

**THE CHURCH AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: AN ANALYSIS  
OF POVERTY CAUSES, ROLE OF THE CHURCH, AND SUSTAINABLE  
INTERVENTIONS IN RWANYANJA CHURCH OF UGANDA, BUGANGARI  
ARCHDEACONRY, NORTH KIGEZI DIOCESE**

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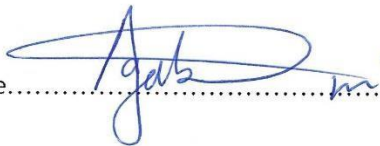
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO BISHOP TURKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND  
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DIVINITY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

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**APPROVAL**

I certify that this research report on the church and socio-economic transformation: A case study of Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry, in North Kigezi Diocese has been submitted and has been recommended with my approval as university supervisor as part of the requirements for the award of the bachelor of Divinity of Uganda Christian University at Bishop Barham University College-Kabale.

Signature..........Date.....*2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2025*.....

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DECLARATION

I BIRUNGI WILLIAM M22/BBUC/BD/005, declare that this research report on “The church and socio-economic transformation: A case study of Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry, in North Kigezi Diocese”, is a result of my original work, not plagiarized and has never been submitted to any other institution for the award of Bachelor of Divinity.

Sign..........Date...25/6/2025..

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I thank them all.

**LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS**

Rev. Reverend

Ven ..... Venerable

2Cor. .... Corinthians

Gen..... Genesis

HIV: ..... Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS. .... Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Ps..... Psalms

Deut..... Deuteronomy

Rt....., ..... Right

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## Abstract

This study was conducted on “The church and socio-economic transformation: A case study of Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese. It addresses the problem of persistent poverty with the overall aim of analysing why there is persistent poverty among Christians despite the church’s socio-economic transformation strategies, which included investigating the causes of persistent poverty, analyzing and evaluating the role of the church in socio-economic transformation of Christians and exploring the practical approaches the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. A qualitative approach was employed, with guided questions in the questionnaire to collect information from respondents, interviews, and literature review.

Findings on the causes of persistent poverty include: illiteracy/low levels of education, laziness, disease /lack of improved health care facilities, big family size, insufficient cultivation, hopelessness, wrong interpretation of the bible, and high costs of living. The church's role in socio-economic transformation includes: agriculture/coffee growing, preaching, training, establishing schools, and establishing health care facilities. The challenges facing the church in its attempts to socially and economically transform Christians include: inadequate financial resources, untrained church leaders, lack of market for agricultural products, and lack of improved means of transport and communications technology.

The recommendations are that; Church leaders should come out with biblical-based fundamental policies and strategies, equipping Christians with vocational skills, church leaders to cooperate with local leaders, introduce bible studies, encourage parents to send children to schools, resource mobilization programs, partnership with other development partners, promote disease-preventive approaches in their families especially personal hygiene and sanitation and sensitize Christians about the importance of family planning.

## CHAPTER ONE:

### GENERAL BACKGROUND

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's background, problem statement, purpose, objectives, research questions, rationale, importance, scope, literature review, and methods for the research study.

#### 1.1 Background of the study.

When people's fundamental needs, such as clothes, food, and shelter—are not satisfied, they are in poverty. Absolute and relative poverty are the two main categories of poverty. Kioko (2020) lists several factors that contribute to poverty, such as shifting economic patterns, a lack of education, a high divorce rate, political instability, a culture of poverty, overcrowding, illnesses like AIDS and malaria, and environmental issues like insufficient rainfall. Because poverty is multifaceted, it requires a comprehensive approach. The church is in a good position to confront poverty holistically.

Poverty is a pervasive and persistent problem in many parts of Uganda, including the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese. Despite the efforts of the government and other stakeholders to alleviate poverty, many Christians in Rwanyanja parish continue to live in poverty. As a spiritual and social institution, the church has a crucial role in addressing this challenge. The Bible clearly shows the need for Christians to care for the poor and vulnerable in society (Proverbs 19:1, Matthew 25:31-46).

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<sup>1</sup> Kioko, J. M. (2020). *The role of the church in social-economic development of the community: Focus on Redeemed Gospel Church in Makueni County, Kenya.*

In Uganda, the church has been involved in various poverty alleviation initiatives, including championing income-generating activities as vocational and technical skills development, savings and credit schemes, and education programs. However, despite these efforts, poverty remains a significant challenge among Christians in Rwanyanja parish. This study seeks to investigate the church's role in social-economic transformation and identify practical approaches that the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians in Rwanyanja parish effectively.

## **1.2. Problem statement.**

The church of Uganda is tasked with a dual role of fulfilling spiritual needs and driving socio-economic development, as outlined in the Provincial Master Strategic Plan (2016-2025). This plan emphasizes enhancing community development through improved church infrastructure, economic empowerment, and social welfare initiatives. However, observations during a block placement at Rwanyanja Church of Uganda revealed that many parishioners face significant challenges, including food insecurity, inadequate healthcare, and limited educational access, indicating persistent economic vulnerability despite the church's presence. This suggests potential inadequacies in the church's interventions, which may be insufficient, poorly implemented, or misaligned with its members' socio-economic challenges.

Furthermore, there is a notable gap in research regarding the specific causes of poverty among Christians in the community and the effectiveness of the church's socio-economic programs. If these issues are not addressed, the cycle of poverty in the church will continue.

This study therefore, aims to analyze the root causes of poverty among Christians in Rwanyanja Church of Uganda, assess the church's role in socio-economic transformation, and propose evidence-based strategies for poverty alleviation, ultimately providing insights into enhancing the Church's impact on sustainable and economic empowerment within its community members may continue, jeopardizing the church's mission and the well-being of its congregation.

### **1.3. Purpose of the study.**

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the causes of persistent poverty among Christians, evaluate the role of the church in social-economic transformation, and identify practical approaches that the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese.

### **1.4. Research objectives.**

The research objectives of this study are:

- i) To analyze the causes of poverty among Christians in the Rwanyaja Church of Uganda.
- ii) To evaluate the church's role in the socio-economic transformation of Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda.
- iii) To identify and analyze practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda.

### **1.5. Research questions**

- a) What are the underlying causes of poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda, and how can the Church address them?
- b) What is the church's role in fostering socio-economic transformation within its community?

c) What practical approaches can the Church implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda?

#### **1.6. Justification of the study.**

This study was conducted because most of the Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish have been affected by persistent poverty; as a result, they fail to grow socially and economically, as well as their church. This research needed to investigate how Christians can motivate themselves and how the church can get involved in working with Christians to increase their incomes and the church's growth in general.

#### **1.7. Significance of the study**

This study would help Christians and the church to understand the causes of persistent poverty among Christians. It would help them learn how to evaluate themselves on the causes of poverty and how to alleviate poverty. Upon completion, the study will also contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the church's role in poverty reduction and provide practical approaches to reduce poverty in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish and other similar contexts elsewhere.

#### **1.8. Scope of the study.**

The research study was limited to the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese. It was focused on the causes of poverty among Christians, the role of the church in social-economic transformation, and practical approaches that the church can implement to reduce poverty. The study covered the period between May and May 2025, and it considered five years because this period was sufficient to study precise analysis and trends of poverty, the underlying causes of persistent poverty, the role of the church in poverty alleviation, and identifying practical approaches the Church can implement to arrest the situation.

## 1.9 Definition of Key Terms

**Poverty:** This refers to a state of deprivation of basic needs and resources required for a decent standard of living, including food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare.

**Social-economic transformation:** This refers to the process of improving the social and economic well-being of individuals and communities.

**Church:** In this context, the church refers to the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese.

**Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish** refers to the specific church community in Rwanyanja, which is part of the Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese.

## 1.10. Theoretical framework: (Participatory Development)

Participatory Development Approach (PDA) is a theory that emphasizes the involvement of people with low incomes in the decision-making process regarding the policies and programs that affect their lives. Therefore, the core principles of this approach center on community involvement by arguing that any development done for the good of a people or community ought to ensure that the poor and marginalized are actively involved in identifying their needs, setting priorities, and designing solutions.

As a project meant to empower them, it requires the communities to take control of their development, enhancing their capacity to manage resources and make decisions. Such an approach emphasizes a bottom-up planning where the development initiatives are designed and implemented from the grassroots level, ensuring they are context-specific and culturally appropriate. The aim of such an approach is social inclusion, where all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups, are involved in the development process to ensure their voices are heard.

### 1.10.1 Critical analysis

The participatory approach is praised for its strength and also criticized for its weaknesses. For its strengths, as quoted by Aurick Mubila, Mundia Libati & Munalula Mulonda (2017) in Manusuri and Rao (2012) said, “Involving poor people in some aspect of projects and programs would lead to better results through connections between development and its intended beneficiaries.”<sup>2</sup> Perez (1999). Therefore, it is envisaged that locals would contribute to development initiatives that impact their lives, supported by the idea that they are analytically capable and creative creatures.<sup>3</sup> According to research by the International Relief and Development Project (IRDP), USAID, the World Bank, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), participatory development is always more pertinent when addressing local concerns. According to Perez and Stiefel (1979), cited by Burkey (2000), the participatory method was an attempt by groups and movements of people who had previously been excluded from such control to gain more influence over resources and regulatory institutions in particular social contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Ilo Rahaman (1984a), as quoted by Burkey (2000), identified some areas that make the work of participatory approaches complex, such as inadequate guidelines and no clear pathway to success. It also criticized the failure of its methodology to change the bureaucratic, centralized local structure that controls decision-making and resource allocation. The coming together of people to analyze their local challenges and recommend ways forward for their problems is part of the guidelines that can lead them to succeed. Through their continuous discussions, the issue of bureaucracy can be identified as a challenge and can be addressed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mansuri and Rao (2012). Poverty persistence and poverty dynamics. Published in IZA World Labour-ISSN 2054-9571. Publisher: Institute for the Study of Labour.

<sup>3</sup> Perez (1999). A Study on Competitiveness and Cross-Border Trade with Neighboring Countries. Retrieved from: <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afd>

<sup>4</sup> Burkey (2000). People First. Guideline to Self-Reliant, Participatory Rural Development, Zed Books

### **1.10.2 Use of the participatory theory**

This study on the Church and social-economic transformation addressed the persistent poverty problem in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. The participatory approach was used to investigate the causes of persistent poverty, analyze the church's role in socio-economic transformation, and suggest the practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty effectively. Much attention was paid to the questionnaire, interview guide, and observation.

### **1.2.0. Literature review**

The literature review of this study concentrates on what other writers or scholars have written about the Church and social-economic poverty transformation by defining poverty. The review is grouped under the three objectives: the analysis of the causes of persistent poverty among Christians, the evaluation of the role of the Church in social-economic transformation, and the identification and analysis of the practical approaches the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

### **1.2.1 Definition of Poverty.**

Regardless of whether it is being studied within the same field, poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon with distinct meanings for various individuals.<sup>6</sup> A lack of income or an inability to achieve capabilities might be considered absolute or relative poverty. It can be either short-term or long-term and is frequently linked to vulnerabilities, underdevelopment, and economic marginalization. It is also occasionally directly linked to inequality.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> UBOS (2020). *Uganda Poverty Assessment Report 2020*. Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>7</sup> Hacker, K. (2013). *Community-based participatory research*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Additional definitions of poverty include hunger and malnutrition, poor health, restricted access to education and other essential services, and a lack of income and productive resources to support sustainable lives.<sup>8</sup> Lack of resourcefulness can also signify poverty for individuals, families, and communities.<sup>9</sup> Poverty, according to some academics, is the absence of resources and necessities.<sup>10</sup> Green (2010) also asserts that poverty stems from capitalism. According to Lamrabat's (2013) definition of poverty from the perspective of living situations, poverty includes things like hunger, lack of housing, illness without access to care, unemployment, helplessness, a sense of being without, connection to adversity, spiritual deprivation, and fear of the future.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.2.2 Absolute Poverty

The idea of sustenance serves as the foundation for the objective, scientific definition of absolute poverty. In a limited sense, it is a condition where an individual cannot ensure their physical existence over the long term. When a person consistently lacks the minimal income necessary to cover one or more essential living expenses, it is called absolute poverty.

Furthermore, Burkey conducted a socio-economic poverty analysis in Uganda in 2000 and categorized the factors leading to poverty into three: local, national, and international. An example of factors in the regional areas includes: lack of capital, lack of savings, lack of credit, lack of skilled labor, lack of management skills, lack of tools and equipment, lack of land, illiteracy, overpopulation, and exploitation. He goes ahead and outlines the socioeconomic indicators of absolute poverty as inadequate.

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<sup>8</sup> *Copenhagen (1995) Declaration, United Nations.*

<sup>9</sup> *UNDP (2020). Human Development Index. United Nations Development Programme.*

<sup>10</sup> *Green, G. P., & Goetting, A. (Eds.). (2010). Mobilizing communities: asset building as a community development strategy.*

<sup>11</sup> *Lamrabat, Amine. (2013). "Promoting Empowerment of People in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment."*

<sup>12</sup> *Pandey, Aviyan. (2013). "Food wastage: Causes, impacts and solutions." Sci. Herit.*

Food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, leading to poor health, shelter, and education.

Myers (1999) says that the consequence of absolute poverty is a form of “poverty trap” or entanglement—when a person lives in poverty, such as material poverty, which includes inadequate assets, inadequate housing, bad sanitation, no land, wealth, and livestock. Similarly, the person can also become weak due to poor health, lack of food, and become vulnerable to sicknesses.<sup>14</sup> He says the spiritual effect of poverty includes broken relationships with neighbors and between God and people. Magnuson (2014), quoted from (open.lib.umn.edu), says children's brains in low-income families can be affected.<sup>15</sup> Beegle in the World Bank report (2019) says that over 150,000 deaths happen yearly due to poverty-related causes.<sup>16</sup>

Poverty is a pervasive and complex issue that affects millions of people worldwide, including Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda, a parish in Bugangari Archdeaconry, North Kigezi Diocese, and Uganda. Despite the church's presence in the community and its socio-economic programs, poverty remains a significant challenge, and its role in alleviating economic hardship has become a pressing concern.

### **1.2.3 Causes of Persistent Poverty among Christians**

The persistence of poverty in various places in the developing world, including the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish, is explained by different factors. These factors include: economic, social, political, and spiritual. Hence, different writers around the globe have written about the factors that contribute to the

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<sup>14</sup> Myers, Bryant L. (1999). *Walking with the Poor. Principles and practices of Transformational Development, Revised and expanded edition*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll.

<sup>15</sup> Magnuson Biewwn (2014): *Poverty persistence and poverty dynamics*. Published in IZA World Labour-ISSN 2054-9571. Publisher: Institute for the Study of Labour.

<sup>16</sup> World Bank; (2019): Beegle K, Christiansen L, editors. *Accelerating Poverty Reduction in Africa*. Washington, DC:

Persistence of social-economic poverty. So, the primary purpose of this section is to cite some of those writers and equally understand what they have reiterated.

