of the unfortunate and the marginalized of the society. The reason why I say this is that, most of the occupants of this slum are casual workers in these two sandwiching blocks.

The name Kibera means “ a forest” to Nubians. It was originally used as a settlement for Nubian soldiers who came from southern Sudan as part of the kings' African Rifles. This is the region that where Nubian soldiers were practicing shooting and other fighting tactics. Kibera slum covers approximately 35 square kilometers. It is one of the 8 administrative divisions within Nairobi area.

Kibera slum is home for almost a million inhabitants who come from all over Kenya and even from neighboring countries like southern Sudan. This can justly be termed as the most cosmopolitan slum in the region. Thus Kibera has become well known as one of the largest slums in Africa. It is commonly described as the dormitory of almost all underpaid industrial workers, cultural and political refugees, self-employed and the unemployed dwellers. This slum can be reasonably demarcated into three distinct groups based on income-earning activities. The first group is comprised of the people who are employed within or outside Kibera. The second set of people consists of those who are self-employed within or outside Kibera. Then there is the third group that is made up of those who have no jobs.

In Kibera the living structures are not worth calling houses. They are made out of any thing that can be improvised to serve the need. People take their own initiative and their building material ranges from “old mabati, mud, wood, boxes, and nylon papers. “Some are bending and one would hardly stand inside them.”¹⁸ As we can see these are all recycled materials for nobody can afford buying new building materials and in any case they are not allowed to put up permanent houses. And this makes the whole area to be commonly known as “Mabandeni” meaning living in a tent like structure.

In this slum there are no basic social infrastructures like toilets or running water. For toilets, occupants of this slum use what is sarcastically called a flying toilet that is polythene papers bags. Once set flying they can land on other peoples so called houses,

18Japheth Oluoch, *'The Lighter side of Darkness'* A youth's Testimony, Tangaza Occasional Papers No: 14, 43

thus the term flying toilets. The situation in this slum as is true with all other slums, portrays the effect of human made poverty that the church and the society is being faced with. I call it human made because most of the people who live in this slum of Kibera are products of exploitation due to poor payment and sometimes domestic violence. They are also the outcome of bad governance in the labour industry whereby the workers are laid off before their contracts are terminated and without being given their benefits.

This slum though extensive as it is, is served by two catholic parishes, St. Michael and Christ the King parish. They have health centers, primary schools and a polytechnic. But on visiting this slum, the two parishes might be hard to find. Instead other sect worshippers will welcome visitors to this slum on daily basis meaning that there are also other religious groups though some do not have any developmental project. This becomes a very clear sign that despite the fact of their poverty, Kibera residents have a very strong attachment to God by the way they pray throughout the day. Now the question remains; what causes this inhuman state of life? This question brings us down to the reviewing of the causes of poverty in Kibera.

2.3 CAUSES OF POVERTY IN KIBERA

2.3.1 Introduction

It is crystal clear that poverty does not always happen to come on its own but sometimes it is caused. And to alleviate it, we have to go to its root causes. As I have realized, there are different causes of poverty in this slum, which are interconnected.

2.3.2 URBANIZATION

Urbanization and the supposed accompanying availability of social amenities became centers of attraction after the colonial era. Many people started migrating from rural areas to urban centers, in search of white-collar jobs. This is as a result of unequal distribution of developmental facilities, which were concentrated only in urban centres. “The enormous flow of migrants means that job-seekers outnumber job opportunities. Labour remains cheap and rents high.”¹⁹ These people find themselves with only one option and that is living in Kibera where the cost of living is low and poor in comparison with that of other places like Karen and Muthaiga to mention but just a few. So these attractions of social amenities blinded people to come to cities not knowing that to benefit from them one should be working and well paid. The suffering, which is visible in Kibera, arose from this factor of urbanization in that job opportunities were only available in urban centers. Those who do not qualify to work in any office or company end up in Kibera the center of poverty hence urbanization becomes one of the causes of poverty Kibera.

2.3.3 BREAKING OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY SET UP.

The African traditional family set up or organization took care of its members, even those who could not work like the old, the disabled and relatives who were coming for a long visit like one or two years. At present in cities like Nairobi, this set up cannot

¹⁹ Alyward Shorter, *Slums ' A Social Analysis'* Tangaza Occasional Papers No: 14, 63

work, given that everything is to be bought. So keeping three to five relatives who are not working in the house becomes a very heavy cross. Most of the young people I talked to during my pastoral work at St. Michael Parish in Kibera complained that they were kicked out of their relatives' houses. For example, a certain young girl got pregnant and was sent out of the house by her aunt with whom she was staying as a baby sitter in Kibera. She said that Kibera slum was the only place, which opened its doors to her. In Kibera, she went to stay with the young man who was responsible of the pregnancy. "By then he was doing casual works in Langata area and coming home daily. He was good to me until one day when I was about to give birth that he went and came back home three months after I had given birth."²⁰ Another girl whose name I withhold was staying with her maternal uncle who twice raped her for material goods he was offering to her like clothes and food. Finding life unbearable, she opted to be married by an old man who had no source of income hence become a beggar since she was not working. This was due to poverty caused by breaking up of traditional family set up whereby a relative could support the other without demand for payment or any favour.

Those sent out by their relatives, do casual works in other peoples houses if they are lucky to get something to do, or sometimes they act as potters of other people's luggage just to get the meal of the day. So break up of traditional family set up becomes a source of poverty in Kibera. That caring concern which could sustain one to get something supporting him or herself is not there anymore.