Karelis (2023) links the factors causing poverty by quoting the Bible in the book of Deuteronomy (15:11 NIV), which describes the endless existence of the poor amidst people, saying, *'There will always be poor people in the land'*. Charles says, *'poverty persists because it is itself persistent'*.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, in the New Testament at Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon, the Leper, in which a woman came with an expensive perfume she poured on his head (Matthew 26:6-11), Jesus comments about the persistence of poverty. When the disciples saw what the woman did, they were angry, describing the deed as a waste of resources. Hence, when Jesus realized what they had in their mind, he said, "The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me" (v11).<sup>18</sup>

The point quoted in the Book of Deuteronomy and Jesus' statement to his New Testament disciples does not mean poverty cannot be reduced.<sup>19</sup> Jesus meant that the woman who poured the oil had done what she did because his time had come to die. However, after his death, there will be poor people who should be taken care of. So, based on this, we see Jesus in the New Testament as a doctor healing the sick (Matthew 8:1-4), and like a humanitarian organization feeding thousands of people (Mark 8:1-9). What we read about Jesus' ministry is a demonstration to the believer to do the same. If the issue of poverty reduction had not been there, Jesus would not have healed the sick.

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<sup>17</sup> Karelis Charles (2023). *Poverty in rising Africa; Africa Poverty Report*. Afribary Knowledge, (2023): Afribary.com.

<sup>18</sup> Rank, M. (2004): *one nation underprivileged: Why American poverty affects us all*. New York, NY: Oxford Press.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Conner (2000): *Transforming your Church. Seven strategic shifts to help you successfully navigate the 21st Century*. Printed in the United States of America by Versa Press Inc.

People are not fed, and people are experiencing poverty.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Bramley (2020) writes about the current debate about the causes of poverty persistence.<sup>21</sup> The current debate is whether poverty is caused by structure or behavior. Structural poverty is associated with poverty, resulting from problems caused by a lack of opportunities, such as jobs. This problem can be due to lack of policies by the policy makers, or it can be lack of visionary leaders who plan and get committed to the vision because the Bible says where there are no vision people perish (Proverbs 29:18)—vision to ensure economic poverty reduction, and reduced insecurity to enable people work for economic poverty reduction.<sup>22</sup>

Charles (2007) lists five key behaviors that he thinks are related to the reasons for the persistence of poverty. The five behavioral reasons include not working, not finishing school, not saving food for a rainy or difficult day, not moderating alcohol consumption, and not living within the law. Charles further associates the root causes of human behavior in poor people with people's apathy or laziness.<sup>23</sup> This further highlights people's limited time horizons and weakness of will, which he calls irrational because poor people need resources. When he traces its causes, he links it to psychological dysfunction, the range of conditions that affect mood, thinking, and behavior. In other words, it is an abnormal mental functioning and pattern of behavior.

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<sup>20</sup> Safety, M., Esfahani, R.D., and Haghghi, H. K. (2012). *Theories of Poverty: A Comparative Analysis, Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*; Vol. 1, No.6.

<sup>21</sup> Bramley (2020). *Journal of Poverty Investment and Development Vol 48*:

<sup>22</sup> Bramley (2011): *Fighting Poverty Together. Rethinking Strategies for Business, Governments, and Civil Society to Reduce Poverty. Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan New York*

<sup>23</sup> Charkes M. (2007). *Poverty persistence and poverty dynamics. Published in IZA World Labour-ISSN 2054-9571. Publisher: Institute for the Study of Labour.*

Afranie (2011) examines the relevance of the culture of poverty among the rural poor by taking the culture of poverty as a theoretical framework.<sup>25</sup> Afranie's findings support the findings of Gleichen (1981), Hobsbawm (1968), and Kimenyi (1991) and say that the persistence of poverty among people is due to prolonged unemployment, low wages, under-employment, seasonality of employment, a thin labor market, and material and infrastructural deprivation of the poor. These factors, as mentioned by Afranie, are structural, and they are in line with what Apt (2007) characterized as the poor people in Ghana through multiple deprivation and insecurity.

According to Kidd and Robson (2001), poverty is often attributed to historical and systemic factors, such as colonialism and neo-colonialism.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Lund and Rasminsky (2015) argue *that poor access to education and job opportunities causes poverty*.<sup>27</sup> More so, Gifford (2015) asserted that the prosperity gospel, which is prevalent in some African churches, has also contributed to poverty because it emphasizes individual success over collective well-being.<sup>28</sup>

Other scholars like Ferguson (2007) have highlighted the impact of corruption, poor governance, and lack of economic opportunities to have significant effects on poverty levels among Christians.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Kellon (2017), a socio-economic scholar, has emphasized the role of cultural and social factors, such as early marriage and teenage pregnancy, in perpetuating poverty among Christians, especially in developing countries of Africa.

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen Afranie (2011). *'Persistence of Poverty in Rural Ghana: Culture of Poverty Perspective*. New York.

<sup>26</sup> Kidd and Robinson. (2001). *Poverty and development in the 21st century*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>27</sup> Lund and Rasminsky. (2015). *The impact of a lack of access to education on poverty in Africa—Journal of Education and Development*. *Development*, 10(1), 1-12.

<sup>28</sup> Gifford B. (2015). *Christianity and economic development in Africa*. *Journal of International Development*, 21(5), 661-674.

<sup>29</sup> Ferguson H. (2007). *The anti-politics machine: Development and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*. Cambridge University Press.

In Africa, specific studies in 2017 have shown that poverty is a significant challenge among Christians. For example, a study in Ghana found that 70% of Christians live below the poverty line.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, a study in Nigeria in 2019 found that 60% of Christians live in poverty.<sup>32</sup>

Willems (2015) has emphasized that population expansion is one of the leading causes of poverty.<sup>33</sup> The fact that the population is more explosive in some places where people are the poorest and most hungry exacerbates the issue.<sup>34</sup> As the population of humans continues to grow, land remains a static resource. Poverty is a result of both structural imbalances and poor economic management.<sup>35</sup> Poor economic management and structural imbalance appear as uneven distribution, unjust economic order, and resource misuse. Natural disasters like droughts and floods also bring on <sup>36</sup> Poverty. These have damaged properties valued at billions of dollars and are extremely dangerous. They harm economic items in ways that cannot be repaired.<sup>37</sup>

"Unbiblical Worldview" and "sinful personal choices" are two more factors contributing to poverty.<sup>38</sup> Laziness, drug and alcohol abuse, and sex are sinful personal decisions that lead to poverty (Prov. 6:6-11; 14:23; 23:21; 24:30-34). A perspective that objectifies or justifies poverty

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<sup>31</sup> Addai, U. (2017). *Poverty and Christianity in Ghana*. *Journal of Theology and Church*, 14(1), 1-15.

<sup>32</sup> Okoro, K. (2019). *Poverty and Christianity in Nigeria*. *Journal of Theology and Church*, 16(1), 1-15.

<sup>33</sup> Willems, W. (2015). *Partnerships between faith-based organizations and governments*. *Journal of Development Studies*

<sup>34</sup> Kimenye, J. (2017). *Entrepreneurship and economic development in Africa*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Development*, 12(1), 1-15.

<sup>35</sup> Kessler, R. (2017). *Education and poverty reduction in Africa*. *Journal of Education and Development*, 12(1), 1-15.

<sup>36</sup> Irich Duchrow. (1988). "Obedient Discipleship in Economic Matters" *Economics*.

<sup>37</sup> Chadwick, O. (1966). *The social thought of the Christian Church*. London: SCM Press.

<sup>38</sup> Chambers, R. (2014). *Rural development: Putting the last first*. Routledge.

"Promotes complacency among the powerful and fatalism among the poor" will ultimately excuse poverty without doing anything to end it.<sup>39</sup>

According to Weber (2015), Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the places where poverty has skyrocketed over the period, even though the absolute number of people living in global poverty has decreased over the last decades.<sup>40</sup> Byars (2015) states that 27 of the World's 28 poorest countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a poverty rate of over 30%.<sup>41</sup> Nyerere (1971) argues that poverty in African countries has resulted in hunger, epidemic diseases such as malaria, cholera, HIV/AIDs, and a high mortality rate, and lowering overall living standards.<sup>42</sup>

According to Bishop Dan Zoreka in 2019, "Death poverty is a choice; being born poor is not your problem." God made you to work hard and succeed by using your hands and wits.<sup>43</sup> According to him, God, who created them, is irritated by the mindset of many individuals in rural regions who choose to spend their days sitting in bars without engaging in any income-generating tasks. "Recall that Jesus Christ stated in the Bible that a tree should be felled if it does not produce fruit. As local and ecclesiastical leaders, we must constantly inspire our people to strive for success."

Lifecycle factors are the primary source of poverty since they mold the person who must deal with the outside world, according to a 2021 study conducted in Jinja district by the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development.

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<sup>39</sup>Chadwick, O. (1966). *The social thought of the Christian Church*. London: SCM Press.

<sup>40</sup>Weber, M. (2015). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. London: Routledge.

<sup>41</sup> Byars, S. (2015). *Entrepreneurship and poverty reduction in Africa*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Development*, 10(1), 1-15.

<sup>42</sup> Julius Nyerere. (1971). *Poverty, Christianity, and Revolution*. New Black Friars, November, Vol. 52, No. 618 (November 1971),

<sup>43</sup> Dan Zoreka. (2019). *Speech at Thanksgiving ceremony on Monday, 13/June*.

The government and other service providers should pay particular attention to these considerations.<sup>45</sup> A person who lacks knowledge and exposure to people, places, and possibilities is considered to be naïve and hesitant about various topics, such as choosing a career or even standing up for their rights. Such a person is unable to address more significant issues concerning his job. However, more significantly, while battling for the limited assistance of the government or donors, that person cannot effectively compete with others who are more well-known.<sup>46</sup>

According to the World Bank (2013), most women in rural Uganda ascribe poverty to dishonest spouses who waste hard-earned money on things like local beer.<sup>47</sup> According to a 2020 World Bank assessment on poverty in Africa, "Men in the villages seem to have been taken by habits which require them to spend all their income including that of their wives."<sup>48</sup> Mugisha (2003) states, "Some men sell off their household property to pay off the debts incurred on booze." Males who drink excessively are chronically impoverished and do not work."<sup>49</sup>

#### **1.2.4 The role of the church in poverty reduction among Christians**

The role of the Church in socio-economic poverty reduction is centered on the divine call in the Bible. In Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV) it says "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in

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<sup>45</sup> Ministry of finance and planning. (2021). *Household poverty survey*.

<sup>46</sup> Uganda participatory poverty assessment process (2002: 13-24)

<sup>47</sup> Banks, R. (2013). *Faith-based organizations and development: A review of the literature*. *Journal of Development Studies*, 49(1), 1-15.

<sup>48</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Poverty and Inequality*.

<sup>49</sup> Mugisha, S. K. (2003). *Views of the Poor: The Perspectives of Rural and Urban Poor in Uganda as recounted through their stories and pictures*

Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord to display his splendor.”<sup>50</sup>

In Luke 4:18, Jesus declared his ministry of serving the world by quoting the same verses as the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-3). In Matthew 5:13-14, Jesus instructed his disciples to be ‘salt’ and ‘light’. Jesus performed many miracles, healing a man with leprosy (Matthew 8:1-4), raising a dead girl, and healing a sick woman (Matthew 9:18-26). In John 8:1-11, Jesus defended a woman who was supposed to be stoned to death. All the above action by Jesus establishes the foundation for the involvement of the Church in providing services in socio-economic development.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the role of the Church in economic poverty reduction, Joshua O. Ayiamba, Matthew M. Theuri, and Peter C. Mungai (2015) describe economic poverty reduction as something that is not a new concept and has its roots biblically based. The creation narrative in the book of Genesis, chapter one (vs. 26-27) establishes the mandate for the Church to be involved in the redemptive work. 52

According to Wright (2004), three major points are to be remembered in the book of Genesis 1:26-27; one Adam was created in God’s image and likeness; secondly, he (Adam) was created out of earth and God breathed in him, and finally God appointed him steward of everything and he created Adam as a co-worker to continue with the

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<sup>50</sup> Coward, E.B., Feagin, R. J.J., Allen, W.Jr. (1974): “The Culture of Poverty Debate: Some Additional Data “Social Problem, Vol. NO 5. Pp. 621-634, University of California Press.

<sup>51</sup> World Relief (2014). *Church Empowerment Zone: Integral Mission implementation: A vision seminar manual for pastors and Church Leaders*, Published by World Relief

<sup>52</sup> Joshua O, Matthew M. Theuri P, Mungai, C. (2015). *Spiritual poverty and Spiritual blindness-The correlation*, Ibru Ecumenical Centre, <https://guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/ibruecumenical-centre/spiritual-poverty-and-spiritual-blindness-the-correlation>.

Work of creation.<sup>53</sup> The Bible says Adam was introduced to a social responsibility by getting Eve out of his rib, so the two became partners. Thus, rendering social services is one of the mandates of the Church, as stipulated by the Bible, for economic poverty reduction.

Bright (1982) and Andrews (2006) have shed light on the original meaning of the Church. They refer to the word 'Church' as the Greek word 'Ecclesia', and 'Ecclesia' comes from Greek words with the root meaning "to call out". The usage meaning refers to the assembly. Andrews (2006), in his explanation, says that initially, Ecclesia was not a religious term. It was a political term that was referred to as a "Community Council" or people who stay in a vicinity or locality, called aside for a while to put strategies in place to promote the welfare of that particular village, and called out of the society to stand for the truth against the false values of the society by supporting each other.<sup>55</sup>

Andrews' explanation indicates that the political functions of the Community Council were seen as essential and can be adapted as the meaning of the word Church. The Church, based on the aforesaid description, is an institution with strategies in place to promote the welfare of people—it is an Institution that can stand for the welfare of the poor. In other words, the Church is to contribute to the welfare of the people. This scenario shows that the Church, with no strategies to promote the people, has misunderstood its role.

Andrews (2006) says Community Councils are independent, self-operating neighborhood organizations. An example of community councils being independent and self-operating is the Community Council, which was instituted through President Wilson's call and issued by the Council of National Defense in the United States of America. The role

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<sup>53</sup> Wright C.J.H. (2004). *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Downers Grove, IL, IVP

<sup>55</sup> Bright. F. (1982). *Learning from the Poor - Findings from Participatory Research*, World Bank.

The Community Council is an independent, self-operating organization that shows the Church is independent not of God and self-operating, but not in the absence of the Holy Spirit. The description above shows that the Church is an organization that can operate in a self-governing capacity. Suppose these are the qualifications and standards by which the Church should operate. Why are some Churches unable to be self-operating with full capacity to meet the needs of the community? This question can be researched.

Conner (2000) agrees with other authors who say, "The Church is a group of people called out of their homes to gather for an important meeting in the city." Biblically, in Paul's first letter to Corinthians (1 Cor 12:17 NIV), the Church is defined as the Body of Christ. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul says: 'Now you are the Body of Christ, and each of you is a part of it.' Therefore, when people talk of the Church, it is 'The Body of Christ', which means all the churches and denominations.<sup>57</sup> More so, Stan Chu Ilo (2013) says, the Church should be of the poor, a Church with the poor, a Church for the poor, and a Church on the side of the poor. The central point here is about the availability of the Church in a community to render the required services, such as reducing economic poverty.<sup>58</sup>

Timothy Sherratt and Ronald Mahurn, as quoted by World Relief (2014), in their book, linked the role of the Church to the work of Empowerment. They say, the Church has been called out from the world by Jesus Christ to take part in his redemptive work, and this redemptive work is through the proclamation of the lordship of Christ, which can virtually be done through doing good work; and this work should be complete in God's

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<sup>57</sup> Conner, R. (2000). *Costing household surveys for monitoring progress toward ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity*. World Bank by Oxford University Press. <http://go.worldbank.org/3T5PAAJ060>.

<sup>58</sup> Stan Chu Ilo (2013). *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics*, Pauline Publications Africa

Compassion. In the five marks of Mission, the first mark is the proclamation of the good news. Any good thing happening is 'Good News'; for instance, when Jesus healed the man with leprosy, it was good news, and when he fed four thousand people (Mark 8:1-13), it was good news.<sup>59</sup> In responding to the point of good work by the Church community, O'Donovan (1996) writes on the nature of good work in the sense that good work serves as the approach of bringing the best in God's plan for humanity that can be seen in the lives of his people in the families, communities, workplaces, communities and other activities that give glory to God's name.<sup>60</sup>

Mwalyo (2022), in her book '*Poverty Reduction through Christian Faith*', says, "In order for the Church to reduce economic poverty, the Church should contribute by ministering through sharing the Christian faith in Africa. The Church should teach, preach and execute activities that contribute towards poverty reduction, and assist people to come out of dependence to self-reliance." Furthermore, she says that, "the church should help people to increase their spiritual strength, train people about their lifestyle, investment, savings, and entrepreneurship and improve one's skills."<sup>61</sup> Adei (2019) further affirms that changing jobs with a focus on transformation helps people to respond to God's call and helps people to define their vision.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> World Relief (2014). *Church Empowerment Zone: Integral Mission implementation: A vision seminar manual for pastors and Church Leaders*, published by World Relief.

<sup>60</sup> O'Donovan, N. (1996). *Voices of the Poor: Crying Out for Change*. New York, N.Y, Published for the World Bank by Oxford University Press

<sup>61</sup> Mwalyo Ruth. (2022). *Poverty reduction through Christian faith*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.ifad.org/poverty/index.htm>, inequality, p. 102.

<sup>62</sup> Adei R. (2019). *The Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05*. Manchester, *Chronic Poverty Research Centre*.

Furthermore, Mwalyo (2022:67) points to ministering through Christian Faith, teaching, preaching, and implementing some activities that will likely enable people to become faithful. So, when people are faithful, their ways of doing things in the community can change. In this way, issues of corruption, poor governance, dishonesty, exploitation, fraud, unemployment, insecurity, tribalism, racialism, and gender issues will be reduced. For this, good policies will be in place to regulate the implementation of the activities, hence reducing economic poverty.

More so, Mwalyo (2022:98) continues to share more about the role of the Church in poverty reduction by saying that the Church should encourage people to do 36 roles to 'one another'. The 36 roles, for instance, help people to know who they are, be dynamic, and gender sensitive. The roles should help people improve their financial decisions and manage their businesses. Thus, empower people by helping them to accept Jesus Christ and build the capacity of their people to implement the 36 roles. The 36 roles include: love one another (John 13:34), be available to one another (Romans 12:5), accept one another (Romans 15:7), be lovingly affectionate to one another (Romans 12:10), provide for one another (Romans 12:13), be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32), spur love in one another (Hebrew 10:24), wash each other's feet (John 13:14), rejoice with one another (Romans 12:15), weep with one another (Romans 12:15--), live in harmony with one another (Roman 12:16), don't judge one another (Romans 14:13), admonish one another (Col 3:16), greet one another (Roman 16:16), wait for one another (1Cor 11:33), care for one another (1 Cor 12:25), serve one another (Gal 5:13), forgive one another (Eph 4:32), be compassionate toward one another (Eph 4:32), encourage one another (1Thessalians 5:11), submit to one another (Eph 5:21), bear with one another (Eph 4:2, Col 3:13), offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9), minister gifts to one another (1 Peter 4:10), be clothed in humility toward one another.

Glenn (2007), in his book titled 'When Charity destroys Dignity', writes about overcoming unhealthy dependency in the Christian Movement, in which he emphasizes three important roles of the Church. He says the Church should become self-reliant, self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-managing.<sup>64</sup> Glenn further says in the role of the Church towards economic poverty, the Church needs to become self-reliant with enough trained human resources who can teach, preach, and run administration.

Glenn's exhortation educates the Church to play roles that can lead to economic reduction. This point paves the way for the Church to initiate income-generating activities to become self-supporting. Glenn's encouragement also discourages the idea of total dependence on external support and the idea of training local people to stand in the pulpit to share the word of God and contribute to the extension of God's Kingdom. It means the missionary's work is not to introduce local people to Christ, but they can come to see the fruit of their work. This can happen when Church leaders are present in their areas to identify the problems together with the Christians in both the urban and rural areas and lay out the strategies to address them.

Zack (2017) quoted five roles the Church should commit herself to for economic poverty reduction. He says the Church should reduce economic poverty by educating the poor people or community to understand the Bible, exerting effort to prepare young people to know their role now, and their duties or responsibilities tomorrow. To this end, the Church should establish accessible facilities for the poor, such as recreation centers for orphans, computer centers for school dropouts, and vulnerable categories. Besides this, the Church should offer primary and secondary education opportunities for young people, and introduce small-scale businesses for women to

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<sup>64</sup> Glenn B. (2007). *When Charity destroys Dignity*, Brighton, Institute of Development Studies.

Please enable them to initiate income-generating activities that can enable them to meet their basic needs.<sup>67</sup>

Zack (2017) further says that the explanation of the role of the Church sounds great if the Church has money specifically designated for those activities. I say so because some church leaders are qualified to divert project money to other unnecessary activities for personal use. Some Churches may decide to implement projects that have no significant impact on the community if implemented. Sometimes, a project planned by many people in the rural areas can be changed by one person—a leader—for implementation.

The Centre for American Progress (2020), as quoted by Kamani (2020), says the Church in the urban areas should be a proactive organization, with different economic activities established that can create jobs for the poor. A person can indeed be proactive, but the level of proactivity of a Church worker who has been to school, read others' books, and seen what other people have done around the globe in other countries, contributes a lot, compared to those who have not.<sup>69</sup>

August (2010), in line with what Ruth (2022) reiterates, argues that the role of the Church is to preach the Good News, teach people to understand the truth of God, and to serve and defend the people. Preaching and teaching are all within the Great Communion of God (Matthew 28:18-20).<sup>70</sup> For this reason, Bosch (2011) says the role and contribution of

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<sup>67</sup> Zack T. (2017). *The Chronic Poverty Report 2004-05*. Manchester, Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

<sup>69</sup> Kamani M. (2020). *Views of the Poor: The Perspectives of Rural and Urban Poor in Tanzania as recounted through their stories and pictures*, Bern, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

<sup>70</sup> August P. (2010). *Explaining Global Poverty: A Critical Realist Approach*, London, December 7, Routledge.

The Church in the community is to get involved in the society, move beyond the walls of the Church, and work for justice and peace <sup>71</sup>

Pope Francis' (2023) keynote address in South Sudan, during their ecumenical visit with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, said that the Church leaders in South Sudan must not keep quiet on the political, social, and economic situation of the citizens.<sup>72, 50</sup> the prophetic voice of the Church about social justice must be heard. This brings us to explore the reasons for the persistence of poverty despite the Church's present role in economic poverty reduction.

Scholars like Weber (2015) have long recognized the church's role in promoting socio-economic transformation. They argue that the Protestant work ethic was a key driver of economic growth in Western societies. Chadwick (1966) supports the above view, saying, "It is rightly asserted that the church has a crucial role to play in promoting social justice and addressing poverty."<sup>74</sup>

According to Gifford (2009), it is argued that the church has a significant role in promoting economic development, particularly through its emphasis on education and entrepreneurship.<sup>75</sup> To Banks (2013), faith-based organizations are significant in providing social services and promoting the socioeconomic development of Christians <sup>76</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Bosch B. (2011). *Costing household surveys for monitoring progress toward ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.*

<sup>72</sup> Pope Francis (2023). *Speech during ecumenical visit in Southern Sudan, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.*

<sup>74</sup> Chadwick H. (1966). *The social thought of the Christian Church.* London: SCM Press.

<sup>75</sup> Gifford U. (2009). *The prosperity gospel in Africa.* *Journal of Theology and Church*, 12(1), 1-15

<sup>76</sup> Banks G. (2013). *Faith-based organizations and development: A review of the literature.* *Journal of Development Studies*, 49(1), 1-15.

Munezero (2017) shows that African churches have successfully promoted socio-economic transformation in various areas. For example, a study in Rwanda found that churches have played a crucial role in promoting economic development through microfinance initiatives.<sup>77</sup> Similarly, a study by Weirimu in Kenya in 2018 found that churches have successfully promoted education and economic empowerment among women.<sup>78</sup>

According to Madunde et al. (2022), In Uganda, Pentecostal churches are leading efforts to combat poverty, and microfinance initiatives that provide modest loans to entrepreneurs shut out of traditional banking institutions are becoming more popular. These initiatives are usually funded by churches and communities working with well-known microfinance organizations to provide loans and financial literacy training to people. Usually, churches fund these initiatives by working with already-existing financial institutions to provide loans and financial literacy training to people.<sup>79</sup> Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), for example, work with some Pentecostal churches to offer microfinance services to underprivileged groups, allowing them to start their own enterprises and oversee the loans they obtain.<sup>80</sup>

According to Chadwick (1966), In addition to microfinance, vocational training is a crucial Church method for equipping Christians with marketable skills.<sup>81</sup> In order to provide their members with beneficial skills in civil service, carpentry and joinery, dressmaking, computer operations, and agriculture, among other vital fields, the majority of churches usually host training sessions. These pre-made programs are helpful.

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<sup>77</sup> Munezero, P. (2017). *The role of churches in promoting economic development in Rwanda*. *Journal of African Studies*, 18(1), 1-12.

<sup>78</sup> Wairimu, E. (2018). *Partnerships between faith-based organizations and governments*. *Journal of Development Studies*

<sup>79</sup> Chikwira, Collin, Edson Vengesai, and Petronella Mandude. ((2022). "The impact of microfinance institutions on poverty alleviation." *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* 15, no. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Gifford, P. (2015). *The prosperity gospel in Africa*. *Journal of Theology and Church*.

Bridge the knowledge gap between education and the workforce by preparing individuals for marketable careers. To promote economic sustainability, World Vision and Tear Fund, for example, work with local churches in Northern Uganda to create and implement vocational training programs that provide gainful employment to impoverished people in rural and urban areas who were displaced by Kony's instabilities in the early 20s.

According to the *New Vision*, 18th April, 2025, establishing food banks, healthcare systems, and housing is one of the most apparent ways churches advance human wellbeing. The goal of these initiatives is to supply basic needs to those who are currently dealing with more pressing issues. For example, food banks run by several Pentecostal churches, like Rubaga Miracle Centre, give foodstuffs to slum dwellers and underprivileged people with little access to food, particularly during Christmas and Easter <sup>84</sup>. They show that solidarity is possible and successfully fights poverty by relying on their members' kindness and alliances with traders.<sup>85</sup>

According to a World Bank report (2019), Church-owned health care systems in Uganda, also called faith-based health centers, are essential in helping impoverished people receive medical treatment.<sup>86</sup> By reducing barriers to health care that are particularly prevalent in underprivileged communities, these clinics occasionally offer care for little or no cost.<sup>87</sup> Churches may work with foreign aid organizations to offer healthcare in impoverished communities, ensuring everyone in need is cared for.

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<sup>84</sup> *Newvision 18th April, 2025, vol 13, Pastor Robert Kayanja celebrates Easter with street children.*

<sup>85</sup> *Hunt, Anne. "Vatican II and the laity: Vision, challenges and opportunities." The Australasian Catholic Record 91, no. 1 (2014): 3-20.*

<sup>86</sup> *World Bank. (2019). World Development Indicators.*

<sup>87</sup> *World Health Organization. (2019). World Health Report.*

Receives care.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, to Gifford (2009), churches primarily undertake housing projects to provide homeless people, particularly the destitute, with a place to live and a fresh start.<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, the Church has welcomed developmental collaborations with governments, local and international non-governmental organizations, and other private sector entities in the current generation. Through these collaborations, Ugandan churches have increased their capacity for resources and may do even more<sup>90</sup>. As an illustration, Habitat for Humanity is a Christian housing organization that works with nearby churches to build homes at the lowest possible cost for future homeowners and involves them in the building process.<sup>91</sup> This is why the modeled system takes care of housing adequacy while ensuring the recipients have a sense of ownership.<sup>92</sup>

The literature review on the role of the Church and economic poverty reduction shows that the Church has a lot to do in the community, a role that begins with positioning herself to serve them as it is stated by Stan Chu Ilo (2013) that; the Church should be of the poor, a Church with the poor, a Church for the poor, and a Church on the side of the poor. The Church should educate people, Zack (2017), Joshua O. Ayiemba, and Matthew.

M. Theuri and Peter C. Mungai (2015) show justice by empowering low-income people and improving their destiny and living standards. Conner (2000) says that the Church should minister to God by building a relationship with God through praise, worship, thanksgiving, and minister to one another and the

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<sup>88</sup> Harvey, Claire. "Building neighborhoods where friendships flourish." *Zadok Perspectives* 163 (2024): 10-13

<sup>89</sup> Gifford, P. (2009). *Christianity and social development in Uganda*. *Journal of African Studies*, 10(1), 1-12.

<sup>90</sup> Kaggwa, S. (2016). *The role of churches in poverty reduction in Uganda: A case study of Kampala archdiocese*. *Journal of Poverty*.

<sup>91</sup> Perez, Lilian G., Cristian Cardenas, Tara Blagg, and Eunice C. Wong. "Partnerships Between Faith Communities and the Mental Health Sector: A Scoping Review." *Psychiatric Services* 76, no. 1 (2025): 61-81

<sup>92</sup> OECD (2020). *Income and poverty*. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development*.

Work. Dave Andrews (2006) says the Church should operate through denominational agencies, congregational activities, and congregants' occupations. Meanwhile, Mwalyo (2022) says that the Church should minister through Christian faith, teaching, preaching, and implementing some activities that can make them economically sustainable.

The aforementioned roles are all the roles of the Church toward economic poverty reduction. The Church is described here as an implementing body in the community, as stated by Stan Chu Ilo (2013). Is the Church an implementing body or a facilitating body? Or can the Church be a conduit through which opportunities can pass to people in the rural areas? If the Church is an implementing body, it has to be in the community to plan and make decisions. If it is a facilitating body, her role can be to make the work easier for people in the community, to know their problems, plan for them, implement, and report. Some people look at the Church as an implementer, and some look at it as a donor. So, what is the role of the Church in economic poverty reduction?

However, the church's strategies against poverty have also failed in various areas. Many church-led poverty reduction initiatives have failed to be sustainable in the long term due to a lack of funding and resources. Some Churches have often failed to engage with local communities in their poverty reduction initiatives, leading to a lack of ownership and sustainability. Also, some Churches have faced challenges of corruption and mismanagement of funds, which have hindered the effectiveness of their poverty reduction initiatives.<sup>93</sup> The aim of the study, therefore, will be to evaluate which strategies can work better in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

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<sup>93</sup> Gedeon, P. (2009). *Christianity and social development in Uganda*. *Journal of African Studies*, 10(1), 1-12.