²⁰ A Testimony from a Young, *An interview I carried out.*

2.3.4 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

In the recent years Kenya and Nairobi in particular have become the talk of the day on the subject of domestic violence. This has not only put Kenyans into the media but has also caused a lot of pain to many families. In Kibera, most of the women living there with their children are products of domestic violence.

Sometimes when the wife battering becomes unbearable, the woman runs for her safety from may be a decent house to the slums, simply because she has no money to go back to up country or rent a dignified house. It also happens that the woman can leave the husband with children in the slums. Running away from their brutal husbands or relatives is not only concentrated in cities but there are also those who escape from their husbands' in upcountry to towns. In either case one group is subjected to the suffering and more especially women and children who normally become victims of the circumstances. This means that majority of women and children in Kibera find themselves there due to domestic violence and have nothing else other than to languish in poverty.

In most cases, the mother runs away with the children. She is surely not in a position to provide three meals a day leave alone pay for their school fees and other basic needs. This forces the children into doing small businesses like selling of groundnuts and sweets in order to help their mothers make ends meet. The story does not end at this point, the boys may end up sniffing of glue, smoking or using other types of drugs. The girls do not escape from the venom of exploitation. They are the most prone because they are enticed into prostitution or sexual exploitation through promises

of minor things like chips, sweets and lotions. And since their mothers cannot provide their daughters with those commodities, they easily fall victim. This lands them into early single motherhood thus adding insult into injury. They are also not safe from HIV/AIDS and other venereal diseases. This happens so because the children are not under the protection of their parents, which is as a result of domestic violence. This results to both material and moral poverty in Kibera slum as is true with other slums and the society at large.

2.3.5 PROSTITUTION.

As noted earlier, most of the women who stay in Kibera, fall into three categories. First that of married and self-employed or married and have no business only doing their housework. Then the second one is that of the unmarried and are self-employed. There is the third category that is of those who are not married and have no source of income but are kept by men hence prostitution.

Given that most of the women in Kibera are married by men who drink alcohol, their families most of the time go without food. This is because the so-called fathers of the family may drink everything they earn if at all they are working. When this takes place, subsequently, the women are left with no choice apart from doing what they can to feed the children. A good number of them are lured into prostitution as the only way out. This does not take place without its consequences. On realizing that, the husbands often kick their wives and children out of the house thus subjecting them to a more crushing poverty. Other women too opt for prostitution if they discover that their

husbands are not faithful. In this way prostitution from either of partners, results to moral poverty in Kibera while the same prostitution sometimes is caused by material poverty.

The same is true: “ young girls who start being prostitutes at tender age easily become pregnant and in many cases end up in single motherhood status.”²¹ Many families and more especially in Kibera, find this issue of adding another burden of a baby to care for, too bitter to swallow. So they chase or expel the girl from the house. Sarah Mukui is a victim of such cruel activity. “I was sent out my of sister’s house by her husband when they realized that I was pregnant. And since I was working as a house maid with the little money I had, I secured myself a house here in Kibera.”²² She narrated this in tears. It is in this way many girls and women, who are not faithful to their marriages, become single mothers, hence are subjected to the untold poverty as found in Kibera.

2.3.6 UNDER PAYMENT.

This is one of the biggest problems, which faces those who live in Kibera. A good number of these people work in industrial area while they live in Kibera. These are people who have families in rural areas or stay with them in Kibera. The salary they get cannot allow them to stay in stone houses, otherwise they will not be able to eat or see their children go to school.

²¹ Alban Odhiambo. *CHANG’AADOM* , A Structural Analysis in: Tangaza Occasional Papers No: 14, 74

²² A youth Testimony during Sharing in Kibera.

According to a research I carried out in Mashimoni that is one of the villages in this slum that covers 2.5 square kilometers, 10% of the adult men and 21% of adult women are unemployed. Then 35% of the men work as unskilled labourers while 33% of the women spend their time at home. If we consider those who work, we will realize that 9% of all adults work in the small enterprise sector in Kibera. The workers in Kibera slum earn the wages between Kshs 500/= to Kshs 1000/= per month. The average mean per household in Kibera is estimated between Kshs 600/= and 1200/= per month.

At present the largest number of workers earn wages between Kshs 2000/= to Kshs 2500/= per month.²³

One young man said to me: “Brother this amount of money is so little and this makes us to stay in this poor condition. We are even ashamed to go home, because those who remained in rural areas will laugh us at.”²⁴ They sometimes fall sick but they cannot get proper treatment given that they have no money. This is an implication that what their employers give to them cannot cater for their needs while they do a lot of work. Hence it goes without saying that their poverty is a product of exploitation, because they do not get their just wages. Poor payment thus, becomes a cause of poverty in Kibera and anywhere in the world.

Sister Asumta encountered this challenge of poverty, as an evangelizer because she works as nurse in Kibera. She said that in their dispensary people pay half price of the cost of their medication. “But I turn many away because they cannot afford. When I

²³ I got this Information from asking some self-employed men and women in Kibera.

²⁴ Information I got from sharing with some youth in St. Michael Parish Kibera.

meet these same people in the Church I hesitate to offer them peace and love of Christ.”²⁵ She says that she is even sometimes ashamed of receiving the Holy Communion. Meaning that inevitably there is contradiction between preaching by word of mouth and the actions.

2.4 CONCLUSION.

Poverty in Kibera as we have seen, presents the image of one of the major challenges the Kenyan Church is faced with. All the causes of poverty that we have seen happen in Kibera makes it look like a summary of the injustices found in the Kenyan society.