### 1.2.5 Practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians effectively

Scholars have identified various practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians. For example, Davis and Harrel (2006) have argued that microfinance initiatives, such as savings and credit groups, can effectively promote economic empowerment.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, Kessler (2017) noted that education and vocational training programs can also help to reduce poverty among Christians.<sup>95</sup>

Socio-economic scholars such as Kimenye (2017) have highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship and business training programs in promoting economic development.<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, scholars like Freeman (2017) have further emphasized the role of community-based initiatives in providing the necessities of life, such as food banks and income-generating projects, in reducing poverty among Christians.<sup>97</sup>

In Africa, for example, specific studies such as that of Lodge (2017) have shown that churches have implemented successful poverty reduction initiatives. For example, a study in South Africa by Lodge in 2017 found that churches have established successful microfinance programs.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, a study by Luhanga in Tanzania in 2019 found that churches have implemented successful education and vocational training programs.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Davis and Harrell (2016). *Microfinance and poverty reduction in Africa*. *Journal of Microfinance*, 14(1), 1-15.

<sup>95</sup> Kessler F. (2017). *Education and poverty reduction in Africa*. *Journal of Education and Development*, 12(1), 1-15.

<sup>96</sup> Kimenye G. (2017). *Entrepreneurship and economic development in Africa*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Development*, 12(1), 1-15.

<sup>97</sup> Freeman O. (2017). *Community-based initiatives and poverty reduction in Africa*. *Journal of Community Development*, 48(1), 1-12.

<sup>98</sup> Lodge, T. (2017). *Microfinance and poverty reduction in South Africa*. *Journal of Microfinance*, 15(1), 1-15.

<sup>99</sup> Luhanga, H. (2019). *The church and economic empowerment in Africa: A review of the literature—Journal of Theology and Development*.

According to Gordon (1991), “To practically reduce poverty among Christians, church must “proclaim the good news of the kingdom to the materially poor, welcome them into the fellowship and share in their struggles”.<sup>100</sup> Bryan (2015), argues that “Those who exploit the poor and those who became poor as a result of their sinful life style need spiritual transformation that comes through the effect of the Gospel.”<sup>101</sup>

According to Cole (1976), Church leaders’ Influence and advocacy on behalf of people affected by poverty is a powerful way for church leaders to reflect the love and compassion of Christ. They can influence the government to consider the programmes to fight poverty in their national budget. The church leaders can stand in the gap for the voiceless and defenseless and save more lives than any mission program could afford. This kind of influence can be powerful locally, where poverty, homelessness, and economic injustice require the church to address the structures that may prevent the poor from improving their lives.<sup>102</sup>

Sullivan (2017) asserts that the Churches must be interested in or concerned for the poor and demonstrate Philanthropic gestures to them.<sup>103</sup> This is supported by Gifford (2009), who says that the church must criticize prophetically the unjust social-economic structures that prevent the poor from rising above their situation (Amos 5:24) and teach the need to have a non-materialistic outlook in life. Since an example is better than a precept, churches should exercise justice in their economic practices and pay.

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<sup>100</sup> Fee, Gordon D. (1991). *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.

Bryan, S. (2015). *The role of advocacy in promoting economic justice*. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 49(2), 361-375.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Cole, T. (1976). *Community development and civil society: making connections in the European context*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

<sup>103</sup> Sullivan, W. C. (2017). *Economic empowerment through entrepreneurship*. *Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 26(2), 1-15.

Wages to their employees.<sup>104</sup> Connell (2017) says churches should emphasize worldly pleasures less, suppressing materialism.<sup>105</sup>

According to Scott (1984), Investments made using church finances must be socially responsible. In order to have enough money to help the underprivileged, Christians should engage in profitable businesses that produce commodities and services. Since ignorance seriously impedes self-improvement, they are able to provide instruction in economic matters. People will better their lives with little to no assistance if they know what to do. This should be chosen over giving low-income individuals charity. "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; but teach him to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime," goes an old saying.<sup>106</sup> Helping the individual and the community we serve become self-sufficient is a better way to provide help.

To Gornik (1991), instead of focusing on individual liberty and isolation and the idea that personal initiative is the most important objective, the Church should aim for "economic and social structures which maximize fellowship and cooperation."<sup>107</sup> Scott (1991), who contends that "Pooling resources together has the potential to increase production," strongly supports Gornik. He goes on to add that both inside the Church and in the larger community, the Church should identify, foster, and encourage local skills. "Christians should not support economic systems that are profit-motivated to the detriment of human welfare," contends Waldron (1991). Rather, they ought to advocate for and support economic structures that address human needs, take into account the impoverished, as they are the targets of poverty, and work to produce

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<sup>104</sup>Gifford, P. (2009). *Christianity and economic development in Africa. Journal of International Development*, 21(5), 661-674.

<sup>105</sup> Connell, Charles W. (2017). "The Franciscan Invention of the New World." 485-488.

<sup>106</sup> John Scott (1984). *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Hants: Marshal Morgan and Scott).

<sup>107</sup> Mark R. Gornik, (1991). "The Rich and the Poor in Pauline Theology." *Urban Mission*, 9 September, p.19.

them (the poor) producers and not fatalistic consumers or predators of the bourgeois.”<sup>108</sup>

### **1.2.6 Literature Gap**

Despite the comprehensive literature as given above concerning the efforts of the church to address poverty among Christians, there is still a significant literature gap in understanding the underlying causes of poverty and the effectiveness of church-led interventions. Most existing literature has focused primarily on individual causes of poverty and isolated church-led interventions. Therefore, this study aimed to address this gap by analyzing the underlying causes of poverty among Christians, evaluating the church's role in socio-economic transformation, and identifying practical approaches that the Church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians.

### **1.3.0 Research methodology**

The researcher identified the tools used to collect the data in the field. It looks at research design, sources of information, population, sampling techniques, variable definitions, procedures for data collection, data collection instruments, duality/error control, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations, and anticipated methodological constraints encountered during the study. This is in agreement with Kothari.<sup>109</sup>

### **1.3.1 Research design**

Research Design is the plan for how the research is going to be conducted, or “Is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims

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<sup>108</sup> Waldron Scott, (1991) “*The Paterson Paradigm: Some Personal Reflection,*” *Transformation*, 8, no 4, October.

To combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure”<sup>110</sup>. The researcher used a qualitative approach regarding the nature of the data. The researcher used a questionnaire and interviews to analyze the causes of poverty and evaluate the church's role in poverty reduction among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. Interview methods were also used to interview Clergy, Lay readers, and heads of laity. While observation was used to assess the nature and intensity of poverty among Christians

### **1.3.2. Sources of information.**

#### **1.3.2.1. The Primary Data**

The researcher used primary sources to collect the relevant data required for the study; these include questionnaires, interviews, and one-on-one contact (observation).

##### **1.3.2.1.1. Questionnaires**

A questionnaire is a structured set of questions designed to gather specific information.”<sup>111</sup> This method was reserved only for those who are literate, and the interview was for those not ready to write down their answers. A set of well-formulated questions was arranged to discover the justification of the topic in the area. It was directed towards finding out the causes of poverty among Christians and the church's role in the socio-economic transformation of Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. Questions were set in an open-ended format to accumulate vast information. Those questions were categorized into priests, lay-readers, and laity. The questions for the priest were: What do you understand about the term poverty? Is poverty a problem for you? Why is it a problem? What do you think are the causes of persistent

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<sup>110</sup> Kothari C.R. (2004). *Research Methodology, Methods and Techniques*. New Age International (P) Ltd, India.

<sup>111</sup> <https://surveysparrow.com/blog/questionnaires/> Cited 25th May 2025 9:43 am

Poverty among your Christians? Lastly, what can the church do to reduce poverty among Christians? Questions for the laity were: What do you understand by the term poverty? Do you see any signs of poverty in your life? What do you think could be the cause of persistent poverty? What do you think is the role of the church in poverty reduction?

#### **1.3.2.1.2. Interviews**

A formal talk between two or more persons, usually with one person, the interviewer, asking questions to gather information, evaluate qualifications, or determine if an applicant is qualified for a job, admission, or other purposes, is called an interview.<sup>112</sup> The questions in the interview guide helped the researcher stay focused on the study's primary goal. The researcher employed this approach to interview the head of laity, clergy, lay readers, and some Christians. requirements that take into account the impoverished, as they are the objects of poverty, and that aim to make

#### **1.3.2.1.3 Observation**

This method will collect facts from the field by recognizing the aspects as they occur using the body senses. The researcher will use unstructured observation (the people being observed will be aware), and the method will become scientific because the researcher will note what will be observed.

#### **1.3.2.2. The Secondary Data**

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The researcher used different secondary sources during the data collection exercises. The researcher visited the library to get more information from books written by various scholars and read the Bible to enhance biblical teachings on the research study. The researcher also used journals, newspapers, and internet sources.

### 1.3.3 Study Population

According to Gupta (2008) “population means totality of items under consideration”.<sup>113</sup> furthermore, according to Paul & Tom (2014), “population is a total sum of all units of interests or the universe.”<sup>114</sup> The study population consisted of all Christians in Rwanyanja Church of Uganda Parish, including church leaders, members, and the community at large. The total population of Christians in the parish was estimated to be approximately 5,000 people.<sup>115</sup> But 60 respondents were chosen to represent the total study population.

#### 1.3.3.1 Characteristics of respondents

##### 1.3.3.1.1 Population of the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish Table 1

Sex/Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	2814	57%
Male	2186	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5023</b>	<b>100</b>

(Source: Primary data; Provincial Christian Census (Bameka, May 2025))

Table 1 above illustrates the population of the research study area. According to the 2025 Province of the Church of Uganda Christian Census (Bameka, 2025), Christian population projections, the estimated population is.

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<sup>113</sup> Gupta R. (2008). *Fundamentals of research and Survey*, Team Research Institute, Kenwood Press, Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>114</sup> Katamba Paul & Nsubuga Tom. (2014). *MK Basic Research Simplified for University Studies*. MK Publishers Ltd, Kampala Uganda

<sup>115</sup> Church of Uganda Provincial Census (Bameka, 2025). *Rwanyanja Church of Uganda Parish Christian population*.

### 1.3.3.1.2 Response Rate of the Respondents

Table 2

Category of respondents	Targeted Sample	Actual respondents	Response Rate (%)
Church leaders	07	05	71.4%
Head of Laity	07	07	100%
Congregation members	46	40	87%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>87%</b>

(Source: Primary Data, Questionnaire May 2025)

Table 2 shows the response rate of respondents. It shows that the entire targeted population did not participate in the study, which gave an average response rate of 87%. This was because the researcher approached the targeted respondents and asked them to participate in the survey; however, only 52 responded positively, giving a response rate of 87%, an adequate sample representation.

### 1.3.3.1.3 Age of respondents

Table 3

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	10	19.2%
26-34	16	32.0%
35-45	12	23.1%
46-55	08	15.4%
56 and above	06	13.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Primary data, Questionnaire and interview guide, May 2025)

Table 3 above indicates that the majority of the respondents, 16 (32%), were aged between 26 and 34 years, followed by 35-45 years, 12(23.1%), while the minority were

Between 46 years and above, with a frequency of 06, giving 13.4%. This means that most people responsible for church advocate programs were concentrated in two classes of mature ages, making up to 75% in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. In addition, they were more hardworking than other consulted age groups and gave complete time to respond to the questionnaires and interview guides.

#### 1.3.3.1.4 Educational background of respondents

Table 4

Level	Frequency	Percentage
PLE & UCE Certificate	30	57.8%
Diploma	15	28.8%
Graduate	05	9.6%
Post graduate	02	3.8%
Total	52	100%

(Source: Primary data; Questionnaire May, 2025)

Table 4 above indicates that the majority of the respondents, 30(57.8%), had just completed either Primary or Ordinary level and had no other employable qualifications, 15(28.8%) had diplomas, and 9.6% were graduates. In comparison, the minority, 2(3.8%), had post-graduate qualifications. This shows that most respondents had low education levels and could not effectively engage in advocacy programs against poverty. This explicitly means that education levels have a strong relationship to poverty alleviation.

#### 1.3.3.1.5 Marital status of respondents

Table 5

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	41	78.0%
Single	11	22.0%
Total	52	100%

(Source: Primary data; Questionnaire, May 2025)

The findings in Table 5 above indicated that most respondents were married, 41 (78 %), while the minority (22%) were single. This implies that most church members and leaders who served in different categories are responsible for looking after their families and liberating them from poverty. In addition, married employees were more committed to their tasks than single respondents and responded positively to church programs to alleviate poverty.

### 1.3.4 Sampling methods and techniques

Sampling methods mean “The methods of selecting samples from the population.” The researcher focused on the exuded and stratified poverty sampling methods in selecting the respondents. This is because it is quick and time-saving. The researcher looked at ways they failed to overcome poverty in their homes. The study mainly used a purposive and stratified sampling technique.

#### 1.3.4.1. Sample size determination

The study was based on qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources to analyze the variables comprehensively. Sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), and 52 members of the congregation were chosen to represent the whole target population in this study, as shown in the table below:

**Table 6. Population and sample size determination**

Category	Population	Actual Sample size	Sampling strategies
Church leaders	07	05	Purposive
Head of laity	07	07	Purposive
Congregation members	46	40	Stratified
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>52</b>	

*Source: Primary source (May, 2025)*

### **1.3.5 Variables and indicators definitions**

Variables “is a trait of an item of analysis in research”.<sup>117</sup> while indicators are ways of measuring or quantifying variables; this study investigated the role of the Church in social-economic transformation, A case study of the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. The theoretical framework for this study is intended to bring new hope to the problem of poverty among Christians and to equip them to address the situation.

### **1.3.6 Procedure for Data Collection**

Before proceeding to the field to collect data, a researcher got permission from the head of the department of theology and divinity of Uganda Christian University, bishop Barham University College, Kabale, then from the Diocesan secretary of North Kigezi as well as the parish priest of Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. He obtained a list of the entire parish's lay readers and their phone numbers, which was significant in the study as it eliminated any worry in the respondents.

### **1.3.7. Data collection instruments.**

The researcher used three methods, including Questionnaires, interviews, and observation. Since the data was “obtained from primary and secondary sources, the data gathered will be both reliable and visible”.<sup>118</sup> The strength and accountability of the data gathered were also laid down in the practical application of the structural methodology in the study during data collection.

### **1.3.8. Quality/ Error Control/Validity and Reliability**

Quality/error control “refers to the process and procedures implemented to ensure that.

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<sup>117</sup> Cited in <https://www.bachelorprint.com/methodology/types-of-variables-in-research/> 26/5/2025 3:17Pm

<sup>118</sup> Cited in <https://www.bachelorprint.com/methodology/types-of-variables-in-research/> 26/5/2025 3:20Pm

The data collected and the methods used are reliable, accurate, and valid.”<sup>119</sup> The researcher ensured the quality and accuracy of data being collected using the methodologies chosen for the study. The researcher monitored the interviewee’s appropriate behavior and other quality control aspects of the survey process to do the work efficiently. The researcher ensured that the data collection, analysis, and recording instruments were valid and reliable.

### **1.3.9 Data processing and analysis**

Data processing “involves editing and open-ended questions, and data analysis is the ordering of data into essential parts to obtain answers to research questions.”<sup>120</sup> After collecting raw data from the field, it was edited and then analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods, and the data was interpreted through inferences to answer research questions.

### **1.3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher obtained the necessary permission before commencing data collection. The researcher informed all the respondents about the topic and purpose of the study. Other ethical considerations included principles like confidentiality, informed consent, and respect and dignity for participants.

### **1.3.11. Methodological Constraints**

The study faced a shortfall in sample size as planned, which may not represent the entire population of the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. Participants could have provided socially desirable responses, which may not reflect their experiences or perceptions.

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<sup>119</sup> John W. Creswell. (2014). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications, USA.

<sup>120</sup> Hector Cuesta. (2013). *Practical Data Analysis*. Packt Publishing, Birmingham, UK.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CAUSES OF PERSISTENT POVERTY AMONG CHRISTIANS IN RWANYANJA CHURCH OF UGANDA PARISH

#### 2.0 Introduction

Chapter two presents the causes of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. It discusses the definition of poverty by viewing different respondents' understanding of the concept and context of poverty and scholarly understanding of the phenomenon of poverty.

#### 2.1 The understanding of poverty in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish

Poverty is not new among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. People in Rwanyanja Church of Uganda are mainly the “Bakiga”, calling it ‘Obwooro’, a general term for poverty. “*Obwooro*” in Rwanyanja refers to a situation in which people or a person does not have something at hand to eat or use. It is a situation when a person has no means of accessing something, when they lack something (something here refers to anything), have problems in life— socio-economic problems, have a shortage in whatever he/she wants or needs, cannot do something, has harsh living conditions, has no money to purchase things, lacks resources and inability to get them, suffering that goes beyond one’s ability, unavailability of services, state of not being able to take care of oneself, unable to meet the minimum needs, being ignorant of life and self-reliance, state of being spiritually, physically and economically poor in mind, lack of necessity needed and not having a job.<sup>121</sup>

Some of the above words mentioned by the respondents, like ‘lack’ and ‘shortage’, are not new. So, Mwalyo Ruth (2022) describes them as poverty of imagination—the situation, according to such result, leads to inability to attain well-

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<sup>121</sup> Respondents, Questionnaire May 2025

Consisting of anything more than food, clothing, and shelter. From the study findings, different respondents had various views concerning the meaning of poverty, depending on how they experienced it. For example, one of the respondents defined poverty as “the state or condition where people or communities cannot meet a minimum standard of living because they lack the proper resources.”<sup>123</sup> Other respondents defined poverty as “the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possession. This exists when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs.”<sup>124</sup>

Other respondents also think of poverty as “a state of being unable to afford basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and health care.”<sup>125</sup> Another respondent defined poverty as “the situation whereby a person or country is unable to provide basic needs or a country fails to produce sufficient products for its use.”<sup>126</sup> Another respondent defined poverty as “a state of economic or material deprivation that affects many people throughout various factors, such as famine, war, oppression, exploitation, and persecution.”<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Respondent BHS, Questionnaire 18th May, 2025

<sup>124</sup> Respondent AK, Questionnaire 22nd May, 2025

<sup>125</sup> Respondent JB, Questionnaire 27th May, 2025

<sup>126</sup> Respondent OM, Questionnaire 19th May, 2025

<sup>127</sup> Respondents GK and RT, Interview guide 20th May, 2025

## 2.2 The causes of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

Table 7:

Causes of poverty	Frequency	Percentage
Illiteracy/Low levels of education	20	38.5%
Diseases/lack of improved health facilities	08	15.3%
Laziness	04	7.7%
Insufficient land for cultivation	04	7.7%
Big family size	06	11.5%
Hopelessness	05	9.6%
Wrong interpretation of the bible	03	5.8%
High cost of living	02	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Primary data, Questionnaire, May 2025)

Table 7 above explains the analysis of the causes of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. This analysis was conducted on 52 respondents. The researcher administered the collection of data.

### 2.2.1 Illiteracy/Low levels of education

The 20(38.4%) respondents associate illiteracy as the leading factor that contributes to persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. One of the interviewed respondents is quoted: “We know that if a person is illiterate, one is likely to miss many opportunities in life, including one’s rights. The understanding of an illiterate person is contrary to the understanding of people who are literate or informed. Our place is less developed because we are lacking educated people.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Respondent TK, Interview guide May 2025

The comment made by the interviewee above signifies that the respondent knew the importance of education. Wage (2008) and Apt (2007), as cited by Stephane Afranie (2011), associate the factor of poverty with illiteracy.<sup>129</sup> Mwalyo Ruth (2022) says that illiteracy is not confined to the issue of reading and writing only, but also involves financial illiteracy (the situation in which a person knows how to manage whatever money he/she has).<sup>130</sup> Stan (2013) equally says that illiteracy is a symptom of poverty and the causes are linked to; lack of schools in the village, a lack of teachers trained as primary and secondary teachers, gender discrimination in the families, village and countries through stereotypes of primitive cultural values and inadequate understanding of the importance of education etc.

Illiteracy as ranked number one proves that it is the root cause of persistent poverty in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish because an illiterate person cannot be offered a white-collar job; he/she can earn a substantial amount of money that can enable him/her to save some. The person knows nothing about one's rights, the importance of education, or going to the hospital for medication. So, illiteracy is the primary factor for persistent poverty in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

### **2.2.2 Diseases and lack of improved health facilities**

Just like the issue of illiteracy, some respondents in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda ranked disease prevalence and lack of improved health facilities as the second leading cause of persistent poverty, 08 (15.3%). The second highest number of respondents on this cause of poverty gives the impression that diseases and lack of improved health facilities are a significant factor for persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. This is what one of the respondents of the interview guide had to say,

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<sup>129</sup> Stephen Afranie. (2011). *Persistence of Poverty in Rural Ghana: Culture of Poverty Perspective*. New York.

<sup>130</sup> Mwalyo Ruth (2022). *Poverty reduction through Christian faith*. Oxford University Press

“I want to tell you that a lack of health facilities is bad. Many people die here in Kyaburere of malaria. The health center II lacks essential drugs, and the private clinics are costly for the poor people unless we sell part of our small lands.”<sup>132</sup>

Lack of improved health facilities is a global concern because it falls within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) number 3, which says, “Good health and well-being”.<sup>133</sup> People are expected to be healthy in body. For this reason, the government and socio-economic organizations sensitize the communities about it in many books and articles that have been developed about health.

Burkey (2000) makes an illustration of the disease as a form of vicious cycle in which there are other factors, other than lack of health facilities, causing illnesses in low-income families and communities. He depicts that a disease can lead to poor health, and when there is poor health, it contributes to low production. Low production eventually leads to low income, and when there is low income, it leads to low taxes for the government and a lack of health facilities.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, whether endemic or epidemic diseases, as explained by Burkey (2000), diseases or lack of improved health facilities are one of the causes of persistent poverty in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish.

### **2.2.3 Failure to apply family planning and large family size**

Some respondents of this study mentioned a big family size as one of the causes of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. It is ranked number three with 06 (11.5%). This ranking indicates that the population in the study area is still adhering to their cultural beliefs that a large family size is another source of wealth. The issue of enormous size and how it is perceived in the community as the cause

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<sup>132</sup> Respondent GJ interview guide May 2025

<sup>133</sup> Sustainable development goals by 2030, cited from [http//www.who.health.global](http://www.who.health.global)

<sup>134</sup> Burkey Stan (2000). *People First. Guideline to Self-Reliant, Participatory Rural Development*, Zed Books

Poverty is not a new phenomenon to be discussed. Some writers have written about it, describing its benefits and disadvantages. However, Michael (1989) refers to a family as an intimate kin-based group comprising parents and their children.<sup>135</sup> Howard (2015) further gives the types of families, such as nuclear and extended family.<sup>136</sup>

Due to the present high standards of living that require parents to focus on enabling children to have access to quality education and health care services for the family, household members realize that a big family size becomes difficult regarding accessibility to quality basic services and meeting socioeconomic needs. Thus, based on the above, the big family has nothing at hand to save. Identifying a big family size as a factor for persistent poverty in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish aligns with the theory, which supports how big family size contributes to socio-economic poverty. Bradshaw (2006) says that the above theory is rooted in the culture of poverty, which suggests that poverty is instigated by the transmission of beliefs, values, and some of the skills that individuals must keep moving from generation to generation. Poverty can be transmitted through beliefs, values, and other cultural aspects.<sup>137</sup>

One important thing that comes to mind when listening to a prominent family's stories is how the head of the family supports the family members. The head of a big family may require enough resources to meet the family members' basic needs, such as money to pay school fees, medicine, clothes, etc. If there is no ability to afford the resources, it can make household members hopeless.

#### **2.2.4 Hopelessness**

Hopelessness is one of the challenges that contributes to persistent poverty. People

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<sup>135</sup> Michael Perry. (1989). *The economics of poverty: Explanatory theories to inform practice*, *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment*.

<sup>136</sup> Howard Dean. (2015). *Theories of Poverty: A Comparative Analysis*, Kuwait Chapter of *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*; Vol. 1, No.6.

<sup>137</sup> Bradshaw, C. (2006). *The Culture of Poverty*. *Vilnius University Journals*; Vol 215. No. 4 pp. 1-25

Frequently talk about hope, and we need to encourage people to have hope; for instance, in the Church, the word hope is repeated several times. Hopelessness was ranked equally with big family size by respondents 5(9.6%). Table 7 above shows that hopelessness is one of the factors of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish.

Although hopelessness is not ranked higher than the other factors, people in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish seem to have the spirit of hopelessness. This is observed from how some people talk when they encounter certain situations and begin to express themselves negatively. For instance, during the interview, expressions that people say about themselves are captured below; “Nothing good will ever happen to me”, “We are poor and we will remain poor”, “This is what God has chosen for me”, “We are already in the evening hours, nothing good will happen to me again.”<sup>138</sup> The expression above by the respondents can be described as killers of the expected socio-economic change that should be happening in the community.

Similarly, about the ranking and declaration of hopelessness as one of the factors that can fuel persistent poverty, hopelessness, according to the Cambridge dictionary and Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, defines hopelessness as the feeling or state of being without hope in a particular activity. Lisnj et al. (2020) link hopelessness to loneliness; the state of being lonely, anxiety, worry, fear, dread, uneasiness, overwhelming stress, difficult pressure, fatigue, and extreme tiredness.<sup>139</sup> Mwalyo Ruth (2022) in her book says hopelessness is the state of mind where the person feels that there is nothing anyone can do to change his or her dire situation. 140

Stephen Franie (2011) analyzed the assessment of the achievement level of respondents. Life expectancy says “hopelessness happens to the poor in a persistent situation.

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<sup>138</sup> *Interview guide, May 2025*

<sup>139</sup> *Lisnj et al. (2020). Biblical Perspectives on Wealth Creation, Poverty Reduction, and Social Peace and Justice. July 2003, Vol. 20, No. 3. Sage Publications, Ltd.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid Mwalyo Ruth (2022)*

Failure classified under the “culture of poverty”.<sup>141</sup> Economic theories as quoted by Alex Addae (2019), Jung and Smith (2017) and Aneel Karnani (2011) claims that a variety of causes, including capitalism, a dysfunctional market, social and political pressures, individual behavior traits, welfare reliance, economic underdevelopment, and a lack of human capital development, are what cause poverty.<sup>142</sup>

So, the issue of hopelessness falls within individual behavior because some people do not trust or value themselves. They see themselves as useless people without the skills to change bad things into better ones. These types of people have given up and are trapped.<sup>143</sup> If a person surrounds himself/herself without struggle, that person’s situation will not change. The person will continue to experience a hard life, which can lead to economic poverty. This brings us to the next topic, which is the Cultural Values.<sup>144</sup>

### 2.2.5 Laziness

Idleness, sluggishness, lethargy, languor, and other terms are synonyms for lazy, which is the state of not wanting to work or exert any effort. According to Collins' definition, it is the refusal to put out effort and to perform any labor that we believe would be inconvenient or challenging. It is the urge to remain idle and accomplish nothing. Table 7 above emphasizes the result of the ranking of laziness 4(7.6%), whether it contributes to the persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda or not.

So, the analysis and ranking of laziness is not a new development because some writers have written about it. Mwalyo (2022) cited Wright in her book ‘*Poverty Eradication*.

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<sup>142</sup> Korankye, Alex (2019). *Journal of poverty Investment and Development Vol.48:*

<sup>143</sup>Jung, S. Y., and Smith, R. (2007) "The economics of poverty: Explanatory theories to inform practice", *Journal of Human Behaviour in the Social Environment*, 16(1-2)

<sup>144</sup>Aneel Karnani (2011): *Fighting Poverty Together. Rethinking Strategies for Business, Governments, and Civil Society to Reduce Poverty. Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan New York*

*Through Christian Faith in Africa, which outlined and linked the causes of poverty according to biblical literature to laziness.* Bryant (2011) quoted Johnson (1998), who examines the causes of poverty in Tanzania, comparing the view of the community and World Vision staff. In the comparison, the community in Tanzania agreed with the view that laziness is a determinant of poverty, and World Vision disagrees that laziness can lead to persistent poverty.<sup>146</sup>

It is complex and unclear why laziness cannot contribute to poverty, as stated by World Vision, because laziness is idleness, sluggishness, and other factors. If a person is idle, where can this person get food to eat? How can this person get some of his necessities? The support that an idle person gets is just for consumption, without surplus. Even the Bible says, “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat” 2Thessalonian 3:10 NIV. The concept of laziness is not a new phenomenon among people in the community of the Rwanyanja church of Uganda. Community members know what it means to be idle and how idleness affects homes. That is why older adults encourage their children not to marry a lazy boy or a girl.

Based on this, the respondents consider laziness to be one of the factors causing persistent socio-economic poverty. Therefore, Burkey (2000) analyzed poverty factors with development officers in Uganda, and they also identified laziness as one of the local factors contributing to persistent economic poverty. Some other factors are placed under national, meaning they are caused at the national level, and others are caused at the international level. This shows that there are levels of factors for laziness that are influenced locally, others caused at the national level, and others caused at the international level.<sup>147</sup> So, this study is not designed to trace out the factors at the national and international levels, but is designed for the rural areas. So, the ranking of laziness shows that laziness is one factor contributing to persistent poverty.

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<sup>146</sup> Bryant (2011). *Understanding and reducing persistent poverty among the youth in Uganda*, Fountain Publishers, Kampala.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid Burkey Stan. (2000)

Among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda.

### **2.2.6 Insufficient land for cultivation**

Some respondents 4, 7.6%) said, “Another cause of persistent poverty among Christians is little land for cultivation for food crops and cash crops, which causes them to lack enough food for their families and a source of their income.”<sup>148</sup> According to them, there are Christians who do not have enough land for cultivating, and it is because they rely on the land, they rent from landlords where they are not allowed to grow perennial crops like bananas or cash crops like coffee. Most Christians practice poor farming methods, which affect their production. For example, during the rainy season, most of their crops are destroyed by soil erosion. When it comes to harvesting, less was realized, which could not sustain them for food and get surplus for sale, thus leading to a vicious cycle of poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

### **2.2.7 Wrong interpretation of the bible**

Some respondents 3, 5.8%) said that “some Christians are poor because of their wrong interpretation and understanding of the Bible.”<sup>149</sup> According to them, there are some Christians who misinterpret the scriptures, for instance, Matthew 5:3, which talks about being poor in spirit; they think that they should be poor in this World in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven. However, they forget that they are still on the earth, and that they need to work hard so that they can have a better life as Paul says, “For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: If a man will not work, he shall not eat” (2Thessalonians 3:10).