This means that the Church will be trying to uproot what human beings plant. This will only be possible if she will remain faithful to her call of contradicting of the oppressing structures of the society. By pointing them out and proposing some ways out.

²⁵ Information from sharing with Sister Asumta.Akinyi, a nurse.

CHAPTER THREE.

3.0 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.

3.1 Introduction.

In this chapter, I will present a general overview of theories that discuss the biblical teaching on poverty. It will also include the social teaching of the church on the issue of poverty. This chapter will also involve what various theologians say about the same topic and its effects on evangelization.

3.2 Bible.

3.2.1 OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING'S ON POVERTY.

From the biblical point of view and more especially in the Old Testament, poverty is looked at as “*divine chastisement*” (cf Genesis 49:25; Deuteronomy 28:3-8). This implies that poverty as found in the Old Testament, in one way was regarded as a curse from God, a disgrace or punishment inflicted on those who turned away from God (CF Psalm 6: 11; 10-15:13-18). It is to say that God does not will that people be poor or live in the state of poverty but rather he used it to bring people back to himself. While on the contrary also, wealth and prosperity is a sign of blessing from God. “The Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters” (Job. 42: 12-13), (CF Deuteronomy 28. 4-5). This implies that due to his trust in God, he got more that he had before as a sign of blessing from God.

In other Old Testament texts, we are presented with an image of God who has concern for the poor, oppressed and any other needy. The nation of Israel is one of the examples of how God liberated His oppressed chosen people. For the Old Testament writers, poverty or any kind of unjustified suffering could tempt to turn people away from God. The book of Job shows us how generally this could happen. “ But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” (Job 1:5, 3:1-13). “Or I shall be poor, steal and profane the name of my God,” (Proverbs. 30:9).

In exodus Yahweh exclaims. “The debtor or one who is sold in slavery should serve his master for six years and be set free on the seventh” (Deuteronomy 15:1-2). This law too applied to the land during the year of jubilee when the land was left to fallow, ideally for the poor to eat from what grew on farms” (Ex 23:10-11).

In Exodus 22:21-27 God is depicted as the defender of the poor and the oppressed, the perfect man is the poor one, whose rights are championed by the most high, and whom He protects. He is in solidarity with the needy of any kind in the society, that is, He sides with them, fighting their battle, an implication that God does not want anyone to stand in need of any material thing or justice.

The prophets too stood for the poor whom they termed as the oppressed, the humiliated, the ones reduced to servitude, meaning those who were made to live in an undermined state of life by their fellow men and women. Still the same Prophets stand and talk for the poor in Kibera because the situation is not different from that of their time. Prophet Nathan’s message to king David shows that Yahweh is for the poor (2

Samuel 12:1-6). (CF Amos5: 12). He strongly talked against the injustices, which were inflicted on people. Condemning the widening gap between the rich and the poor. Prophet Amos too prophesies against the oppression and exploitation of the marginalized (Amos 2:7).

According to Isaiah. 'God is the friend of the poor'. he warns the rulers and the elders of the approaching punishment due to their exploitation of the poor (Isaiah 3:13-15). Ezekiel passes the same message of destruction of the kingdom due to the ruler's oppression and exploitation of the poor (Ezekiel 22:29-30). Prophet Amos warns of the invading judgement due to the oppression of the poor, (Amos 4:1-3).

The Psalmist advices, that justice must be rendered to the poor and they need to be protected from all kind of oppression for Yahweh does not forget the cry of the poor.

In summary, the Old Testament Yahweh's concern for the poor and their condition are undisputable, as is seen through the prophetic messages. Yahweh's opting for the poor should not be taken for granted. It is in other words standing against the system that gives birth to poverty or servitude. "God's anger against oppressors is no more than expression of love for God's children..., because they are placed in a situation of humiliation and abandonment."²⁶ He advocates for change of the situation or Himself will come to punish the oppressors.

²⁶ Jorge Pixley, Clodovis Boff, *The Bible, the Church and the Poor*, 113

3.2.2 NEW TESTAMENT BIBLICAL TEACHING ON POVERTY.

In the New Testament, the teachings on poverty are complicated because Jesus pronounces blessed those who are poor for, “poverty is the ability to welcome God and openness to God; a willingness to be used by God, humility before God.”²⁷ The willingness to be used by God in the sense that Jesus rich as He was willed to be associated with the poor. “The life of Jesus itself is one of the self-chosen poverty, in his teaching praxis, he identified himself with the marginalized, the meek and humble.”²⁸ It is in the face of the poor that the suffering of Christ is manifested. It is in the concern for the poor that we manifest the love of God through helping our brothers and sisters.

He denounces the rich, something that seems to contradict the Old Testament understanding of poverty. Since in the Old Testament poverty was looked at as a curse while wealth was regarded as a blessing from God. This should not be understood as if Jesus implied that material possession was evil. He knew that, “material wealth can reduce those who have it to become exploiters and oppressors in order to accumulate more,”²⁹ at the expense of others. But the problem is solved by the distinction, which is between material poverty and spiritual poverty. His statement in the beatitude on the blessedness of the poor (Luke 6:20) does not mean that the Jesus was canonizing poverty and misery. On the contrary he is very sure that lack of material goods can result

²⁷ Waruta Douglas ed., *Caring And Sharing Pastoral Counseling in African Perspective*, 33

²⁸ Gutierrez, 296

²⁹ J.N.K. Mugambi, *African Christian Theology*. ‘An Introduction’, 98

to worries, which may hinder one from total commitment to the searching of the kingdom. So in this case, Jesus has great concern towards the poor.