The above respondent’s ideas relate to Akintola's (2012) argument: "The Bible is the foundation for Christian teachings about the poor and the rich. Unfortunately, some wrong teachings abound in modern times, which include: prosperity is a sign of

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<sup>148</sup> Respondents ML, NJ, KL, and AK, Questionnaire on May 25, 2025

<sup>149</sup> Respondents SJ, BM & FP-, Questionnaire on 25th May, 2025

God's blessings; poverty is a sign of godliness; and poverty is a curse from God. Some even go to the extreme by teaching that genuine Christians can never be poor."<sup>150</sup> According to that argument and the respondents' ideas, wrong interpretations of scriptures could be the root cause of poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish.

### **3.2.8 High Cost of Living**

Some of the respondents explained that, "most of the Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda are poor because of the high cost of living."<sup>151</sup> Due to the country's economic situation, such as high taxes on goods and services, prices have increased, causing the cost of living to be high. Even those with some income still struggle to meet their needs due to the high cost of living, which affects them. For example, the cost of necessities such as education, goods and services, healthcare, and food has become much higher compared to previous years. Because of this situation, the family has been dramatically affected and cannot sustain itself or even support the Church, as it relies on the same families to bring offerings to the church to meet its daily basic expenditures. Due to this situation, some families cannot stand alone; they need help from the church, which also depends on contributions from its Christians. Therefore, Christians find themselves suffering greatly from poverty, which affects their faith in particular, and in turn, this affects the church in general.

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<sup>150</sup> Samuel Olugbenga Akintola. (2012). *God, Church and Poverty in A Post- Modern World: A Study of Acts 11: 27-30*

<sup>151</sup> Respondents JR and GJ Questionnaire on 20th May, 2025

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIANS IN RWANYANJA CHURCH OF UGANDA PARISH

#### 3.0 Introduction

This Chapter focuses on the role of the Church in the socio-economic transformation of Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish. It includes an introduction, the mandate and purpose of the Church, and the challenges facing the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda's efforts to reduce poverty among Christians.

#### 3.1 The Purpose and Mandate of the Church in Poverty Reduction

The book of Deuteronomy says, "There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be open-handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11 NIV). This statement is also found in Matthew (26:11 NIV): "The poor you will always have, but you will not always have me". The book of Deuteronomy encourages the Israelites to worship God when they enter the Promised Land and treat the Israelites in the Promised Land. Verse 11 and 4 contradict because verse 11 that says, "There will always be the poor among you" and verse 4 says, "However, there should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you." Verse 5 makes it clear that if only they fully obey the Lord God and carefully follow the instruction that He gives. If they do not obey Him, low-income people will remain among them.

The Gospel, according to Matthew 26:1-13, speaks about how the priests plotted against Jesus. According to the Bible, on his arrival in Bethany to visit his friend called Simon for the Passover feast, a woman known in the Gospel of John as Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, broke a bottle of perfume and poured it on Jesus' feet, and the disciples described it as a waste. However, Jesus knew the heart of the woman. Jesus

Told them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me (NIV)". In verse 11, he says, "The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me (NIV)." The response of Jesus here is recognition of what the woman did in love for him.

The Book of Isaiah (61:1-3 NIV) says: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord to display his splendor".

The quotation above refers to Jesus because when Jesus stated his Ministry on earth in the Gospel according to Luke (4:18 NIV), we see that Jesus, when in Nazareth, went into the synagogue, as was his custom, he stood up to read. He read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in verse (18 NIV) "The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, release the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor".

Zack (2017), as cited by Kamani (2020), cited five areas of operation for which the Church exists to perform. He says the Church exists to educate the poor about the Bible, so that the poor should have knowledge of the Bible stories, and prepare the young and older adults through education programs to know what they should do today and what they will do tomorrow. Secondly, serve the poor by providing accessible facilities to the poor, such as empty Church buildings as recreation centers for orphans, and establish computer centers for the most vulnerable categories.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Ritvasky Zack (2017). The economy of God Living Stream Ministry. USA.

Conner (2000) also says the Church includes ministering to God by building the broken relationship with God through praises, worship, thanksgiving, and ministering to one another and the world. Conversely, Olidipo J. (2000) a Research Consultant wrote an article on the roles of the Church in poverty mitigation in Africa with a focus on the mission of the Church based on Jesus' statement in Luke (4:18-19) "The spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." He continues to say that the mandate of the Church includes mobilizing people, enlightening people, or adapting the ways and approaches of sustainable development innovation. The strategy of mobilizing local people to understand new inventions can make people move away from their old ways of understanding to a new paradigm shift; for example, moving from inside to outside. The above descriptions of the purpose and mandate of the Church bring us to see what the Church in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish is doing to reduce poverty.

### 3.2 The role of the church in the socio-economic transformation of Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish

Table 8

Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	40	76.9%
Preaching	22	42.3%
Establishing educational institutions	28	53.8%
Others	08	15.3%

Source: Primary Data; questionnaire May, 2025

Based on the declaration of Jesus's ministry to reduce poverty in St Luke 4:17-18, he says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and

recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor".

The practical conversions of what Jesus said are found in Matthew (4:23), in which Jesus healed diseases and sickness, and in Matthew (8:1-4). He touched the man with leprosy, Matthew (9:27-29) healed the blind, and Matthew (15:29-39) fed the four thousand people. John (8:1-8) defended the woman who was to be stoned to death. These practical actions of Jesus established the foundation for the involvement of the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish in the implementation and support of socioeconomic activities in the community as strategies to reduce economic poverty.

Thus, the respondents in this study were asked to list some of the economic activities that the church implements in the rural areas as strategies to reduce economic poverty. Along the same lines, they also listed some challenges each diocese faced during the implementation.

The respondents in the believe that agriculture 40(76.9%), preaching 22(46.1%) trainings/teaching 24(46.2%), establishing schools 28(53.8%) and health facilities 10(19.2%) are being supported and implemented by the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda as part of its contribution towards socio-economic transformation

### **3.2.1 Agriculture**

According to Wikipedia, agriculture incorporates crop and livestock production to provide labor and produce diversified products such as food and cash crops. The purpose is to sustain life through the provision of food and to build strong economies through trade.

With the above explanation on agriculture, the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish supports agricultural projects, especially coffee farming in the communities, by supplying free coffee seedlings to enable Christians. Agriculture projects are very crucial due to their importance. Agricultural projects

Take place on land. According to Investopedia by James Chen (2022), in traditional economics, land is a factor of production along with capital and labor. Land ownership offers the titleholder the right to any natural resources within their boundaries.

Burkey (2000) quotes the argument that poverty exists because poor people lack modern agricultural techniques. What can be the next option if modern techniques do not exist in rural areas? Without mechanized tools, people cannot wait until modern techniques are available. Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish should encourage rural people to work as a team by joining hands to work as groups to increase production. Notably, production can be for consumption and some for surplus for the market, even if it is not, as it would be like the production of modern techniques.

### **3.2.2 Preaching**

According to the Cambridge dictionary, preaching is trying to persuade others to believe in a particular belief or follow a particular way of life. Merriam-Webster describes it as arguing the acceptance or abandonment of an idea or action. Preaching is one of the roles of the church. It is through preaching that the messages of socio-economic transformation are preached to people. Jesus also stated his ministry of deliverance through preaching in (Mark 1:15 NIV) as he says, “the time has come, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.”

Equally, in the gospel according to Luke 4:18 NIV), Jesus declared his ministry through preaching, quoting Isaiah 61:1-3 NIV) in which he says, “the spirit of the lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, release the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the lord’s favor.” Preaching is a tool through which messages of socio-economic transformation can be passed to socially, economically, and politically marginalized people. The gospel can reach the oppressed, the well-to-do, and other social groups through preaching messages of hope and reconciliation.

Categories of people.

Therefore, when asked what activities the church was doing to uplift the socio-economic standards of the Christians in Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, 22(42.3%) of respondents said, “In every social gathering, there is preaching by the Reverend as well as Lay-readers and preaching is always comprehensive because they educate the people for instance on the importance of education, health services, self-reliance and economic programs. People are being encouraged through preaching to work together as a team, to treat people equally, love each other, and live according to Christian values.”<sup>154</sup>

Based on the importance of preaching, Mwalyo (2022) says, “ministering through Christian faith, teaching, preaching, and implementing some activities is likely to enable people to become faithful. Faithfulness is essential because a faithful person does things according to the Bible's instructions.”<sup>155</sup>

### **3.2.3 Establishment of primary education**

This study also found that the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish establishes primary education programs in some areas. Primary education is typically the first stage of formal education after pre-school. So, 28(53.8%) respondents said that the church contributes to reducing poverty by promoting education for the children of Christians.

Education is critical because it introduces people to new things. (Matthew 5:1-16). When Jesus started his ministry on the earth, he taught his disciples in preparation for the future. He introduced to them different types of challenges they will encounter and the outcomes they will have when they resist those challenges.

The involvement of the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish in education programs is very.

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<sup>154</sup> Respondent HN questionnaire May 2025

Vital because, as Mwalyo (2022) concluded in her book, poverty results from being unable to read and write because people who cannot read and write have few chances to get skilled jobs, which can enable them to build their livelihoods. What comes to mind about education revolves around the issue of the ownership of the school. Who owns the school? Do people in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish understand that the community should own the schools? Are the parents willing to pay school fees so that teachers can be paid out of it? Are community members involved in decision-making for the school? Are the teachers in those schools well-trained?

The establishment of schools is not the end of the journey of reducing poverty; it is the most crucial element in establishing and owning schools. The ownership of schools should be ensured. Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish cannot do it alone. It needs to work together with the community members to find remedies. This work can be done through meetings with the local leaders without forgetting the issue of gender, Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), board members, and other stakeholders such as the policy-making bodies of the education sector.<sup>156</sup>

### 3.3 Challenges facing the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish in its attempt to reduce poverty among Christians

Table 9

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate Church resources	40	76.9%
Lack of well-trained church workers	30	57.5%
Lack of market for agricultural products	25	48.1%
Lack of adequate means of transport and communication	15	28.8%

(Source: primary Data, questionnaire May 2025)

<sup>156</sup> Oladipo Julius. *The Role of the Church in Poverty Alleviation in Africa.* (October/December 2000, Vol. 17, No. 4). Sage Publications, Ltd.

The second issue centers on the difficulties the parish experiences in serving the community after learning about the Rwanyanja church of Uganda's role in socioeconomic development through preaching, school establishment, and agricultural initiatives.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a challenge is a circumstance that tests a person's abilities because it requires a lot of mental or physical work to complete satisfactorily. The interview guide and questions were used to determine the difficulties the dioceses encountered.

Table 9 above shows the challenges the respondents identified: absence of transportation and communication resources, inadequate resources, lack of well-trained Church workers, and lack of a market for agricultural products.

### **3.3.1 Lack of adequate means of transport and communication**

The respondents identified a lack of adequate means of transport and communication as one of the challenges facing the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. This means local transport is a problem. People cannot attend meetings on time because pastoral work is difficult. The local situation is also known to have a poor transport system, underdevelopment of transportation, and insufficient public transportation.

According to the respondents, an absence of transportation and communication resources, including cars or Lorries that can carry the produce, especially coffee, from rural villages to the processing centers and markets in the urban towns, such as Rukungiri Municipality. It also includes a lack of mobile phone network connections in rural areas like MTN and Airtel, where the produce owners can contact customers and transporters. On the other hand, the Reverend of the Rwanyanja church of Uganda said that the parish has only one motorcycle to use in pastoral ministry in all six sub-parishes. Moreover, most church leaders in the parish do not have laptops or internet connections in their offices; therefore, communication is a huge problem.

When the respondents ranked the absence of transportation and communication resources, out of fifty-two respondents, 15(28.8%) believed that the absence of transportation and communication resources, is a massive challenge in the rural areas of Katerampungu and Kyaburere, and this hinders their work.

Based on the importance of means of transport and communication, Jean Rodrique (2016) says, “When the transport system is efficient, it provides socio-economic opportunities; but when it is not in place, the opportunities are reduced, and quality of life becomes low.”<sup>157</sup> So, the absence of means of transport and communication in the Church is a massive challenge because the priests or traders cannot easily reach communities far away from the Church and the market. The priests' failure to reach those far away can be due to a absence of transportation and communication resources. People are not connected with traders in the towns due to a absence of transportation and communication resources. So, means of transport and communication are a challenge in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda.

### **3.3.2 Inadequate church resources**

The dictionary defines resources as a source of assistance, support, or supply, particularly one that is easily accessible when needed. The word resources, according to <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/resources>, is derived from an old French word that means "relief" or "recovery," which is undoubtedly related to the concept of a resource or anything that provides essential assistance. Another name for it is a natural resource.

Matoc (2018) defines natural resources as “something which refers to anything obtained from the land in terms of its physical environment to meet human, economic, and social needs through the utilization of existing natural resources in the country.”<sup>158</sup> Matoc

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<sup>157</sup> Jean Rodrique (2016). *Strategy for effective church growth: Role of leadership for effective ministry*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

<sup>158</sup> William Matoc (2018). *The effect of IMF and World Bank programmes on poverty*,

Gives two characteristics of natural resources: resources that are not renewable. Sunlight, wind, water, and forests are examples of renewable resources; fossil fuels (petroleum, natural gas, and minerals) are examples of non-renewable resources. Within natural resources are biotic resources, which refer to any life form within nature, such as humans, animals, and plants. Secondly, abiotic resources, such as metal, rocks, and stones, refer to natural resources without life.

Although the explanation of natural resources by Matoc (2018) is crucial, the lack of resources in this study refers to a lack of money at hand by the church to implement projects that can improve the economic status of poor Christians. Additionally, it also refers to a lack of trained human personnel in the rural areas who can proactively generate money that can enable them to reduce poverty in the parish.

Greg (2021), in his book titled 'Why Africa is Poor and What Africans can do about it', declines to acknowledge the statement that Africa is poor. He says Africa is poor because African leaders have used the resources in Africa to enrich the elite, spread corrupt practices, and divert development energy and focus.<sup>159</sup> Greg's (2021) further refers to political leaders who misappropriate the resources.

So, respondents 40(76.9%), mentioning inadequate church resources in this study, mainly focus on the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, which lacks money to do some activities, such as training Church workers who can work effectively in the Church and bring positive socio-economic changes. Lack of resources is a massive challenge because without money and trained human resources, progress can hardly be realized. Therefore, top leadership in the parish needs to think it over and plan accordingly to ensure that the parish has money for project implementation and training of the Church.

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*University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), Helsinki. (n.d.).*

<sup>159</sup> *Freedman, Greg (2021). Rural livelihoods and poverty reduction strategies: Four African countries', Journal of Development Studies 40(4), 1-3.*

### **3.3.3 Untrained Church Workers**

The other challenge this study identifies as ranked by the respondents is the challenge of untrained Church workers in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. In other words, for the untrained, these terms are inexpert, unqualified, inexperienced, and others. The issue of untrained Church workers is linked to a lack of proper education, especially in socio-economic and community development programs. Burkey (2000) says, "Lack of education is also linked to illiteracy. When a person is untrained, it is due to a lack of education, due to a lack of schools or school fees." Burkey further says, "lack of education contributes to lack of knowledge, skills, awareness, self-confidence, innovation, and independence. "

Hence, this challenge was ranked by the majority, 40(76.9%) respondents, during the study. Therefore, the point of Burkey (2000), in which he says lack of education is also linked to illiteracy, is notable. When a person is untrained, it is due to a lack of education, resulting from a lack of schools or school fees. Furthermore, he argues that lack of education contributes to lack of knowledge, skills, awareness, self-confidence, and innovation, which brings the researcher to the point out that untrained Church workers are a big problem because the challenge of lack of knowledge and skills cannot create opportunities for the bright future of the Church. Thus, the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish is exposed to any forthcoming danger for other mushrooming churches. Training needs to be done so Church workers can become economically informed, informed of their work, and aware of contemporary issues.

### **3.3.4 Lack of market for agricultural products**

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This study found that a lack of a market is one of the challenges people face in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. The word market has numerous definitions.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, it is a location or occasion when people get together to purchase and sell goods; it is a system, organization, producer, social interaction, or infrastructure that facilitates trade between participants. So, the researcher links this study to the definition of market made by the Cambridge dictionary. These definitions reveal that there are no rural areas where people can sell their products and generate money to assist them.

Michael J. Boyle & Skylar Clarine (2023) say, “lack of a market is a situation with inefficient distribution of goods and services in the free market due to insufficient information available for people to know.”<sup>162</sup> Secondly, it is due to the situation when one party has much control over the market. Moreover, the processed solution includes the government's involvement in imposing solutions, which can be done through a participatory or collective action approach, and other solutions. Michael J. Boyle and Skylar Clarine's (2023) focus on insufficient information available for people, which is very relevant because people in rural areas need to be informed of what is needed and what is not. For instance, if a community of Christians needs to buy maize and other crops from another community, this information should be passed through church services to the congregation, and other socio-economic development information should be prepared for it.

Therefore, in light of the above descriptions by other writers, 25(48.1%) of respondents mentioned a lack of market for agricultural products. It portrays that the issue of the market is a considerable challenge. Secondly, it also displays that things in the parish must be sold in the markets. However, there are no markets for them. The results indicate that the need for the market in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish is a primary concern in bringing about socio-economic transformation.

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<sup>162</sup> Michael J. Boyle & Skylar Clarine (2023). *Christianity and poverty*, in *For Ordinary Christians.org*, viewed 07 February 2014.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Practical approaches that the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish

#### 4.0 Introduction

Chapter four is about the practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians effectively. The chapter presents the third objective of the study: to identify and analyze practical approaches that the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda. The respondents were asked what practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians effectively. The responses are indicated in Table 10 below.

#### 4.1 Practical approaches that the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish

Approaches	Frequency	Percentage
Training church workers in socio-economic programs	34	65.3%
Alternative funding and partnership with other development partners	43	82.7%
Acquiring affordable means of transport and communication	14	26.9%
Partnership with local businesses and associations to increase market	24	46.1%
Encouraging hard work and discouraging laziness	44	84.6%
Establishing schools and improving the education system	38	73.1%
Establish a well-founded health facility	13	25.0%
Fostering hope and empowering Christians	15	28.8%

(Source: Primary data, May 2025)

##### 4.1.1 Training church workers in socio-economic programs

According to the respondents, 34(65.3%), especially church leaders, one of the challenges facing the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish in its attempt to socially and economically

Transform the lives of Christians due to a lack of trained church workers to effectively implement church programs meant for poverty reduction among Christians. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), “training and development programs can help to build the capacity of the church workers, enabling them to contribute to social and economic transformation of their communities effectively.”<sup>163</sup> Respondents 34(65.3%) suggested that the church can organize workshops, seminars, and conferences to equip its workers with the necessary skills and knowledge to serve the community effectively.

For instance, the church can invite experts to provide training in community development, project management, and leadership skills. This can help build church workers' confidence and competence, enabling them to implement social and economic transformation programs effectively. This is in line with Patrick (2017), who says, “The church can encourage mentorship and coaching programs, where experienced church workers can guide and support less experienced ones”<sup>164</sup>

#### **4.1.2 Alternative funding and partnership with other development partners**

The majority of respondents, 43(82.7%), suggested that the church can also address the challenge of inadequate resources by exploring alternative funding sources and partnerships. This view aligns with a study by Kiiza et al (2018), “Churches can make partnerships with local and international organizations to access funding and resources that can support their social and economic transformation initiatives.”<sup>165</sup> The church can also engage in fundraising activities, such as events and campaigns to raise money for its activities.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup>Kouzes and Posner (2017). *The leadership challenge: How to keep people motivated and focused*. Jossey-Bass.

<sup>164</sup> Patrick (2017). Kiiza, J., Kaggwa, E., & Ssemogerere, P. (2018). *Partnerships and resource mobilization for church-based community development initiatives*. *Journal of Development and Christian Leadership*, 12(1), 231-245.

<sup>165</sup> Kiiza et al (2018)

<sup>166</sup>O'Connor, D. (2017). *Effective resource management in church organizations*. *Journal of Church and State*, 20(1), 175-190.

Moreover, the church can prioritize its activities and focus on the most crucial needs of the community. As O'Connor (2017) noted, "Prioritization is essential in resource management, as it enables organizations to allocate resources effectively and efficiently."<sup>167</sup> By prioritizing its activities and focusing on the most crucial needs, the church can ensure that its limited resources are used effectively to socially and economically transform the lives of Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish.

#### **4.1.3 Acquiring affordable means of transport and communication**

Respondents 14(26.9%) suggested that the church can address the challenge of a lack of means of transport and communication by purchasing affordable means of transport, such as motor-cycles, and investing in communication technology. According to the study by Nalyanga et al (2019), "Access to transport and communication is critical for rural development and poverty reduction."<sup>168</sup> The church can also explore alternative transport options such as bicycles to facilitate the movement of church workers and during pastoral visits <sup>169</sup>

Additionally, some respondents suggested that the church can invest in technology to enhance communication among its members and the wider community. For instance, the church can use social media platforms, mobile phones, and email to disseminate information and mobilize resources. This is in line with Gere and Mwangi (2017). According to the respondents, by investing in transport means and technology, the church can improve its ability to reach out to the community and provide essential services.

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<sup>167</sup> Respondents' questionnaire, May 2025

<sup>168</sup> Nalyanga et al (2019). *The role of church-based organizations in promoting agricultural development in rural Uganda. Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 50(2), 205-221.

<sup>169</sup> Respondents' questionnaire May 2025

#### 4.1.4 Partnership with local businesses and associations to increase market

Some respondents, 24(46.1%), said that the church can address the challenge of a lack of market for agricultural products by partnering with local businesses, farmers, associations, and government agencies. For example, some respondents gave the example of “CAWOCOM,” a company that buys coffee directly from farmers at relatively high prices and takes care of processing rather than Individual farmers transporting their coffee to processing centers. According to the study by Nyanga’a et al (2018), “Partnerships between churches, local businesses, and government agencies can help to create a market for agricultural products and improve the livelihoods of rural communities.”<sup>170</sup>

To some respondents, “the church can provide training and capacity building programs for its members on agricultural best practices, market access, and business skills.”<sup>171</sup> This can help enhance local farmers' competitiveness and improve their market access (Wainaina et al, 2029). Furthermore, the church can explore alternative marketing channels, such as online platforms, to reach a broader market and improve the sale of agricultural products.<sup>172</sup>

#### 4.1.5 Encouraging hard work and discouraging laziness

The majority of respondents (congregants), 44(84.6%), suggested that the church can encourage Christians to adopt a strong, hard work ethic by promoting vocational training and entrepreneurship skills. This aligns with Katz’s (2013) statement, “the church can establish a vocational training center that offers courses in areas such as agriculture, carpentry, and tailoring. This will equip Christians with practical skills to start their own

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<sup>170</sup> Nyanga’a, J. K., Otieno, P. O., & Okoth, S. O. (2018). *The role of church-based organizations in promoting agricultural development in rural Uganda. Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 50(2), 205-221.

<sup>171</sup> Respondents’ questionnaire May 2025

<sup>172</sup> Wainaina, J. K., Gachui, R., & Mwangi, W. (2019). *Enhancing agricultural productivity through capacity building and market access: case study of small-scale farmers in Uganda. Journal of Agricultural Extension and Education*, 7(1), 1-15.

businesses or secure employment, thereby reducing poverty.”<sup>173</sup> Additionally, the church can encourage Christians to participate in community development projects, such as cleaning and conservation efforts, which can help build a sense of responsibility and motivation.<sup>174</sup>

#### **4.1.6 Establishing schools and improving the education system**

Other respondents, 38(73.1%), believed the church can reduce poverty by establishing educational programs that give Christians quality education. Some respondents said, “The church can establish more schools or partner with existing private and government schools to provide scholarships and educational materials to the children of the needy Christians.”<sup>175</sup> This idea was developed by Hanushek (2013), who says, “The church can promote adult education programs, such as literacy classes, to help adults acquire basic reading and writing skills, enabling them to participate in economic activities.”<sup>176</sup>

#### **4.1.7 Establish and enhance church founded health facilities**

Some respondents 13, 25.0%) suggested that “the church can establish their health facilities or partner with the existing health facilities to provide Christians with access to quality health care services.”<sup>177</sup> This view aligns with the World Health Organization (2018), which argues that “the church can also promote health education programs, such as HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention campaigns, to reduce the spread of diseases.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Katz, M. B. (2013). *The price of citizenship: Redefining the American welfare state*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

<sup>174</sup> Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.

<sup>175</sup> Respondent questionnaire May 2025

<sup>176</sup> Hanushek, E. A. (2013). *Economic growth in developing countries: The role of human capital*. *Economics of Education Review*, 32, 412- 424.

<sup>177</sup> Respondent questionnaire May 2025

<sup>178</sup> World Health Organization. (2018). *Universal health coverage (UHC)*

#### 4.1.7 Fostering hope and empowering Christians

Hopelessness was mentioned among the causes of persistent poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. The respondents 15(28.8%) to the questionnaire were optimistic that “the church can promote programs that foster hope and empowerment among Christians.”<sup>179</sup> According to Wickrama (2017), the church can also promote economic empowerment programs, such as microfinance initiatives, which provides Christians with access to financial resources and business training.”<sup>180</sup> Armstrong (2018) further retaliates that “the church can promote economic empowerment programs, such as microfinance initiatives, which provide Christians with access to finance and business training.”<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Respondents' questionnaire May 2025

<sup>180</sup> Wickrama, T. K. (2017). Social support and psychological distress among older adults in the United States. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 72(4), 532-542.

<sup>181</sup> Armstrong, R. (2018). Microfinance and poverty reduction: A systematic review. *Journal of Development Studies*, 54(5), 857-875.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON POVERTY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

Chapter five presents the Biblical and theological perspectives on poverty and socio-economic transformation. It discusses the Biblical perspectives on the causes of poverty, the church's role in socio-economic transformation, and the practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty.

#### 5.1 Biblical reflection

The bible demonstrates the issue of poverty spiritually and physically so that the readers and hearers can understand and decide their position. The bible emphasizes the importance of humility, generosity, and compassion. It explains that material wealth is not the ultimate measure of success and that spiritual wealth is often found in simplicity and service to others. One example is Jesus, who lived a humble life and showed compassion to the poor and marginalized through his various miracles of healing, exorcism, and feeding.

The bible encourages all people to share what they have with the people in need and to make sure they advocate for justice for the poor (Micah 6:8). Furthermore, the book of Proverbs states, "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done." Various laws and principles in the bible address poverty and promote economic justice.

### 5.1.1 Biblical perspectives on the causes of poverty among Christians

The socio-spiritual problem of poverty emerged with the fall of man. The authors of the creation tales in Genesis 1 and 2 claim that there was no poverty at the time of human genesis. Since God is the God of plenty, it defies logic and imagination to believe that he would create humans in his image and likeness (Genesis 1:27) without making sure they have enough to survive. A close relationship with God is shown in the Genesis creation story. According to Genesis 1:27, when God created humans, they bore his likeness. If Adam and Eve could voluntarily carry out the duties that God gave them, God would supply them with all they needed.

The bible explicitly stresses that lack of genuine biblical stewardship is one of the primary causes of poverty among Christians. The bible teaches that God entrusts us with resources, and we are expected to manage them wisely (Genesis 1:28, Matthew 25:14-30). In the parable of the talents, the servant who failed to invest their talents wisely was rebuked by the master (Matthew 25:26-30). Similarly, in the Old Testament, the Israelites were instructed to tithe and give offerings to support the poor. God's ministry (Leviticus 27:30-32, Malachi 3:10). Failure to manage resources effectively can lead to poverty. For instance, a Christian who overspends on non-essential items such as alcohol, drug abuse, and sexual immorality, neglecting to save or invest for the future, may find themselves struggling financially.

Idleness and laziness are biblical concepts that can lead to poverty. Proverbs 13:4 says, "The soul of the sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the soul of the diligent is richly supplied." On the other hand, in the New Testament, the story of the lazy servant in the parable of the talents illustrates the consequences of idleness (Matthew 25:14-30). Paul writes, "For when even we were with you, we used to give you this order, if anybody is not willing to work, then they are not to eat, either." (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12). Idle or lazy Christians may struggle financially, as they are not utilizing their resources and talents effectively.

In Deuteronomy 28:1-68, the Israelites are promised blessings for obedience and curses.

For disobedience. Verse 48 says, “You will serve your enemies, who the lord will send against you.... You will be hungry and thirsty, clothed in sackcloth, and your neck will be made of iron.” On the other hand, the New Testament also teaches that obedience to God’s word is crucial for prosperity (John 14:15, 1 John 2:3-6). This suggests that when Christians disregard God’s instructions, they may experience financial difficulties. For example, failure to follow marriage, family, and financial principles will likely lead to poverty.

The bible indicates that debt and financial responsibility are common causes of poverty among God’s people. Proverbs 22:7 note, “The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is a servant to the lender.” The bible warns against unmanageable debt (Proverbs 22:7, Romans 13:8). Christians who incur excessive debt or fail to manage their finances responsibly may struggle to make ends meet. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were further instructed to release enslaved people and cancel debts every 50 years (Leviticus 25:8-55). This principle highlights the importance of responsible financial management.

The bible teaches that each believer has unique gifts and talents to use for God’s glory and benefit (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Ephesians 4:7). Failure to utilize these gifts may result in financial struggles. For example, a Christian with a talent for craftsmanship or entrepreneurship may struggle financially if they do not use their skills to generate income.

The bible teaches that Christians should work hard, save, and invest wisely (Proverbs 22:29, 1 Timothy 5:8). In addition, it instructs believers to avoid get-rich quick schemes and instead focus on long term financial stability (Proverbs 28:20). Christians who are unaware of or disregard these principles are likely to struggle financially. For instance, failure to prioritize needs over wants can lead to financial difficulties.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your path.” Christians who do not seek God’s wisdom in their financial decisions may experience

Difficulties. King Solomon writes in Proverbs 24:32, “Then I saw, and considered it well: ‘Get ready for the right, and lie down; your slumber will be pleasant. Take no rest till you make a plan.’”

The bible further attributes poverty among God’s people to a lack of community and accountability. The bible teaches that believers should live in a community, support one another, and be accountable to each other (Hebrews 10:24-25, Acts 2:42-47). Furthermore, Proverbs 27:9 says, “With the help of a friend, perfume the air, and sweet fragrances satisfy the soul.” When Christians isolate themselves from the community of believers, they may miss out on valuable support, guidance, and encouragement, leading to financial struggles.