In Mark 1:15, Jesus says, "The time has come: and the kingdom of God is upon you." Here Jesus is telling the Jews that, elimination of exploitation and poverty is the only condition for the coming of this kingdom. Jesus himself engaged into this activity of fighting against what was incompatible with the kingdom of God. He opened the eyes of the blind, proclaimed the release of the captives and fed the hungry (Isaiah 62: 1-2), thus denouncing poverty. As the scripture says, "for you know the generous act, of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor so that by his poverty you might become rich", (2corinthians 8:9). He was associated with the poor so that he may improve their state of life. He opted for them in order to show that God is the God of both the poor and the rich.

Saint Paul looks at poverty as an evil phenomenon, which oppresses human beings. He believes that it was at the power of other people who are not poor that the solution of this problem of poverty lies. Concerned with poverty he wrote to the Corinthians demanding them to share their goods with the poor. He says that "I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need...., In order that there may be a fair balance,"(2corinthians 8: 13-14).

As a sign of solidarity with the poor, he personally struggled to make collections for the poor of the church of Jerusalem (2Corinthians 9). So Paul wants the faithful to develop that spirit of solidarity with the poor to help them change their state

of life. He was convinced that it was through acts of charity that multitudes are attracted to God.

The apostolic Church too encountered the problem of poverty in the process of preaching the gospel of Christ from one place to another. They could not close their eyes to the inhuman state of life of those they preached to. So the leaders of the Church James, Cephas and John urged Paul and Barnabas to “remember to help the poor.”(Galatians 2:10). Their concern for the poor reflects their conviction that, “opting for Christ means opting for what Christ chose, the poor.”³⁰

The poor in the Acts of the Apostles needed help while the preaching of the gospel had to continue. And since they could not neglect the needy nor the word of God, they instituted the order of the deacons in the Church to help in distribution of food and other material goods (Act 6:1-6). In the same text, we are told that the apostolic community put everything together, shared in common and nobody was in want. This shows how the Church ever since was confronted with the challenge of poverty and how she was concerned about it.

Saint James in his epistle too comments about poverty as an inhuman state of life. More especially when it is caused by human beings through exploitation of workers by not giving them their just wages. In James 4:5 he points out that, “the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.”

³⁰ Mugambi, 112

By this text, he gives us an image of God who has concern for his exploited people and who will come to punish the offenders. The image of God who hates suffering of His people thus taking their side hence standing against any inhuman structure that causes poverty. He advocates for the payment of wages that the workers may not suffer.

This brings us down to reviewing the Catholic Church teaching on poverty as is found in her social teachings

3.3 CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHING ON POVERTY.

The church's prophetic voice or role is always challenged by the phenomenon of poverty, meaning that it can be ridiculous for her to close her eyes to the issue of poverty. The church's concern for social problems is as old as she is but the first Papal document came out on 15th May 1891 long before Vatican II, which started in 1963. The battle against poverty in our modern society started with Pope Leo XIII then it is continued by his predecessors. In *Rerum Novarum* he was deeply moved by the condition of the urban proletariat that he demanded "some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so urgently on the majority of the working class."³¹ Here the pope was talking not only about poverty, but also about the systems that caused it.

By the time he wrote this document, there was a problem of favouritism whereby the rich had a better treatment from the state leaders than the poor. He condemned this unchristian system by saying that; "It would be irrational to neglect one

portion of the citizens and favour another.”³² He spoke strongly against this idea of favouritism for the rich kept on flourishing while the poor were languishing. He was trying to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, which threatened to result into a sharp class distinction. According to him lack of just treatment among all the citizens bred poverty, which is inhuman state of life.

Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits they create that being housed, clothed, and enabled to support life, they find existence less hard and more endurable.³³

In the same document, he talked against exploitation of the workers. He advocated that, “a workman’s wages be sufficient to enable him to maintain himself, his wife, and his children in reasonable comfort.”³⁴ Though written that long ago, the same document addresses Kenyan government and all the employers to consider the wages they give to people of Kibera slum or the working poor.

In addition the Kenyan bishops with the same overtone pointed that, “Kenyan citizens are tax payers. The money collected from taxes is not supposed to be used for paying external debts only but for the common welfare of the country.”³⁵ It is a pleading they make for the poor people of Kibera to get them supplied with social infrastructure. Since in one way or another, they also pay taxes that should not be used for servicing debts from which they never benefited.

³¹ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Judith Dwyer ed. *The catholic Dictionary of Social Thought*, 887

³² Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 26

³³ Leo XIII, 27

³⁴ Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Seven Great Encyclicals, 3

³⁵ Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Kenya 1996, *Our Social Responsibility*, 9

Pope Paul IV realized that the problem of poverty is caused by the unbalanced distribution of power worldwide. In his encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* he wrote rejecting the baseless theory, which considered material gain and competition as the key motive of the economic progress. He postulated that, "the development of the human person is at the center of the church social teaching."³⁶ Pope John XXIII who convened the Vatican II council made it clear that; "the church wants to be in particular the church of the poor."³⁷

He affirms that the role of the church is that of a teacher and of a nurturing mother to the poor. Using different words, to emphasize the same idea Pope Leo XIII pointed out that; The commitment of the Church is "that the poor..., should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in use and for this it strives."³⁸ At this point, his motivating force was focused more on the dreaded state of poverty in the underdevelopment countries. Like Christ who identified himself with the poor, the church also invites God's privileged ones in the society to respond to the appeal of the poor and support them in alleviating their state of poverty. The church demands for social justice by conscientizing the poor to become aware of their rights. She also calls the rich to recognize their responsibility towards their brothers and sisters of improving their miserable state of life.

On the same topic on poverty, Kenyan bishops and prefects Apostolic of Kenya carried forward the same commitment to poverty alleviation. Faced with the

³⁶ John Paul VI., *Populorum Progressio*, 22

³⁷ John XXIII. *On Christian and Social Progress*, 9

³⁸ Leo XIII, 24

responsibility of helping the poor to liberate themselves, they in one voice said: “It is futile and dangerous to believe that there is another way of improving our condition of life except the hard way of conscientious work.”³⁹ They continued to teach that it is through the individual’s efforts to work and not through handouts from the west that he/she will be able to lift their standards of living. Hence they emphasized that, “the state must see to it that all may have reasonable chance to work for a respectable standard of living.”⁴⁰ Work is not enough solution but giving of just wages to workers for reasonable comfort, they added.

The permanent solution of the problem of poverty “lies in striving so that these hands, whether individuals or entire peoples need not be extended in supplication, but become human hands work and working, transform the world.”⁴¹ This means that prayers should not be seen as the only solution to the problem of poverty but rather people should turn to work as well in order to improve their state of poverty.

3.4 CONCLUSION.

As we have already seen both the Bible and the Church teachings hold the stand that poverty is an evil thing. It oppresses human beings, reducing them to slaves and making them subhuman. By slaves I mean that they are exploited from all corners of life. For example, doing a lot of hard work without getting a corresponding salary, or

³⁹ Rodrigo Mejia, SJ, Ed., *The Sonscience Of Society*, 20

⁴⁰ Mejia, 20

⁴¹ Chukwudum B. Okolo, 63

stealing children from the streets to go and work in farms or jobs such as picking coffee and tea without paying them apart from the meagre food they eat. The money they are supposed to get goes to those who have sneaked them into those farms. It calls all people of good will to fight against this type of slavery. This will only be possible if we all accept to share our material and spiritual well being, with those who are less fortunate. Meaning that many people oppress others because instead of being softly talked to by the Christians they are rather condemned. If they are politely made to understand that giving unjust wages is evil then they will change. This is what I mean by saying that we share our spiritual well being with them. The solution of poverty in our present world finds its cure from the co-operation of both the Church and the state.

Both sides should always sit down and plan together on developmental projects. For example there is the famous Mathare slum housing project, which almost became a failure. This was because there was no good understanding between the Church and state. Of late we have seen that most of what formerly used to be mission schools were taken by the government. This means that the Church may start hesitating to establish new institution that may not attain its goal. The government should subsidize or should pass a law that Church goods geared towards poverty alleviation be tax-free.

Chapter Four

4.0 THE WAY FORWARD

4.1 Introduction.

We have already seen both the biblical and church's teaching on the issue of poverty. God has been portrayed as taking the side of the poor. On the subject of poverty the church stresses so much on respecting of human dignity. It depicts poverty as abusive of this God given dignity.

Considering what we have noticed, it is very easy to stand aloof and shout that the bible says that or the church's teaching condemns, implying that people can be very good in highlighting the problems and other injustices in the society but not as well good in giving solutions. Many different religious congregations and non-governmental organizations have worked and carried out researches in Kibera, but the situation does not seem to improve. This is because the given suggestions of the way out are not followed up. So in this chapter, I will give some recommendations as a contribution to missionary involvement in poverty alleviation here in Kenya and Kibera in particular. This will be effective because I personally will be working with these poverty alleviation projects.

4.2 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH.

The church is greatly encouraged to be on the front line in both talking and responding to poverty: the sub-human state of life. She should hold strongly to the non-conforming spirit. I mean that she should not do what others are doing, *turning to profit making other than helping the poor*. The church is being reminded to maintain her original aim of establishing some of her institutions like non-profit making schools and hospitals. It is clear that the benefactors do not fully fund these institutions. One of the dangers of relying too much of benefactors is that people will be reduced to beggars or dependants. They will not be able to work for everything will be provided hence our resources will not be exploited. But the fee required should not be equivalent to those institutions formerly established to make money. A sick man in Kibera said they are aware the whites are no longer sending money as before. "But then we should slowly be prepared by being requested to pay a little amount."⁴²

It has been noticed that, some of the church institutions are established in order to attract members from other already existing denominations. Then once the goals of setting up those institutions are realized, the orientation changes. A certain Christian denomination in Kibera established a polytechnic whereby they were offering lunch. Within no time they got many followers from the already existing Christian Churches. Then at the end of one year, they started charging those who were undergoing training in

⁴² Information I got from sharing with a patient in Kibera slum.

that center. This made many to stop even attending their Church services leave alone the training. In this way, the poor are neglected hence feel cheated and betrayed.

Ecumenical dialogue should be encouraged and more especially when it comes to matters pertaining to poverty alleviation. The church leaders should think and talk with one sincere voice of improving the peoples living conditions.

It is very clear that the church in towns is the hardest hit by the challenge of poverty. For example in Kibera the Church ministers to the people who have different problems like the sick, those who have no food and school fees to mention but just a few. Some die in the slum but the relatives who happen to be around cannot afford the burial expenses. At the end of the day they turn to either of the parishes in Kibera for help. Others like the family of Mr. Edward Mutua living in Kibera slum would like to go home upcountry but they are worried of how they will start life again in the village.

This calls for proper net- working between the church in the urban centers and the Church in rural areas. That is those in rural areas should be given means of supporting those who come from urban areas to re-establish themselves once again. Meaning some of the charitable organizations based in urban centres should be advised to extend their services to rural areas. It should be organized that they move with those they are helping to make sure that they are fully established. Their assistance's should not only be limited to giving of handouts. It should involve equipping them with some skills like dress making, welding and small-scale farming like chicken keeping for permanent poverty alleviation. This networking will greatly help reduce poverty in different urban areas and Kibera in particular where this is highly needed.

Social and developmental studies should be introduced in all seminaries and other religious training institutes like Tangaza. These will prepare the future ministers to be able to encounter the problem of poverty with the right tools. Thus these studies will be giving the Tangaza students the right solutions without wastage of resources. For those who work in Kibera they should be given seminars to help them give at least permanent solutions to the problem of poverty.

“I invite the Church to play the role of a good friend to the government, without fear or favour... I believe that a man’s best friend is the one who tells him when he is going wrong.”⁴³ So the Church in Kibera too should be prepared to dialogue with the government on the area of human development without fear in order to alleviate poverty. She should be more committed in constructively correcting the political leaders and more especially when they do not fulfill their promises like supplying water, electricity and decent houses in Kibera. She is called to prophetically admonish them when what they are doing is not good as the founding father of the nation told the Church that she is the conscience of the nation.

4.3 NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS.

In Kibera slum it is not only the Church, which is involved in poverty alleviation projects as a means of evangelization. There are also non-governmental organizations, local and international. Their work is to help in improving the living conditions of the dwellers of this slum. Some of these social workers come and work within a very short

⁴³ David kyeyune, ed., *New Trends for the Empowerment of the People*, 112

period and then go. They do not live with or among the people but are housed outside the Kibera slum. Whatever goes on at night or sometimes during the day they cannot tell. Some do not carry out research to establish the most effective solutions to the problems of these slum dwellers. Though with great heart of helping, we can say that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the causes of the state of poverty in Kibera.

For example, some of the people found in Kibera slum during the day are not permanently living or stationed there. They normally flock in only when there is a certain organization giving aid. Some are employed there to work in simple hotels, welding projects while others work as tailors, meaning that they come to work during the day and go to spend the night elsewhere. Then this means that if a certain charitable organization comes to help, then the assistance could go to the wrong people. Even if the permanent Kibera residents know them, they cannot do anything since they say that no one pays for the aid that is given. Again they argue that they are in need like the permanent inhabitants of Kibera.

In order to solve this problem, the non-governmental organizations should work in very close collaboration with the church ministers who are permanently stationed in Kibera. This is because they know who are really needy and are inhabitants of that slum so that they can be the right beneficiaries. They also know the intensity of the problems facing these people and the possible solutions. Like there are those who are stationed in Kibera and have no rural homes to go to unlike those who can be transported upcountry, even though it is not all that easy for some do not want to go. The help they need cannot

be the same because one needs a temporal solution while the other needs long-term assistance.

The dwellers of Kibera and any other slum need things like social and health services. This need calls for close supervision or monitoring and this cannot be possible with those who come and go. So under such circumstances, collaborative ministry between the Church and the non-governmental organization is very vital.

4.4 THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT:

The government on the other hand must give a policy that any investor in the country should first provide housing facilities for the employees. It should too determine the amount of salary to be given to the workers. The issue of salary should not be left between the employer and the employee, because most of the employees are out to exploit their workers as most of the Kibera residents testify. The working conditions or environment should be conducive to human health. The workers benefits should be well channeled their beneficiaries according to governmental guidelines.

The government should see to it that consumers are not exploited. Meaning that it should control the charges in the transport and housing industries so that the workers can save some few coins for the future, so that from their saving they can help the poor in Kibera.

The government should make sure that some services like electricity is supplied in the rural areas. This will reduce the number of the poor people in Kibera for most of them do their small-scale businesses in the slum because there is no electricity in rural

areas. Thus I recommend that the government invests more on the rural electrification program. This will make many Kibera dwellers to shift from that slum to their upcountry home because they will be able to continue with their businesses like welding and carpentry. Rural-urban migration will also reduce because the services for example good hospitals, cinema and good schools, which normally push people to come to town, will be available in rural areas. Hence the shameful subhuman condition found in Kibera will at least be something of the past or reduced.

4.5 DECENTRALIZATION OF INDUSTRIES.

Here in Kenya the agricultural sector is the backbone of the economy. This means that most of the industries manufacture tools and equipment, which are mostly used in agricultural production. On the other hand, the agricultural products like tea and coffee get processed in the urban centers. All these industrial products and raw material, needs to be transported even the labourers in these industries call for migration from rural areas to cities. For example we have seen that most of those who live in Kibera are the underpaid industrial workers who are far away from their homes.

To solve this problem and help reduce the level of poverty in Kibera and in the other slums, I recommend that industries be established nearby the production zones, which need the tools and the equipment they manufacture. It will help reduce rural-urban migration, which in most cases give way to rise in poverty level both in towns and in the rural areas as well. The level of pollution in urban centers will also be reduced. The workers in these factories will mostly be operating from their homes or not very far

from home. By so doing the problem of housing and need for other social services that cause problems to Kibera slum dwellers will be greatly reduced. The level of crime and other immoral behaviour in Kibera due to the problem of poverty will reduce too.

Decentralization will also bring about balance in developmental opportunities throughout any given country. If this is respected, it will be like a realization of the dream of Pope John XXIII. He said that, "everyone, and especially public authorities, strive to effect improvements in rural areas as regards the principle services needed by all. Such are...housing, medical services; elementary trade, and professional schools...."⁴⁴

4.6 CULTURAL PURIFICATION.

As I pointed out before culture is a very important phenomena to human existence. It defines the way people think and act meaning that it gives them their identity. It should not be thought that everything cultural in human society is positive. Some cultural values are oppressive and exploitative. For example, in patriarchal societies men are more valued and looked at as the only bread winners and owners of everything. They normally get the first priority when it comes to education. Kibera houses many woman and young girls who are the product of this cultural favouratism. Two women sent out of their brothers' houses complained that they were withdrawn from secondary school for their brothers to continue with studies.

⁴⁴ John XXIII, *Christianity and Social Progress*, Mater et Magistra. 39

Other values like wife inheritance in most of the communities here in Africa and bed warming are also oppressive. Bed warming means that a man can offer his wife to spend a night with visiting male friend. A certain woman in Kibera who sells second hand clothes is a victim of this practice. Her husband was forcing her to spend a night with a visitor in their family. This is not only restricted to Maasai but has also been discovered in other communities although it remains a very high secret. Inheriting of one's dead brother's wife, involves bringing forth more children, which becomes a burden to the woman hence poverty. Both the Church and the state should discourage this cultural practice.

Wife beating seems not to be an issue even in our Kenyan courts. It is very common to find that a case of a woman who has been battered is presided over by a man. In such cases, justice is not granted and the woman ends up being the loser because the man judge does not see any problem if he does that to his own wife. Lack of women power to inherit anything after her husband's death is a social concern. So to proclaim some of these cultural values as important phenomenon to any human society one needs first to purify them.

On the above account, both the church and the state should strongly challenge and denounce the structures, which oppress women or enhance poverty. For example, wife inheritance and bed warming should be completely abolished and more especially during this era of HIV/AIDS. If left to continue it goes without saying that, the able-bodied men and women of our society will be cleared by HIV/AIDS. The end result will

be a rise in poverty level because children will be left without both material and moral support, which they could get from their parents.

Another cultural value and belief worthy modifying is the association of particular duties, responsibilities and privileges to a particular gender like men. In the education sector, men have always been given the first priority when it comes to making a choice between a boy and a girl as to who has to be taken to school.

Man is looked at as the central pillar in the family without considering what will happen when he dies or becomes terminally ill. If such an occasion of sickness presents itself, the family gets subjected to abject poverty because the women have not been given the tools to fight against it. With this in mind, there is a need of change of mentality. The church and the state need to put the stress on availing of equal opportunities to both men and women and more especially when it comes to education. Let the saying that, educate a woman and the whole society will be educated, come true. As a way of eradicating poverty, women should be empowered or given tools, which will enable them to run their families in the absence of their husbands. Women in all ethnic communities here in Africa and Kenya in particular should be allowed to own and have a say over the property they produce. And what their husbands owned when they lived in case they are dead should not be taken without her consent. Education on their rights and abilities is very vital as some Kibera dwellers pointed out.

In order to do away with unnecessary poverty, which challenges the gospel, people should change their cultural and traditional mentalities on property and the position of women in the society.

It is the duty of the church to teach and heal the broken relationships. This is involved also in Christian churches ministry to evangelize the abusive cultural system. Women battering to some ethnic communities looks like a norm and men who do not beat their wives are termed as weak or cowards. Majority of men even some women are comfortable with this, for some women say that their husbands do not love them since they do not beat them. The outcome of this action to the women who cannot put up with it is divorce; separation or sometimes they commit suicide. In any case if any of the above three takes place women and children are the victims. They lack material support for they may not be educated, eat good food and have decent shelter, so men mentality should be changed about this. They should be brought to understand the outcome of wife beating.

This education should not be limited to married men only but also to children in schools. They should be made aware that men are not superior to women and that a man's power is not measured through beating of the wife.

4.7 CONCLUSION.

We have seen that poverty alleviation calls for many things to be done. Most of them are not very far from those affected and their environment. So each member of the society is invited to bring forth his or her remedial action in order to make our fellow brothers and sisters lead a dignified life. This will involve changing our way of looking at the poor as if they are destined to be in that state of life forever. Gods' created earthly

goods are for the benefit of all and should be shared equally. To arrive at this the greatest thing to be done is providing equal opportunities to all people.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

Poverty as we have so far seen is something evil, degrading, a scandalous human condition which is contrary to the plan of God. God desires that man and woman live not in need of any material thing for all he created should be shared equally that is among His people there should be no poor. Poverty makes human beings not to live that dignity God from the very beginning destined them. Man and woman living in unfreely chosen poverty gets difficulties in believing in God who seems not to be concerned about their welfare. As we have noticed from the scriptures, God never created poverty but rather stands against it. This means that poverty is as a result of unjust social structures that call the Church and people of good will to stand against them.

So our society should not close the eyes to the inhuman state of life as experienced by Kibera slum dwellers. This is because Kibera slum stands as a summary of the sufferings one can suffer in the hands of his fellow men and women. Too it is through the state of living in Kibera that we look at the situation throughout Kenyan society because Kibera is a multi-ethnic slum.

We have seen that the Catholic Church worldwide has many documents on social concern, but still there is need to conscientize people about them. The Kenyan Episcopal Conference and other religious leaders have involved themselves in poverty alleviation projects although a lot is still expected of them more especially on matters affecting land ownership. Their prophetic role needs not to be compromised. It is our call not to grow tired of talking and acting against anything that causes poverty. Education should be geared towards making everyone full human being as God wants. All this involves

gender sensitivity and women empowerment since they play a very important role in the production sector.

The religious prophetic role is still relevant in our present materialistic world than ever. We have the vocation of making people aware that true human value lies in sharing of earthly goods but not in accumulation to some few individuals. This includes letting people to know each one's role in poverty alleviation for it is an issue that touches everybody.

Contrary to remaining faithful to our prophetic role of being the voice of the voiceless, the poor will still stand on the roads of evangelization. They will not move from the doors of our churches with their questioning faces, 'does God really love us?'

So if the Church wants to make her gospel truly relevant, then she has to clean and dress the wounds of all Lazarus' in our present society, which are caused by poverty.

APPENDIX 1: **BIBLIOGRAPHY.**

BOOKS

AGBASIERE, Joseph Therese, ZABAJUNGU, Bonface, ed., *Church Contribution to Integral Development*, Eldoret 1989.

AYAKO, Aloys, *Review of Poverty in Kenya*. Nairobi 1997.

BACHELOR, Peter. *People in Rural Development*, Great Britain 1993.

BOFF, Clodovis, PIXLEY, Jorge, *The Bible The Church and The Poor*, Great Britain 1989.

BROWN, Robert McAfee. *An Introduction to Liberation Theology*. New York 1990.

BUJO, Benezet, *The Ethical Dimension of Community The African Model and Dialogue Between north and South*, Nairobi 1998.

DOUGLAS, Waruta, ed., *Caring and Sharing Pastoral Counseling in African Perspective*. Nairobi 1986.

GETUI, Mary N., THEURI, Mathew M., ed., *Quest for Abundant life in Africa*. Nairobi 2002.

GUTIERREZ, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*, New York 1973.

League of Kenyan Women Voters, *Women and Democracy*, Nairobi 1992.

LEONARDE and BOFF, Clodovis. *Salvation and Liberation, In search of a Balance Between Faith and Politics*, New York 1984.

MAGESA, Laurent, *African Religion the Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, New York 1997.

MBITI, John, *Introduction to African Religion*. London 1975.

MEJIA, Rodrigo SJ, *The Conscience of Society*, Nairobi 1995.

MUGAMBI, WASIKE, Nasimiyu, ed., *Moral and Ethical Issues in Africa*. Nairobi 1998.

MUGAMBI, J.N.K., *African Christian Theology, An introduction*, Nairobi 1998.

OKOLO, Chukwudum B., *The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today*, Eldoret 1999.

STENGER, Fritz, RATTI, Maria Teresa, ed., *The Poor Discover their Own Resources, A Practical Approach to Poverty Reduction in Urban and Rural Areas in Africa*, Nairobi 2002.

DICTIONARIES.

JUDITH, Dawyer, ed., *The Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, CollegVile 1994.

ENCYCLICALS.

Pope John XXIII, *Mater et magistra, On Christian Social Progress*, New York 1961

Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Noverum*, London 1891

Pope Paul VI *Populorum Progressio*. London 1967

ARTICLES.

ODHIAMBO, Alban, *Chang'aadom*. A Structural Analysis. Tangaza Occasional Papers, No: 14, Nairobi. Pauline Publications Africa, 2002. A youth's Testimony, in

OLUOCH, Japhet, *The Lighter Side of Darkness*, A youth's Testimony, Tangaza Occasional Papers, No: 14, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2002.

SHORTER, Alyward, *Social Analysis*. Tangaza Occasional Papers, No: 14, Nairobi 2002.

WHELAN, Gerry SJ., *Theological Reflection and the Slums*, Tangaza Occasional Papers, No: 14, Nairobi 2002.

CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	ii
STUDENT'S DECALARATION.....	iii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Objectives.....	2
CHAPTER I	
TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY.....	3
1.1. Introduction.....	3
1.2. Poverty: A Definition.....	3
1.3. African View Of Poverty.....	6
1.4. General Causes Of Poverty.....	7
1.4.1 Socio-Cultural Factors.....	7
1.4.3 Socio-Economical Factors.....	11
1.4.4 High Costs of Living.....	12
1.4.5 Ethno-Political Conflicts.....	13
1.4.6 Natural Disasters.....	13
1.5 Conclusion.....	14
CHAPTER II	
POVERTY IN KIBERA.....	15
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 Location of Kibera slum.....	15
2.3 Causes of Poverty in Kibera.....	17
2.3.1 Introduction.....	17
2.3.2 Urbanization.....	18
2.3.3 Breaking of Traditional Family set up.....	18
2.3.4 Domestic Violence.....	20
2.3.5 Prostitution.....	21
2.3.6 Underpayment.....	22
2.4 Conclusion.....	24
CHAPTER III	
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.....	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Biblical.....	25
3.2.1 Old Testament Teaching on Poverty.....	25
3.2.2 New Testament Teaching on Poverty.....	28
3.3 Church Teaching on Poverty.....	31
3.4 Conclusion.....	34
CHAPTER IV	
4.0 THE WAY FORWARD.....	36
4.1 Introduction.....	36
4.2 The Role of The Church.....	37
4.3 Non Governmental Organizations.....	39

4.5 The Role Of The Government.....	41
4.4 Decentralization Of Industries.....	42
4.6 Cultural Purification.....	43
4.7 Conclusion.....	46
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	48
APPENDIX 1: BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	50