#### **5.1.2. Biblical perspectives on the role of the Church in social and economic transformation of Christians.**

The Psalms passage makes it clear that God owns the earth and everything on it (Psalm 24:1) and that humans were given the earth to rule over (Psalm 115:16). Humans were given the planet. However, they were also given the responsibility of ruling it (Psalm 4:8). Although humans are in charge of the planet, they live under God’s authority, take care of it, and appreciate the riches that only God can provide (Psalm 116:12-13). Humans should be good stewards and use the resources for the betterment of humanity, as they cannot repay God’s benevolence (Psalm 116:12). People recognize their reliance on God and his stewardship when they help their fellow humans. For Adam and Eve to enjoy the Garden of Eden and be good stewards, God placed them there. Life would be simpler for everyone if individuals stayed faithful and supported one another.

Holistic ministry is what the church should strive for, just as Jesus came to everyone. The church should continue to declare the kingdom of God and reach out to the ill, the hungry, and the grieving, offering them hope and providing for their basic needs, as Jesus came preaching the good news of the Kingdom (Mark 1:15). It is necessary to sympathize with people who are enslaved to this world and assist them in finding

freedom in Christ. To guarantee that everyone has what they need to survive, God's people should strive to eradicate poverty and aid one another by practicing acts of kindness (Deut. 15:4).

The church is expected to be giving; if it is not, it will suffer the repercussions. The Bible tells the tale of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-23. God harshly chastised the rich man for failing to share with the poor, rather than taking advantage of Lazarus to amass a fortune. It is necessary not only to understand the needs of those living in poverty but also assist them in preventing punishment. The bible makes it quite evident that the lord of history will turn against us if we amass a fortune by oppressing the poor or if we are wealthy but fail to give liberally to those in need. God evaluates societies based on how they treat the poorest members of society. According to Proverbs 19:17, everyone friendly to the poor is lending to the Lord, and God takes care of the impoverished. According to Proverbs 14:31, those who treat the impoverished with cruelty and lack of love "display contempt for their maker." Therefore, the Lord is pleased when those in need are empowered.

According to Proverbs 31:19, the Bible exhorts the church to speak up for the voiceless. A biblical call to justice is made to the church. Being on the front lines and fighting for justice for everyone, especially the disadvantaged, is one of the many things the church must undertake. People's lives may be extended when they are assisted in leading a better, more respectable lifestyle because they are more productive and able to care for their families. The necessity of justice has been discussed extensively in both the Old and New Testaments. As we advance God's kingdom, the New Testament has underlined the need for social justice. (Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 4:18-21).

Regardless of socioeconomic standing, ethnicity, sex, or political party, the biblical command to "love our neighbors as we love ourselves" (Matthew 22:37-39) demonstrates a profound care and compassion for everyone. Oppressing a neighbor while still loving.

Physical and spiritual freedom from Egypt are inextricably linked. After recognizing that God had freed them from Egypt, the people came to understand the need of empowering one another (Exodus 22). They thought that if they followed God's word, they would succeed. They believed that giving to the poor was a way to comply and carry out one of God's commands. Being impoverished is against God's will since it was His desire for them to enjoy prosperity.

In addition, the Psalmists have devoted a great deal of effort to portraying a God who helps the impoverished in their time of need. The Psalms contain several petitions for the impoverished. These include Psalm 72:12-14, in which the Psalmist promises the impoverished that once they cry out, the Lord will hear them. The impoverished were reassured that God would be with them and that they would soon be freed from the oppressors (Psalms 109:31, 140:12) (Bansikiza 62). Thus, it indicates that God respects and cares for the underprivileged. Additionally, the princes dine with low-income people while promising them a better life from the dunghill (Ps 113:7-8)

### **5.1.3 Biblical perspective on the practical approaches that the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians effectively**

In 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12, it is written, “For we hear that some among you are idle and not working at all, but are busybodies, so then, those who are idle and not working must be encouraged and argued to do the work.” The Church can therefore provide economic empowerment programs, such as vocational training, microfinance initiatives, and entrepreneurship development. This approach enables individuals to acquire skills and access resources to help them become self-sufficient and avoid idleness.

In Isaiah 58:7, it is written, “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to lose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke.” The Church, therefore, is called upon to establish food banks and community gardens to provide food for those in need. This approach addresses the immediate need for food and provides community engagement and fellowship opportunities.

In Proverbs 29:18, the author says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish; but he that keeps the law, happy is he.” The church can therefore provide educational programs such as literacy classes, adult education, and scholarships. This approach enables individuals to acquire knowledge and skills to help them access better job opportunities and improve their socio-economic status.

In his first letter to the Corinthians 6:19-20, St Paul writes, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.” The church is therefore tasked with the task of providing health and wellness programs, such as health fairs, medical facilities.

According to Matthew 28:18-20, the gospel says, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The church can establish mentorship and discipleship programs that provide needy individuals spiritual guidance, support, and encouragement. This approach enables individuals to develop a strong faith and receive guidance on navigating life and socio-economic challenges.

Jeremiah 29:7 is written, “Also seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the lord for it, you too will prosper.” The church can engage with the broader community to address poverty and promote social justice. This approach enables the church to build relationships with local organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders to accumulate resources and expertise.

In 2 Corinthians 9:6-7, Paul writes, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” The church can promote stewardship and resource mobilization by encouraging members to give generously to support poverty eradication initiatives. This approach will likely enable the church to mobilize resources and use them to support poverty reduction programs.

## **5.2 Theological reflection**

The early church fathers were the first to eradicate poverty. Augustine and Chrysostom are two outstanding individuals who provided special assistance to those in need.<sup>182</sup> It took much work to convert the pagan population to Christianity once it was declared the Roman Empire's official religion. Among other methods, the church's participation was a significant part of helping the impoverished by working with the miserable and constructing almshouses.<sup>183</sup> Chrysostom and others promoted the idea that the impoverished should be helped.

According to Martin Luther Junior (1967), the Church is said to be the state's conscience, and the state must be the servant of the Church.<sup>184</sup> His teaching emphasizes the importance of the Church's role in promoting justice and morality in society.

According to some practical theologians like Bonhoeffer (1937), the church is described as not only a spiritual institution that has to do with the salvation of souls. However, but also However, 185 states, "It is a community of people committed to one another and the world." His teaching emphasizes the importance of the church's role in promoting community and social responsibility.

Gutierrez (1971), a theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notes, "The church is said to be a preferential option for the poor. It must prioritize the needs of the poor and vulnerable in its mission and ministry."<sup>186</sup> His teaching emphasizes the importance of the church's role in promoting justice and liberation for the poor and vulnerable.

According to theologian Wright (2015), the church is called to be a sign of the Kingdom of justice, peace, and love.<sup>187</sup> His teaching emphasizes the importance of the church's role in promoting the kingdom of God and its values of justice, peace, and love.

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<sup>183</sup> Kreider, A. Robert. (2011). *The role of faith-based organizations in poverty alleviation in the Roman Empire*. *Journal of Development Studies*, 43(1), 115-134.

<sup>184</sup> Martin Luther Jr. (1967). *Where do we go from here? Chaos or Community*, Harper and Low, New York.

<sup>185</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer. (1937). *The cost of Discipleship*. Macmillan, New York

<sup>186</sup> Gutierrez, G. (1971). *A theology of liberation*, Orbis Books. New York.

<sup>187</sup> Wright, N.T. (2015). *The divine surprise*, Baker Academics, Grand Rapids, MI.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This study, titled “The church and socio-economic transformation,” adopted participatory theory to analyze the causes of persistent poverty, the church's role in socio-economic transformation of Christians, and the practical approaches the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. Hence, the summary of findings is under each of the three objectives.

#### 6.1 The summary

The study analyzed the persistence of poverty in the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, beginning with understanding poverty in the local context. The word “*Obwooro*” among the Bakiga refers to all aspects of poverty.

On the causes of persistent poverty, this study identifies that illiteracy/low levels of education, laziness, diseases and lack of improved health care facilities, big family size, insufficient land for cultivation, hopelessness, wrong interpretation of the bible and high cost of living are the factors behind persistent poverty among Christians in Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish. These factors have adverse effects on the lives of Christians. The effects is that some Christians have no stable income, they have no daily source of income, so, based on this situation, they are not able to pay school fees for their children and it leads to failure of their children to finish primary and secondary education also people have no access to quality health services, big family size, high cost of living, insufficient land for cultivation among other causes.

On the role of the church in socio-economic transformation of Christians, based on the divine mandate of the church as quoted by Jesus in the book of Isaiah 61:1ff and the mandate of the church as the salt and light of the world; this study has found out that Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish has many socio-economic challenges such as

Inadequate resources, untrained church workers, lack of market for agricultural products, and lack of improved and effective means of transport and communications technology. To facilitate and disseminate economic programs. Owing to the above challenges, this study found that the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish has done little for Christians in agriculture, sensitization/mindset change, training, and improving primary and secondary education.

On the practical approaches the church can implement to effectively reduce poverty among Christians in Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, this study found out that; teaching people hard work, improving church founded health care facilities, teaching people to improve personal hygiene and sanitation, improving educational facilities, partnership with other development partners, agencies and Non-governmental organizations, fostering hope and empowering Christians may effectively reduce poverty among Christians of Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, poverty is not something to be contented with, or a body-skin to remain with, but if Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, together with all Christians and stake holders make good decisions, take decisive actions, and stop being satisfied with their current situations, the lives of the congregation will improve, and they will serve and give back to God faithfully, leading to the growth and development of the church of God.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

On the causes of poverty among Christians of the Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, church leaders should develop Bible-based fundamental policies and strategies to bring about socio-economic transformation among Christians. For example, encouraging adult education programs that equip older adults with the skills of reading and writing, equipping Christians with vocational skills, encouraging priests and lay-readers to cooperate with local leaders such as chairpersons local councils, village health teams (VHTs), introduce bible studies, encourage parents to send children to schools and sensitizing parents to own schools through participation in Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and board of governors (BOGs) committees.

On the challenges, inadequate resources to spearhead church programs towards socio-economic transformation in Christians can be minimized by the church through resource mobilization programs and partnership with other development partners. Because of the lack of improved health facilities, the church can encourage Christians to promote disease-preventive approaches in their families, especially personal hygiene and sanitation. The challenge of some Christians having prominent families is that the Rwanyanja church of Uganda needs to sensitize its Christians to the importance of family planning.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for future studies**

- This study has found that most respondents do not sufficiently understand the ownership of the church; some Christians think that the Archbishop, Bishops, priests, and Lay-readers are the real owners of the church. So, this area needs further study to enable Christians to know better who owns the church.
  
- Further research is needed on why churches have remained poor and dependent on donations from offertories. However, they have vast lands that can be utilized for the socio-economic transformation of themselves and their Christians.
  
- Further research is needed on the relationship between the church's mission in the world and the socio-economic transformation of its Christians.

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## **APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Dear respondent,**

I am Birungi William, a student of Uganda Christian University undertaking a Bachelor of Divinity. Currently, I am carrying out a research study on the “Church and socio-economic transformation: A case study of Rwanyanja church of Uganda parish, Bugangari Archdeaconry in North Kigezi Diocese, as part of the requirements for a Bachelor’s Degree. This questionnaire is therefore intended to seek information on the above subject matter. The information is purely for academic purposes, and all the answers will be handled with utmost confidentiality. Therefore, I humbly request that you complete this questionnaire correctly in the spaces or options provided. (Please, tick the appropriate answers where options are given.)

### **Section A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents,**

#### **Background Information**

##### **A. Gender**

Male

Female

##### **B. Age**

18-25 years

26-35 years

36-45years

46 years and above

##### **C. Education level**

Certificate Level

Diploma Level

Undergraduate Level

Post-Graduate Level

##### **D. Duration in the Local Church**

Less than 5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

16-20years

21-25years

26-30years

Above 30 years

**E. Position in the Church**

- Pastor
- Deacon
- Elder
- Congregant
- Christian leader (Specify.....)

**F. If Pastor, duration of Service**

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

**Section B: Causes of poverty among Christians**

1. In your understanding of your community, what is poverty (Obwooro)?

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

2. Gauge the poverty levels within your Local Church

- Very High
- High
- Low
- Very Low

a) If high or very high, what might contribute to poverty among the congregants?

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....
- v) .....
- vi) .....
- vii) .....

**Section C: The church's role in the socio-economic transformation of Christians.**

3. What could be the role of the Rwanyanja Church of Uganda parish in the social and economic transformation of Christian lives?

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....
- v) .....
- vi) .....

4. How often do you hear messages aimed at socio-economic transformation of Christians in your Church (Question not for Pastors)?

- Very Often                       Often                       Rarely                       Never

5a) If a Pastor, how often have you preached on socio-economic transformation/poverty eradication in your church service or fellowship?

- Never                       Rarely                       Often                       Very Often

b) Explain your answer in 5 above, showing the message content:

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

6(a). Does your Local Church run any programs towards poverty reduction/socio-economic empowerment for members and the community?

- YES     NO

b) If yes in 6 above, describe the poverty reduction programs undertaken.

- i) .....
- ii) .....
- iii) .....
- iv) .....
- v) .....

**Section D: Challenges facing the church in its attempt to socially and economically transform the lives of Christians.**

7. As a leader in your church, how would you gauge your knowledge of poverty eradication skills?

- Very knowledgeable
- Knowledgeable
- Less knowledgeable
- Unknowledgeable

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

- Never
- A little
- Much
- Quiet Much

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

- YES
- NO

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

-----  
-----  
-----

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

- Lack of skills in poverty eradication
- Lack of goodwill from the larger Anglican denomination,
- and Lack of resources to start poverty eradication
- programs.

Poor cooperation from the congregants in poverty eradication initiatives

Other challenges (please specify) -----

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-----  
-----  
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**Section E: Practical approaches the church can implement to reduce poverty among Christians effectively**

11. (a) State the Level of Agreement with the following church’s steps/approaches towards poverty eradication/economic empowerment among Christians.

This section used a Likert scale. It is a series of questions or items that call for respondents to provide an answer on a scale, for example, one through five, with one meaning strongly disagree and five meaning strongly agree with a given statement. Questions below, five represent Strongly Agree, four represent Agree, three represent Not sure, 2 represent Disagree, 1 represent Strongly Disagree.

**Steps/approaches that the Church Administration can take in Rwanyanja Parish to reduce poverty effectively**

SN		Response				
		5	4	3	2	1
	<b>Church administration roles and strategies</b>					
1	Teaching Christians to work hard/mindset change					
2	Increase educational and financial literacy among church leaders and congregants.					
3	Establish a church, founded health facilities, and Sensitizing Christians on disease prevention strategies					
4	Partnership with the Government and other development partners in poverty eradication programs.					
5	Aggressive resource mobilization, such as seeking overseas donors to support poverty eradication campaigns.					
6	Establishment of a founded school and improving the existing ones					
7	Integrate poverty eradication training in the Bible Schools within the region.					
8	Partnership with local businesses and companies to increase the market for Agricultural products					

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. What do you understand by poverty (Obwooro)?
2. Do you agree that poverty affects the church?
3. In your church, is it true that even children are forced to sleep because there is no food?
4. Is it true that when you are carrying out marital counseling, some families face poverty challenges? If yes, how?
5. According to your understanding, what could be the causes of poverty among Christians
6. Do you agree that the church is essential in ensuring poverty is out of Christian homes? If yes, explain how?
7. Does the church indeed face some challenges in its attempts to eradicate poverty among Christians? If yes, please explain how?
9. What are your recommendations/suggestions to improve the church's response to poverty eradication in your church?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION**