

**MOTIVATION AND STRATEGIES FOR A HOLISTIC MINISTRY
TO WIDOWS: THE ROLE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NAIROBI, KENYA, IN ADVOCACY, COUNSELLING,
EMPOWERMENT AND JOB CREATION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya as elsewhere in Africa, women are economically deprived. This situation is exacerbated when a husband, who has been the sole bread winner, dies leaving his wife with no financial support to look after herself and the children. Traditionally, these women were cared for by levirate marriage. With the coming of modernization, care of widows has dramatically changed. It is in this understanding this study was undertaken to examine how the ACK Diocese of Nairobi, can explore some practical ways and means of dealing with issues affecting widows and address the cultural regulations that oppress, dehumanize and victimize them in the society and in the church.

This thesis further examines how an African woman, living in a changing world can continue with her life once widowed. This is considering the fact that she is living in a male dominated society. After the first chapter, which provides background information, motivation and the research focus, the study proceeds with an investigation of what widows experience after their husband's death. Through the formal interviews the study asserts that widows undergo cultural marginalisation, emotional stress, financial insecurity and lack of meaning, control and purpose of life. Then the study proceeds to a theological reflection on this experience in light of the word of God and the church. It points that it was a biblical tradition in the Old Testament and the New Testament to care for widows. The church is challenged to continue with this and redefine its original goal, at same the time rebuking the injustices in the society.

In response to the experience of widows and the theological reflection, the thesis argues that there is need for a holistic four-fold ministry to widows in the ACK Diocese of Nairobi. It is argued that the church should be involved in the role of advocacy, counselling, empowerment and job creation. This is to help them regain their dignity, self-esteem, and become self-reliant.

The thesis concludes with a set of practical proposals for the Anglican Diocese of Nairobi.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Life is a struggle and those who make it are those who are courageous enough to face the challenges. Those who know the road walk confidently for they know the corners and potholes. Looking back to where I came from and how far I have reached I can confidently at least say that I somehow know the road a little better than when I started. It would not have been so easy for me to overcome the obstacles on the way were it not for friends who have supported me, who courageously walked along with me and encouraged me to continue walking and looking ahead with confidence. To them I owe my gratitude. First, I would like to thank Dr Steve de Gruchy who has been of great help. He has stood on my side despite my shortcomings. One thing that came out clear along the way is that he has a heart of patience and concern and did not fail to positively criticise the work thus, guiding me on the way. His love, commitment and concern has been a challenge to me. I would like also to thank Ms Edwina Ward who has also invested her time to encourage me. Her spirit of love and care is highly appreciated. A word of thanks goes as well to Mrs Pat Bruce for her support and advice.

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Thanks to my whole family who kept holding me up in prayers. It would be unjust to forget to thank our children Emmanuel Muraguri and Irene Wambui who have stood with me during this time of my studies with a lot of patience and tolerance. Finally but not least, my dear wife who has stood with me up to the end. Mere words are not enough. All I can try to do is to be faithful to the commitment that brought me here. She has been the source of encouragement even in times when things seemed to be hard. She has continued to care for me with a lot of love. In gratitude for her love, care and concern I dedicate this dissertation to her, “my dear wife Alice Wangui I. Muraguri”.

DECLARATION

I, Humphrey Irungu Muraguri, candidate for Masters of Theology (Theology and Development) in the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg hereby declare that: except for the quotations specifically indicated in this text, and such help as I have acknowledged, this thesis is wholly my own work and has been submitted for the purposes of the above mentioned degree.



.....

University of Natal

Pietermaritzburg, 2001

ABBREVIATIONS

ACK	ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA
NCCK	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN KENYA
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
MU	MOTHERS' UNION
AFF	AMANI FARMERS' FOUNDATION
MT	MOUNT
PRA	PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.11 Background Information

In order to understand the problems affecting widows it is appropriate to listen to their own voices. The problem of widowhood is multidimensional: it is not only psychological but also sociological and economical. For this reason, widowhood causes a crisis in the lives of many Kenyan widows. It may be the first solitary state they have ever known. The change from sharing life intimately to being alone may be quite threatening. Adjusting may well take time. But widowhood also often implies a change in material security together with a loss of social status apart from the emotional grief. My investigation focuses on this very specific but multi-dimensional problem.

1.2 Motivation

Looking back at my experiences as a parish priest, I regret the fact that I never listened to the voices of widows in the surrounding community. Although I noticed their problems I did not know how to handle them. This was probably because my theological training had not prepared me enough to deal with that type of person or to identify with them. By ill-preparedness, I mean that my training did not bring to my attention the plight of widows in the life and mission of the church. Even when I thought I could do it my way, I was always afraid. My curiosity led me to try and discuss the matter with the people I thought would understand, the parish council members. To my surprise they were as ignorant as I was. Their answer to my questions was that widows' problems belong to the society rather than the church. It was through interactions that it became clear to me that upon the death of the husband, widows' lives are dramatically changed: economically, socially, and spiritually. It was very moving to see, in some of the homes, children who were literally starving and naked, not because the mother wanted it to happen but because she was not able to feed and clothe them properly. Other children had to stop going to school due to lack of school fees. Yet, with all these problems, the society around them just looked at them and ignored them, at times blaming the mother for her laziness.

These insights motivated me to feel that the church should do something in relation to widows. Taking into consideration what we will see in this study, it is easy to conclude that one of the most dreadful things experienced by most women in Africa is becoming a widow. Widowhood strikes suddenly, leaving women unprepared even when a prolonged illness is involved. It is something that is never discussed or arranged for in advance. It is particularly difficult when it happens while the couple is in the process of bringing up a family or planning to bring one up (or the wife is pregnant). It is therefore clear that widowhood may cause a serious state of crisis in the lives of many women.

It is seemingly impossible to talk about the problems affecting women in the whole continent due to the fact that we are so divided by political boundaries, tribes and clans. What may be practiced in one ethnic group may be different in another. Also, some cultures are patriarchal and others matriarchal. Despite all these differences it is important to note that the problems of women and widows in general, transcend all boundaries, for they are indeed universal. Death is not partial, it comes to Christians and non Christians, young, old, educated, illiterate, rich or poor, female or male.

There are many writers who have researched, implemented and published articles in journals and books on the theme of widowhood. However, to my knowledge, none has looked at it in this context, focusing on the necessity of empowerment, counselling, advocacy, job creation and initiating development projects for sustenance as a medium to bring social change in the lives of these women. The focus of this study will be the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to raise questions that need critical examination in relation to the plight of widows and then to offer the church suggestions for assisting them. The church as well as the society need to ask this question: while there are many widows in the society, how much poverty, oppression, shock, anger, stress and depression are they suffering and what can the church

do for them?

1.4 Research Focus

Five issues are focused on in this research:

Firstly, to highlight what widows experience after the death of their husbands, due to the fact that they are often denied support, comfort, counselling, or guidance from either the church or the society.

Secondly, how will an African woman, living in a changing world, be able to continue with her life socially, economically and spiritually once widowed? This must be considered from a premise that she is living in a male-dominated society where a woman is only seen and recognised through a man (Nassaka 1996:166).

Thirdly, to challenge the church to seek ways and means of dealing with practical issues affecting widows and to re-address the cultural regulations in the society and the church, which favour men in light of God's word (Biblical perspective).

Fourthly, to examine the current role of the ACK in Nairobi in widows ministry and also conscientise

the church and the society regarding the problem and of its future implications to the widow if redress is not taken.

Finally, analyse the effectiveness of the proposed four fold strategic ministry to widowhood.

1.5 Hypothesis

My hypothesis is that if the church in its ministry to widows would understand its role to include advocacy, empowerment, counselling and training in entrepreneurial skills, it would help the widows to regain dignity, identity, and financial stability.

1.6 Research methodology

The purpose of this section is to describe the methodology employed in the process of the research.

It seeks to describe and validate the choice to employ the method. It further describes how the research was conducted, the target group, and the setting of the research. It is a general sum of the research process.

My method was informed by the insights, theories, and approaches of Philpott (1993); Phiri (1997) Sotshongaye & Moller (2000) and Chambers (1992). The reason being that they used participatory research in their work.

According to Graham Philpott, participatory research is a research process in which the community participates in the analysis of their own reality in order to promote a social transformation for the benefit of the participants who are oppressed (1993:21-23). In this research, my endeavour was to investigate and examine the role of the church focusing on the oppressed women who are the widows. The central point was to create awareness of their experiences and highlight the need for a holistic strategic ministry to widows. The church, as well as the society, should recognise its abilities and involvement (Shisanya 1996:191). Subsequently, one would challenge the church to re-assess the structures that create a formal invisibility of widows. Widows are marginalised in Kenya society.

Ayanda Sotshongaye & Valerie Moller used the same participatory research method of encouraging people to talk openly about the aspects of their lives:

The group discussions, which were facilitated by the first author, lasted approximately one hour and thirty minutes and were directed by a discussion guideline, which was prepared in advance. The main questions put to the women concerned their developmental roles in the family and the community; perceptions of living conditions, including the advantages and disadvantages of living in Mavela and Cobane; problems experienced in community upgrading projects; and development priorities of their area. (2000:121)

Robert Chambers (1992) in his work the *Participatory Rural Appraisal* (Discussion paper 311) emphasised the importance of participation, empowerment and working with the poor. He looked at the oppressed and addressed the issues that led to their marginalisation.

Isabel Phiri (1997) traced the contribution of Chewa women to the Presbyterian church of Central

Africa. This contribution was traced from the days of traditional religion to their present women's organisation in the church. In her study she used in-depth interviews to grasp the experiences of the women in Malawi, their struggle to be recognised by the church and with God. It involved intensive interviews that sought to gather as much information as possible from the interviewee. To gather the information, she conducted informal interviews guided by unstructured questions. She used unstructured questions to allow free and objective discussions with the interviewees. The responses were not based on what was wrong or right since her objective was rather to get the feeling of the interviewees. Her goal in the study was not only the liberation of women but also an emphasis on female community and harmony. Similarly, assimilating this theoretical frame work I used in-depths interviews and questionnaires.

The reason I was inspired by this theoretical framework was because participation in development is vital. Secondly, in-depth interview enables the interviewees to feel free to share their live experiences. Their lived experiences in the church and the society has informed the research problems pertaining to widowhood and expectations from the church. Also, the interviews have informed the study of the cultural precautions of widowhood and the role of a widow in the society in relationship to development.

The SEE, JUDGE, ACT method was used as a tool in the overall structure of the study. This method reminds us that we need to begin our engagement with a concern for the world in need for transformation (SEE). Secondly, the method helps us see that the Christian answer to the world is drawn from the Bible. So we take the time to (JUDGE) in the light of God's word. Finally, the method draws us towards a practical response (ACT). It is easy to talk about what is to be done, to have conferences and resolutions, but God wants us to join in his work of transformation in the world (Van der Water & De Gruchy 1993:25). In this study, the experiences of widows have been looked at (SEE). Then their experiences have been judged in light of God's word (JUDGE). Finally, a practical response has been formulated, the church to take action towards its four fold strategic ministry to widowhood (ACT).

- **Interview setting**

In this research project there was concern to ensure that the interviewees were open and honest in the setting in which the interviews were to take place. A relaxed setting was provided for the interviews where widows felt free to be open and honest. Adam and Schvaneveldt advice that “In completing a questionnaire or responding to an interview, once the respondent accepts the situation as non threatening the more he/she will be open and insightful” (1985:214).

The researcher had already established a rapport with the interviewees since he was well known and familiar with them as Anglican clergy. This served as the key to success of the data collection. This was done without ignoring the danger of studying a familiar group, that is the tendency to overlook things a stranger would observe. However, there were advantages to it. Parker asserts that “it allows a thick description regarding the meaning and significance of certain observations which would probably not be available in shorter periods of association....(1996:50).

The rapport that one has established makes interviewees to be less suspicious and more willing to talk about their experiences. This helped to enhance an atmosphere of openness and honesty. The interviews began with a word of thank for the interviewee willingness to participate. This was followed by an introduction which briefly reviewed the purpose of the interview. The importance of honesty and openness was stressed and the interviews were assured of complete anonymity and confidence. The interview questions were open-ended an effort to encourage interviewees to tell the story their way. This helped to gather descriptive data from the subjects own words so as to develop insight on how subjects interpret their own experiences.

According to Borg and Gall, three types of interviews are used in research methodologies. Some use highly structured interviews, while others use either unstructured or semi-structured interviews (1963:43). In this research the last two were used whereby the interviews were semi-structured but took the approach of the unstructured interview in actual interview. This approach “does not employ

a detailed interview guide but has a general plan and usually asks questions or makes comments intended to lead the respondent towards giving data to meet the interviewers objectives" (Borg and Gall 1963:43).

Our chosen type of interview has some advantages over questionnaires. George Mouley in his work *Educational Research, the art and science of investigation*, asserts that "the greatest strength of the unstructured interviews is undoubtably its flexibility, not only does it enable the investigator to get more adequate answers, but more important to enable him/her to follow through on what may turn to be very significant ideas" (1978:202-203).

The intensive interviews lasted for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

- **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was also used as an instrument to collect data and served as supplement to the interviews. The decision to employ a questionnaire as additional tool to gather data has its major advantages when compared with the interview. Two things stand out clearly, as given by George Mouley one, the

questionnaires permit a wide coverage at minimum expenses and effort. It not only affords wider geographical coverage but it also reaches persons who are difficult to contact. This greater coverage makes for greater validity in the result through promoting the selection of a larger and more representative sample. The questionnaire also allows greater uniformity in the way the questions are asked and thus ensures greater comparability in the responses (1978:189).

According to Mouley (1978:187) in reference to questionnaires I used the open answer categories whereby the interviewee were provided space to give their own answers. The reason for the choice of open-ended questions was the desire to have more details by allowing interviewees to speak out their mind. This agrees with what Mouley says: "Open-ended questions are studied for complex questions that cannot be answered in a few simple categories but required more details and discussion" (1978:188).

Having the researcher administer the questionnaire personally while waiting was an advantage in that he was available to answer questions, give directions and offer support. In addition the was thoroughly controlled, giving the research an independence of response.

- **Limitations**

The case of what widows undergo in all societies is almost similar (Kirwen 1979:35). However, it is noted that societies differ in the formal options available to widows. In Kenya, according to my own observation, the Agikuyu community have limited options and widows generally have little choice but to remain in their husbands' communities. They may have nowhere to go and in case of doing so, it usually requires leaving children behind. Once widowed the woman remains in that status for the rest of her life. What I want to express here is that, although cultures do indeed differ, the problems affecting widows in general are relevant. Due to financial restraints I was not able to do my research across Kenya as I would have preferred to do, but limited the survey to the women in the ACK Diocese of Nairobi. Women from the other ACK dioceses were interviewed for comparison purposes only.

- **Data Collection**

In this project data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data was then collated into some coherent whole and was analysed by the researcher. In regard to data collection, the researchers role and place are considerable significance. Merriam states that "The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument rather than some inanimate inventory...(1988:8). My interviews and questionnaire respondents were drawn from the four dioceses of the Anglican church in Kenya (Nairobi, Mt Kenya South, Mt Kenya Central and Embu diocese).

- **Sources**

This study used published and unpublished literature which included books, articles, journals and information from newspapers and the Internet. Interviewing of women (widows) from urban and rural areas were done. The church leaders: the administrative secretary, the rural dean, some clergy, the Mothers Union Co-ordinator and a few church elders from the diocese were interviewed to ascertain what the position of the church was in regard to the oppressed and the poor especially the widows. My personal experience of the past seven years also informed the study.

1.7 Historical Background of Nairobi

According to Anderson (1988:6) and Shorter (1991:66) the Nairobi city originated in the angle formed by the Uganda railway and the Nairobi river in 1899 (see map on pg. 12, 13 and 14). A commercial area soon developed in the vicinity of the railway headquarters. Houses were built for Europeans along the western approach and roads were separated from the city centre by parks and open spaces. At the north, there was an Asian settlement, east of the river, and along the north side of the railway an African township grew up along with an ever-growing number of low income residential areas. South of the railway were the railway yards and huge industrial areas. People came from all over the country to look for employment in these industries from rural areas (Anderson 1988:6; Shorter 1991:66). According to Shorter, after political independence in 1963, the city grew rapidly. Outlying villages to the west increased and a number of squatter settlements appeared in the east along the Mathare valley and Nairobi rivers. This was to accommodate the low income people and the disadvantaged who could not rent an expensive house. From that time on the slums with low-cost housing have emerged and the number of the people living there has increased. Most of the people living in the slums are disadvantaged and unemployed and the majority are women. Widows are the most affected (1991:68). The middle class people lived in the south of the industrial area (currently Nairobi South C). It is clear that a gap still prevails between the poor and the rich, the low income and the middle income population (Shorter 1991:67). Shorter points out that at independence Nairobi had a population of almost a quarter million and in 1969 it was 400,000. After

ten years the population had doubled and at the end of 1980 it was one and a half million people (1991:68). Currently, Nairobi has a population of 2,143,254 (Central bureau of statistics 2000).¹

1.8 Outline of the Thesis

Chapter One has discussed the background information, purpose of the study; motivation, the research focus, hypothesis, limitations, the research methodology and a background history of Nairobi.

As noted above this study uses the SEE- JUDGE- ACT frame work and so deals with three major issues: The experience of widows, theological reflection on this experience in light of God's word (widows, scripture and the church) and finally, it proposes a need for a holistic strategic ministry to widowhood.

SEE: The cultural marginalisation of widows, emotional stress, financial insecurity and lack meaning and control is discussed in Chapter Two.

JUDGE: Chapter Three attempts to explore widowhood in the scriptures, while Chapter Four is an analysis of the response of the Anglican Church of Kenya towards widowhood. General ministries to the poor and the cries of widows are looked at.

ACT: Finally, a framework for the four key concerns, a holistic approach of ministry, the advocacy, counselling, job creation and empowerment is looked at in chapter four. After looking at the experiences widows undergo due to cultural marginalisation, Chapter Five reveals the need for advocacy in response to the concern of cultural marginalisation. Issues relating to gospel, gender and culture are discussed in this chapter. Chapter Six explores the need for pastoral care and counselling in response to emotional stress. Chapter Seven discusses development and the need for involving widows in this process of empowerment in response to lack of meaning and control.

¹ The information is according to, Central Bureau of statistics Ministry of finance and planing 2000. *1999 Population and housing census counting our people for development vol.11*. Nairobi, Kenya.

Recognising that financial insecurity is a key concern for widows, Chapter Eight attempts to analyse some possible projects that suit these women in order to give them skills to sustain themselves and enable their involvement in small businesses. Ways in which the church can contribute and what is hoped to be achieved is also analysed in this chapter. Chapter Nine gives a practical way forward and recommendations. Finally, conclusions are made in Chapter Ten.



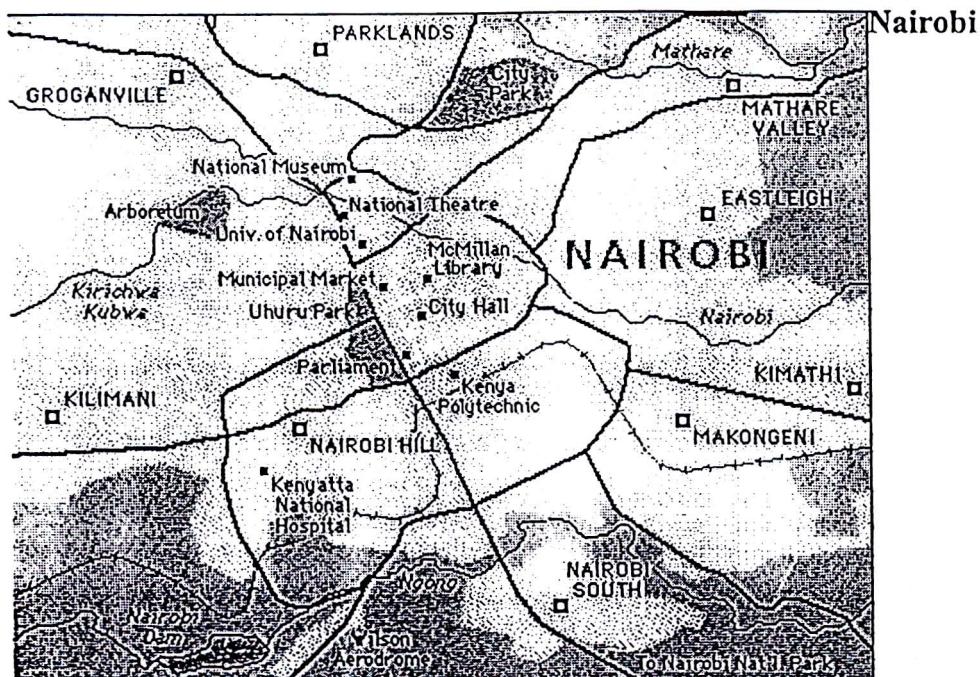
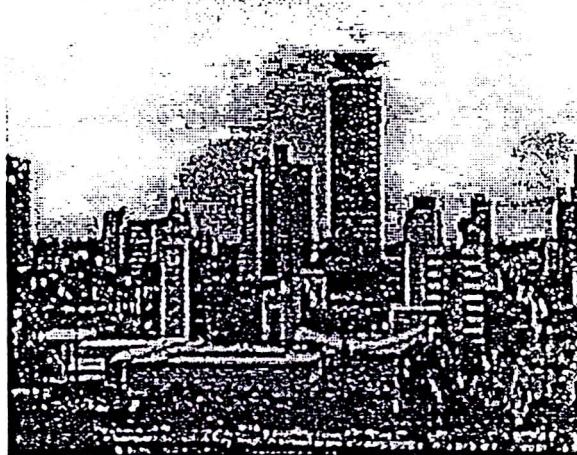
Nairobi

The Place of Cold Water!

Popularly known as the green city in the sun, Nairobi got its name from the Maasai who called it *enkare nyarobi* (the place of cold water).

It is the capital of Kenya with a population of over a million people. This is where most people start and finish their Kenyan visit.

If when in Nairobi you need to know where to eat, where to shop or places to visit. Then this is the site for you. Here you will find useful information to make your stay pleasant and enjoyable.

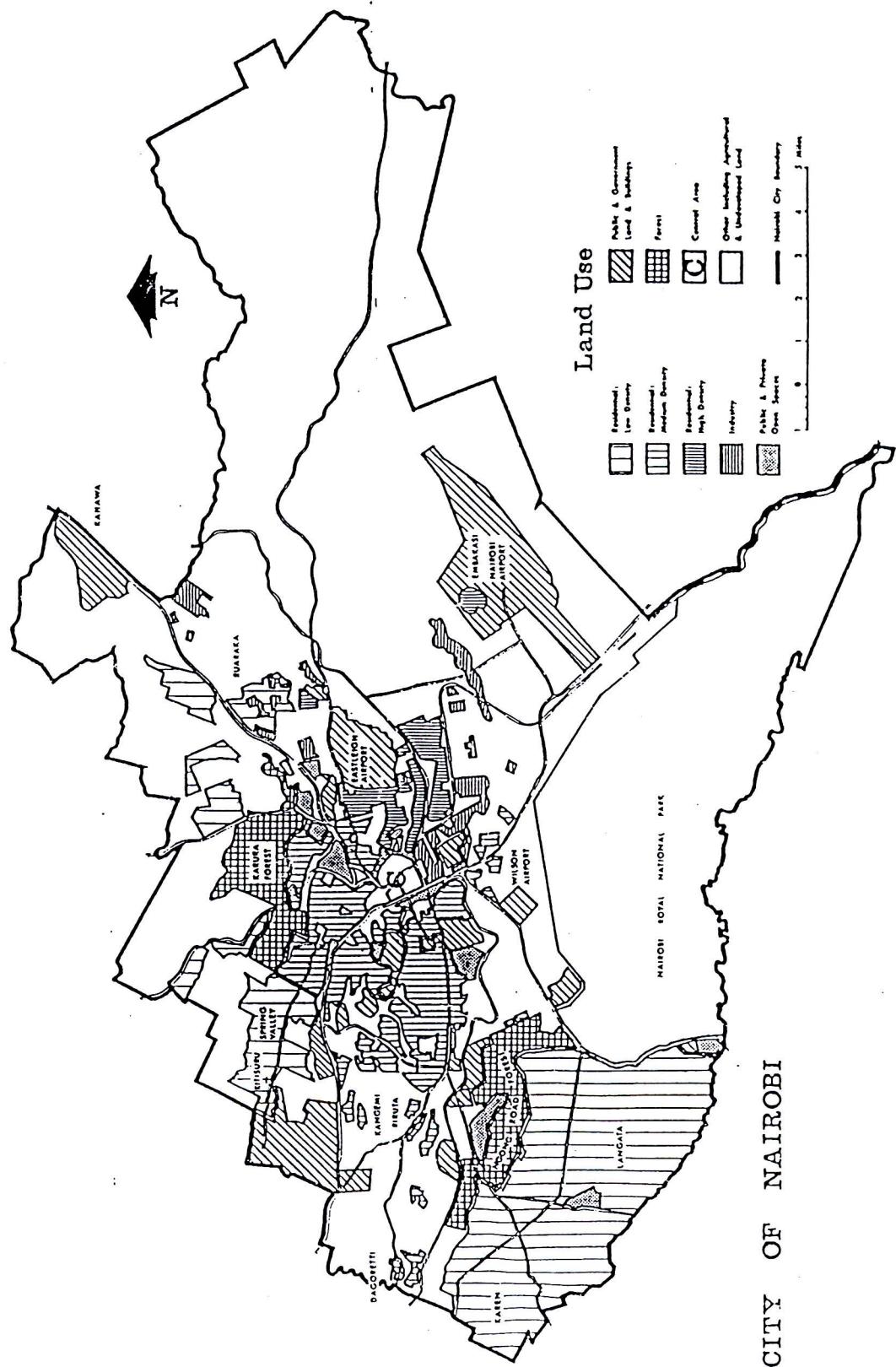


Kenya National Theatre; and Sorsbie Art Gallery.

History

Located in an area once frequented by the pastoral Masai, Nairobi was founded in the late 1890s as a British railroad camp on the Mombasa-to-Uganda railroad. From 1899 to 1905 it served as a British provincial capital. In 1905 the city became the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate (called Kenya Colony from 1920 to 1963). In 1963 Nairobi became the capital of independent Kenya and annexed neighboring areas for future growth. During the early 1990s, Nairobi suffered from civil unrest because of the growing popular opposition to Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi. Population (1984 estimate) 1,103,600.

THE CITY OF NAIROBI



SECTION A

SEE

THE EXPERIENCES OF WIDOWS

CHAPTER TWO

WIDOWS IN THE KENYAN SOCIETY

In the previous chapter the purpose of the study, the methodology, problem focus, background information, limitations, provisional outline, motivation, hypothesis and the sources were discussed. In this chapter, the experience of widows will be explored. Here we argue that this can best be understood through four key concepts, namely: cultural marginalisation, emotional stress, lack of meaning and control and financial insecurity. In this context AIDS, while not an issue on its own or a problem by itself, amplifies these four key concepts and, therefore, widows suffering with AIDS will also be looked at.

The information for this chapter is drawn from both the literature review and field research undertaken in Kenya in December 2000 and January 2001. This field research focused on two key issues, namely, the experiences of widows and what the church is and should be doing for widows. In this chapter we will draw from the first aspect of this research and return to the second aspect in chapter 4.3.

2.1 Data Analysis.

Most of the interviews were done in Nairobi and a few outside Nairobi for comparison. Those done outside Nairobi were done in Kiambu, Mount Kenya South Diocese, Embu, Diocese of Embu and Muranga Diocese of Mount Kenya central.

The average age of widows interviewed range from 25 -75 years (see Table 3). The educational status ranged from those who had no education to university education (see Table 2). Sixty percent of widows interviewed were unemployed, 11.1% owned small businesses and 28.8% were employed (see Table 1).

It was observed that most of the widows (40%) were very poor with just 20% being able to get a little assistance from their children. Property ownership was identified with men, causing conflict

between widows and their relatives after the death of their husbands.

Table 1: Number of widows interviewed who were able to earn a living through formal employment and small businesses. This table also indicates the number of the unemployed.

Item	No employed	Percentage
formal Employed	13	28.8%
Unemployed	27	60%
Small businesses	5	11.1%
Total	45	99.9%

This table indicates that most of the widows were financially handicapped

Table 2: Education

The table summarizes the level of education of the widows interviewed.

Level of education	No of women	Age	Percentage
University	1	36	2.2%
Colleges	3	25-58	6.2%
Secondary school	8	25-58	8.7%
Standard seven and above	12	35-70	26.6%
Standard seven and below	11	36-75	24.2%
None Education	10	30-75	22.2%
Total	45		90.1%

Table 3: Table showing the emotional effects suffered by women (widows) upon the death of their husbands.

EFFECT	No. interviewed	Age	Percentage
Couldn't work due to stress.	5	45-70	11.1%
Felt like weeping and uncertain about the future.	9	35-58	20%
Physical disorders, backaches, headaches, high blood pressure etc. avoided friends and wanted to be alone.	18	30-55	40%
Crippled by fear and anxiety (shock).	10	25-45	22.2%
Could not enjoy usual pressures and had sleeping difficulties, felt rejected.	3	30-75	67%
Total	45		

This table reveals that most of the widows were severely traumatised by their husband's death.

Of all the 45 widows interviewed, 36 of (80%) lived in single rooms and of these, three quarters (27) lived in the slums. It was observed that those living in the slums were not in close proximity to good portable water and they were exposed to conditions where epidemics thrive such as cholera and meningitis. Due to the marginalisation of women in the society, only about 14.9% of the widows interviewed had college and secondary school education and 2.2% university education. The rest were below standard eight (see Table 2). This gives a clear indication that the education of women is not emphasised in most societies. The lack of educated Kenyans swells the problem of unemployment, evidence being the large number of housewives who may

have wanted to work.

Analysis of the field research, as well as the literature review, suggests that the experience of widows can best be understood through four key areas: Cultural marginalisation, emotional stress, lack of meaning and control and financial insecurity. HIV/AIDS contributes to these experiences.

We turn to these now in the rest of this chapter

- **Social and cultural background of the Kenyan society**

Within African societies in particular, in the Kenyan family, the father is the chief and master of the family. Oduyoye says that his duty is to protect and provide for his wife and children (1997:108). According to her, this betrays a very subtle way of expressing the male domination among Africans (1997:108). On the other hand, as positive attribute, women are to surrender to male domination for protection. The status of women as compared to that of men is always secondary. In African societies Kenya included, all women are regarded as mothers. As a norm, each and every woman was/is to be under the male domination (Oduyoye 1997:47).

A woman's life may not always have been easy, her role is/was clearly defined as her husband's. Women play important roles in the life of the family as well as of the tribe varying from household chores, nurturing children and economic growth. But, apparently through my own observation, there is lack of appreciation of the role women play in the society.

Oduyoye asserts that, these difficulties are very distinct when we scrutinize certain norms, values and customs of some kind of moral instructions of the society by which women are expected to conform. By and large, seemingly such laws were/are to be observed by women denoting some kind of an expected behaviour towards their male heirs (1997:109). This leads to cultural marginalisation. The next section deals with the marginalisation of widows, which should be viewed as a form of violence against women.

2.2 Cultural marginalisation

Cultural marginalisation has been defined by Wirth in Oduyoye as "a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled from others in the society in which they live

for differential and unequal treatment and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination" (1997:110). According to Wamue (1996:41) women are discriminated against, powerless, stereotyped and mistreated. She points out that the violence and abuse men perpetrate against women is rooted in tradition of male supremacy. Male were and still are socialized that females are worthless, less deserving and may be treated poorly or worse. Oduyoye points out clearly that the violence against women is systematic, receiving cultural and structural support. She asserts: "The traditional African rites of passage carry within themselves some kind of subtle violence which are prevalent during special occasions, for example weddings and funerals" (1997:111).

According to Oduyoye,

Women's subordination is accomplished and maintained by patterns of interpersonal interaction prescribed by culture and social structures. Hence such negative attitudes are institutionalized. Because male supremacy is institutional they do not need to invoke a plot to account for mistreatment of women (1997:111).

In the African society, the extended family is an ideal. Every person exists for the others. Mbiti observes that Africans traditionally live in cooperation (1969:92). "I am because we are and because we are I am" captures the dictum, according to Mbiti (Wamue 1996:40). This social aspect strengthens the concept of the community sharing their experiences of happiness, sorrow and guilt together. In most cultures there are cultural norms, regulations and attitudes that prevail during death and after death. Every member of the community knows exactly what role to perform (Oduyoye 1995:150-151). Oduyoye states that culture describes what men ,women, children and relatives are to do at the time of the death of a member of the concerned family and thereafter. For example, when a woman was bereaved it was the duty of the extended family to ensure that she was provided with moral, physical and emotional support and was ensured of the continuity of the family (1995:150-151). This was done through levirate union. The following section will look at levirate marriage.

2.2.1 *Levirate Union (widow inheritance)*

In most African communities, for example the Luo in Kenya, traditions ensured that the widow was immediately remarried either to the brother or a close relative of the deceased family

(Kirwen 19979:30).² Oduyoye sees it as a way of protecting the children's interest of the deceased family (1995:151). However, what is much clearer is the fact that we are living in a changing world and that fixed cultural morals also change (Oduyoye 1997:116). That is to say if the world changes, specific cultures change too. It is hard for groups to be completely isolated from the tentacles of the 'global village'. It is in this context that the traditional issue of widows being catered for, is one issue that has proved lacking in many societies (Oral interview 8-1- 2000). Thus, Rev. John Maina a rural Dean & Vicar of St Patrick Kayole Parish (Nairobi) says:

Most cultural practices today have proved to be oppressive to the women whose husbands have passed away. What they are looking for is what the husband has left (property). It is very unfortunate that the church is doing nothing towards its members who are in such situations. I feel widows should be protected in the society to emphasise their human rights without oppression (Oral interview 8.1. 2000).

Kirwen describes marriage to a brother or a close relative of the deceased as a "levirate union where a temporary adjustment in a continuing marriage occurs and thus a brother-in-law substitutes for the deceased legal husband" (1979:10). A comment from the book of Kenyatta (first President of Kenya after colonialism) *Facing Mt Kenya* states that all women among the Kikuyu were expected to be married and be productive and have children, including widows (1961:163). Ryrie further explains that culturally, a levirate marriage was "The marriage of a widow by her brother-in-law after the death of her husband, helping to protect the rights of the widow (1978:81).

The justification of this phenomena is that a widow was understood to have emotional, material and physical needs. Thus, the levirate condition was alleged to provide for these needs (Wamue 1996:41).

The levirate union ensured that a widow would have as many children as she may have desired if her husband was alive. This then serves as a preventive strategy from having children outside the cultural regulations.

²Luo is the second biggest tribe in Kenya

Wamue thus explains that:

it also prevented her from having children with men who were from outside the family. In some communities having children from outside the family was a taboo. The levirate marriage was encouraged in the hope that having children with a member of her husband's kinsmen would curb rivalry and fighting among children. The levirate union was aimed at preventing intruders from possible interference with material possessions left by the man. Such material included land, livestock and even children (1996:41).

Many communities in Kenya discouraged remarriage but some did not. According to interviews done in Kenya by Kirwen, marriage was only encouraged where the widow was very young and literally had no children. Among the Luo, the widow was expected to marry the brother-in-law as is the custom rather than remarry outside or live alone (1979 :10-11).

An interview with Leah Adhiambo aged 47 of the level of standard seven and whose husband died in 1994, reveals that she had no alternative obey by the in-laws. She states: "Since I had no employment and my five children were young, the only alternative which I felt could rescue the situation was getting remarried to my brother in-law as required by the Luo custom"(Oral interview 4 .1. 2001). After a free discussion, the researcher asked her about how she is coping with life to which she responded that life was extremely difficult. The reason was that was the second wife and the husband showed no love and support, she claimed (Oral interview 4.1.2001).The main problem of inheritance is that it involves both individuals and their lineages. Oduyoye alludes that someone cannot understand death rites before understanding the meaning of marriage which is the climax or final stage of life (1997:111). She confirms this especially in the African societies where the status and role of women are concerned.

- **Marriage in African societies**

The question is this: how does the cultural understanding of marriage affect the life of a widow after the husband's death in an African context?

According to Oduyoye, marriage and death in the cultural perspective are communal concerns and therefore, decisions are made in the society according to their customs and taboos (1997:111).

In African societies marriage was and still is treated as an affair of great interest in both

families of the two people concerned. The marriage therefore was not for individuals but for the whole clan. As such in ancient Africa elderly people arranged marriages for their children. The relatives of the male got together for close consultations as to who would be a suitable partner and the families concerned negotiated. It was considered abnormal, unnatural and ungodly not to be married (Odugoye 1997:112).

Hastings gives a similar opinion. He describes the motives behind marriage in Africa. For Hastings the concept of African marriage is the union, permanent at least by intention, of a man and woman for the purpose of procreation and rearing of children and mutual companionship and assistance. He points out that in the African traditional society that stress was laid in marriage upon the production of children rather than upon the inter-parental relationship (1973:27-28).

It has been clear that marriage was a community affair whereby both families exchanged valuable gifts of livestock as a sign of agreement which boosted community pride. It was a clear message to say that the wife belongs to the family lineage and clan. In this way it led her to have no say after her husband's death. Even the children belonged to the lineage. Kirwen observes that, likewise, the children are the children of the lineage (1979:10-15). If we look at it critically, this is why the clan and the relatives of the deceased are forbidden to allow a widow remarry outside the family relatives.

From my own research, Kirwen's perception that the intention was to support the widow (1979:78), is questionable because the idea was actually not to lose the dowry and the deceased's property if any. The other point is that the clan totally discouraged a widow to get married outside the family or relatives even if she was willing to (Wamue 1996:42). The researcher wishes to emphasise that this is clearly an example of cultural oppression. The society laid down dissuasive legalities to discourage remarriage. Wamue states:

tough conditions of marriage were laid out to discourage the practice. These included among others the repayment of dowry in full. This was almost impossible. Dowry during marriage procedures was never paid in full. It was a life time commitment with various stages and rituals. Its repayment once was therefore deemed unnecessary and impossible. A widow was also threatened with surrendering her children to her husband's kinsmen in case of re-marriage. Not many women were willing to do this. Therefore, the majority preferred the levirate union rather than outside the in-laws. A widow and her children belonged to her

husband's kin even after his death (1996:42).

Oduyoye gives pertinent reasons for these practices in African societies. The reasons for these practices include emotional, physical, material, and sexual providence for the widow. She says a widow was supposed to be prevented from breaking down due to loneliness. According to her, it was ensured culturally that she had plenty to support herself and her children in order to provide emotional stability. Finally, it was intended to prevent intruders from interfering with those material possessions left behind by the husband (1995:151).

2.2.2 *Dowry/Bride Price*

In Africa the issue of bride price has been handled differently in different tribes. Every tribe had its own methods, and thus used different terminologies. Some calls it 'Ruracio' (a Kikuyu name for dowry) meaning compensation.³ Muriithi quotes Kenyatta by saying:

The issue of bride price in many African societies is understood as a way in which not only the couple is joined together but the two families. It is the obligation of the man's family to give and the girl's family to receive (Kenyatta in Muriithi 1999:23).

The African levirate custom arose in the context of certain presumptions about the nature of marriage. Kirwen points out that the major presupposition was that marriage involved both individuals and their lineages, and that marriage is both a personal and social alliance (1979:10). Evidence for this is that at the time of marriage the lineages involved the exchange of expensive gifts of livestock and money as a sign and proof of the marriage. This was to affirm and ensure that the relationship entwining a woman and her children with her husband's lineage did not cease automatically with his physical death. This tied a woman to continue in the lineage as a functioning wife of her brother-in-law (Kirwen 1979:10).

This idea of the man's family paying or contributing towards the family of the girl has enabled the society to empower men to dominate over women and it became worse when the husband died (Muriithi 1999:24). Some scholars argue that it was/is a way of creating relationships between the

³ Kikuyu is the biggest tribe in Kenya.

families (Kirwen 1979:183). The question is: why is the family of the husband so interested in wealthy and children?

According to research done by Kirwen with regard to the Luo people in Kenya, when a husband dies his widow may continue to live in her deceased husband's home in which case she may cohabit with one of her husband's brothers, one of her husband's male relatives or, any man who has been adopted into the deceased husband's clan though originally a stranger.

If she cohabited with a stranger the man might be sued for adultery. According to this cultural regulation the children of the levirate union belong to the clan of the dead husband. If the widow decides to go back to her home, the family was forced to return the bride's wealth according to the number of children the widow had (1979:30). However, Kirwen states that it was imperative for a widow to cohabit, even if for a short period, with a brother in-law or a person of the clan's choice before the widow can decide to go back to her father (1979:40).

Muriithi criticizes the issue of bride price in the African context because it is/was oppressive in most tribes. She says,

The dowry payment is/was supposed to be a long drawn out process. The relationship went on even when the wife was deceased. For me, however, this turned out to be oppressive to women because sometimes women became bound to the family even after the death of the husband. On the other hand the wives lived and became identified closely with her husband's lineage group and her links with her kinsfolk were being correspondingly weakened (Muriithi 1999:24).

Mbiti supports Muriithi by explaining that it was a group obligation of the husband's family to provide and of the girl's to receive (1992:8). Widowhood is a condition of a woman who has lost her husband through death (Nwachukwu in Oduyoye and Karoyoro 1992:54-93). A widow, further, is a woman who has been bereaved and is physically, emotionally and spiritually stressed. Death is a natural and inevitable condition that occurs to all human beings. It is expected that victims of bereavement are perceived as people to be pitied, sympathised and helped. However, in most cases,

cultural values and attitudes are used to oppress the bereaved (Wamue 1996:40).

Interview with Mrs. Phyllis Lowe aged 40 whose husband died in 1995 after a long illness was sympathetic. Due to the long illness of the husband, this family spent all that they saved in the previous years. Phyllis elaborates that they had gone to the extent of selling their properties in order to cover the medical charges. Unfortunately, after the death of the husband the in-laws decided to be part of his pension. This was very disheartening because Phyllis had stayed with her husband for 12 years, she comments. According to her the case was taken to court and till then (Dec 2000) no judgement has been made.

Phyllis explained her mutual relationship with her husband by saying:

My husband was faithful to me for the last 12 years and I have been faithful to my husband for all that time. Now I cannot understand why all these complications are coming up. I feel very discouraged because after the death of my husband they declared that I was not the wife of Lowe and now I am in a dilemma for nobody wants to associate with me. (Oral interview 31.12.2000)

Another statement was made by Ziporah Kamamia that “your husband’s relatives will always recognise you as long as your husband is alive.” She says: “I never expected that my mother in-law who seemed to have loved me very much could lead the battle to evict me” (Oral interview 8.1.2001). According to Zipporah, they harassed her because they wanted the properties left by her husband. Culturally, as they claimed Zipporah has no right to own anything belonging to the deceased because she does not have children. Her husband died in 1999, just two years after marriage (Oral interview 8.1.2001).

As stated in chapter one, the state of widowhood has been used to violate and exploit women. For this reason, this dissertation suggests that such traditions, customs and regulations which are oppressive to women, especially widows, should be condemned. One clergyman serving in the Diocese of Nairobi by the name Rev. Samuel Thubi invited me on 31.12.2000 to speak to his congregation. While introducing me to speak to the Christians, he properly clarified the area of my research. One of the comments he made was that:

Widowhood is so common in Kenya. Why? Because death has been massive, either through accidents, diseases, murder or war; but the problem is that the church has not formulated a way to minister to widows. The cultural practices practiced in our society are always oppressive to women. A widow is looked on as inferior and unworthy, and after the death of her husband nobody cares. Pastors feel insecure about visiting widows for the fear of being accused of having relationships. (Oral interview 31.12.2000)

When death strikes the husband, the widow becomes the sufferer. She suffers economically, physically, emotionally and spiritually. According to Rev. Thubi, the church should be able to point out and name the oppressive aspects of our cultures. The fear of breaking taboos should come to an end (Oral interview 31.12. 2000). The dehumanization of a widow is common in African societies following a husband's death (Kirewn 1979:47).

Phiri states that:

The widow also underwent a period of seclusion before a ritual was performed to set her free to marry. In some African cultures the widow underwent many dehumanizing rituals. The Chewa woman was protected by the fact that she was surrounded by her kin who supported her emotionally and economically, to bear the loss of her husband. The ritual of burning the house which she shared with her husband meant, however, that the wife no longer had accommodation of her own but had to go back to her parents' home since she also had children to care for, she was also then a burden to her parents (1997:39).

In Kirwen's research of the Luo people, he noted that the church also played a role in dehumanizing and punishing widows because of levirate unions (1979:47). This is sad because the church should be able to understand the situation of these women.

Kirwen further analyses the marital history of the Luo by saying that:

The marital histories of the Luo widows demonstrated that nine of the twenty-two Christian widows had been punished by their churches because of a levirate union. All of the punished widows had not remarried, and all had children under their care. Furthermore, there was an age difference between the punished and the unpunished widows. The unpunished widows tended to be over 45 years of age. This coincides with the fact that once a Luo woman is past menopause she no longer cohabits with a marital partner hence she cannot be faulted for having a permanent 'unlawful' relationship (1979:47).

According to my understanding, the cause of all these problems centre around the attitudes African traditional societies have towards women. Fabella and Oduyoye point out correctly that African traditional societies are, by and large, not as fair to women as we would like to think. Indeed,

sometimes women are/were regarded as second class citizen, and sometimes often used and handled like the personal property of men. They are / were exploited, oppressed and degraded (1990:5). This becomes worse when the husband dies. Then the question still remains: what should the church do?

From the above analysis, critical issues concerning widowhood and African culture have been unraveled and it was observed that marriage of a widow to the brother-in-law or any other husband's kin was likely to ruin her life or to put the widow into more depression because such a union might lead to jealousy and competition with the other wives of the man. Realistically, it is even possible that such a widow may not have had love for a brother-in-law (Wamue 1996:42).

Such traditions which treat women as objects in the society should be condemned . This is because,

- When a woman dies in the society the husband, according to his will is given the right to remarry whoever he loves.
- The society does not dictate about the property because according to culture a woman does not own anything.
- He is not seen as the cause of the death of the wife, as we have seen. On the other hand, when it comes to a woman she is confined to the cultural regulations.

It is from this perspective that this study argues that cultural practices which are oppressive to widows should be condemned.

Haider challenges cultural and customary practices which are oppressive to women and questions: “why is it that only when women want to bring about change for their own benefit does culture and custom become sacred and unchangeable?” (1995:35).

It needs to be argued, therefore, that the widow is in need of special protection and care, legally or otherwise by the church (Cecil & Wigoder 1982:487f). Thus there is no reason why she should be doomed to poverty.

2.3 Emotional Stress

It is a reality that modern living entails an exponential surge in daily problems, problems such as loneliness, meaninglessness, conflicts, addictions, uncontrolled anger, hidden anxiety, acute guilt, strange fears and mental stress. These are all accepted as psychological problems accompanying modern living (Peterson 1982:9). Peterson alludes that these problems can develop in intensity to the point where the person becomes trapped, indeed a prisoner of his/her own problems (1982:9). The person is hurting inside and needs to be loved. He holds that, “ help cannot come from a superficial professional diagnosis nor a well-meaning pat on the back approach. Rather there must be a realistic love-in-action approach” (1982:9). Therefore, it is commended that the whole person needs to be loved and helped through relevant counselling (Lee 1968:67).

It should be a love tempered with enough knowledge to reach the person without increasing the problem (Wicks *et al* 1985:544). According to Peterson, it is kindly love to a special person (1982:9). Where is such love to be found today? Peterson asks (1982:9). Lee states that, physical disease is caused by identifiable factors, for example: viruses, heredity, age and accidents. This affects both Christians and non-Christians. This is also true for emotional illnesses such as depression, anxiety, stress, separation, loneliness, guilt etc (1968:26-27). Peterson mentions some of the emotional disorders as : poor parental modelling, emotional manipulations, absence of consistent discipline, standards of perfectionism in behavior, inability to communicate feelings, emotional hurt, withdrawal, excessive fantasy to escape reality, avoidance of responsibility and thereby loss of self-respect, fear of commitment producing isolation, mistrust of others and oneself, exaggeration of minor problems into trauma, self-indulgence to compensate for inferiorities, deep feelings of being unlovable and continual confusion between reality and non-reality (1982:13). All these require counselling.

Although the focus of this study is not to explore all the areas of counselling, critically we should ask ourselves this question, if psychologically, emotionally, and physically, we are affected when we face tough and unloving situations, what about a widow who has lost her husband? How lonely is she? Having lost the bread winner, imagine how depressed she must be! Having been oppressed by the community, how stressed she is: How guilty she feels! How angry she is having been

rejected by the community! We can see then that the second key experience of widowhood is emotional distress.

According to Oates, severe grief is caused by the loss of a spouse (1997:38). Holmes and Masuda in Oates also rank the death of a spouse as the most severe stress a person has to endure (1997:38). Many continuing emotions attend the death of a spouse, depending upon the depth of intimacy and the length of the years of marriage. On the other hand, death is death even if you stayed for a day with your spouse, it is still separation and the pinch is still there.

According to an research conducted by the researcher in Nairobi, widows experience shock, depression, sorrow, loneliness, fear and rejection. Some felt unloved and unworthy. One lady by the name of Beth Wanjiku Mwai aged 45 whose husband died in 1993 said she has always felt lonely (Oral interview 12.1.2000). Most of the widows interviewed clarified that it was not easy to accept the situation and that it was painful to be called a widow. This supports Oates' view that "for women who are widows such experience is intense" (1997:41).

Velma Stevens in Oates points out that "loss of status and self-worth comes with the death of a mate" (1997:41). He explains that it is painful to be labelled a 'widow' after proudly bearing the title 'wife' (1997:41).

An interview with Mrs Njeri Kamau aged 38 of the level of standard seven and who lost her husband in 1999 was of great insight:

Due to the death of my husband, there were things which shocked me. Firstly, I couldn't believe that my husband was dead until the burial day. Secondly, I developed relentless headaches, and felt uneasy all the time. Thirdly, I felt lonely and sometimes would speak to myself. Fourthly, my children dropped out of school and they could not understand what was happening. Nobody dared to care or visit me for comfort or hope (counsel). It was unfortunate that even the church members did not visit me after the burial (Oral interview 11.1. 2001).

Another woman working as a lay reader with the Anglican Church at St Catherine , Tumaini parish,

Nairobi said that it is very strenuous and stressful when the husband passes away while your children are young (Oral interview 11.1.2001). According to her, after the death of her husband everybody in the society kept their distance from her. She said that she felt socially rejected and unloved. After a long and free discussion with the researcher, she pointed out that the only solution in assisting widows is to engage them in business opportunities in order for them to be able to support their families. She stated: "it is since the death of my husband that, I have educated my children with finances attained from my own small businesses. Today I survive through making African bags (*ciondo's* in Kikuyu)" (Peris Njeri, Oral interview 11.1.2001). Peris suggested that the church should embark on a serious programme of pastoral care to widows. She made it clear that it is a very devastating situation in somebody's life (Oral interview 11.1.2001).

Mrs Grace Mukami uneducated at 58, and whose husband died in 1995, confessed living a life of depression and uncertainty. She said that she believed that the whole world was against her. Why was this so? Neither the church nor the society could come to her rescue.

She says:

I do not know where to start because the problems I have encountered are too many. After my husband's death, my in-laws started attacking me and wanting to inherit my husband's property. They became hostile and brutal. I was chased from home through abusive language. This led me to depression. When I went to the pastor for assistance, he prayed for me but told me that he could not interfere with cultural and family issues. Due to lack of assistance from the pastor, I felt rejected, unworthy, unloved, guilty and angry. For that reason I did not want to face anybody (Oral interview 10.1.2001).

Beatrice Wanjiku Mukera aged 37, educated up to form four and whose husband died in August 1998, said that after the death of her husband she felt that life was full of uncertainties and that her future had come to an end. She said that it was hard to accept the reality (Oral interview 6.1.2001). To manage the properties left by her husband was also a problem due to the fact that she was not prepared for the responsibility. She complained of her loneliness and depression (Oral interview 12.1.2001). When asked by the interviewer what she thought could have been handled by the counsellor, she replied thus: "It may be that the counsellor could have helped me to cope with life after the death of my husband and to relate with my relatives and the society and how to deal with

in-laws who were interested in grabbing my husband's properties" (Oral interview 12 .1.2001).

2.3.1 *Accusations against Widows*

People regularly accuse widows for being instrumental in their husband's death (Kabonde 1996:197). They are either accused of neglecting them or of driving them to whatever circumstances that may have led to their deaths. In most cases the in-laws get into full swing: grabbing whatever material property their son, brother, uncle, or nephew, may have left. This is done during the mourning period when those concerned like the wife and children are still emotionally disturbed. Accusations follow immediately of how the widow is conducting herself during the mourning period. Sometimes the main interest is centred on how she dresses and how she carries herself. Criticism from all circles follow such a woman (Kabonde 1996:197).

According to Rev. Kimata (St. Polycarp Juja Road Parish), widows are always neglected and, in cases of working class scenarios, a widow is expected to resume work, hide grief, cope and adjust immediately after the funeral without any pastoral care. He commented that this is an area which the church needs to address. On other occasions she is expected to continue mourning forever, to be depressed and to portray her mournful emotions constantly. He insists that these are confusing and conflicting expectations demanded of a widow (Oral interview 8 .12 .2000).

Nwachukwu expands on these impressions by stating that:

the widow is perceived as taboo to living husbands and other males. She is subject to hopelessness, punishment, neglect, contempt, suspicion about her treachery, or lack of good care. She is perceived as threatening to other couples', relationships and suspected of adulterous living (1992:67)

From the observations of the above interviews, it is clear that widows find themselves in difficult situations of loneliness, depression, repression, and denial. For the church to meet the needs of these people it needs to have a willingness to understand the situation of widowhood. Learning is essential (Peterson 1982 :15). This includes a growing awareness of one's own emotional needs during this period of grief and later (1982:15). This is due to the fact that widows undergo traumatic

experiences after their spouse's death as identified above. These experiences (repression, denial, displaced aggression, guilt, regression, depression) will be discussed below.

Depression:

Bereavement is a major change in life experience which is a cause of depression. Atkinson *et al* asserts: "There is anxiety lest the reduced self will not be able to meet the demands of the new situation and it therefore tries to withdraw" (1995:300).

It is a well established fact that a widow who has lost her husband through death is liable to depression as this study observes. Hauckin in his book *Overcoming Common Problems; Depression* points out some causes of depression which are directly related to the situation of a widow:

- i. *Self-blame*: this is when you constantly criticize yourself, hating yourself, thinking that you are the worst person in life. He says that when you are in this situation you will most certainly become depressed. You would always blame yourself, for example, 'why I am I undergoing this situation?' 'Why me?' (1974:8). It has been very clear in this research that most widows go through this situation of self-blame.
- ii. *Self-pity*: the second way is when someone feels sorry for him/herself. This emotion occurs especially when things do not go the way you want them to while in a critical condition. It occurs mostly when you are not treated fairly by other people (1974:10). Thus, oppression is one cause of depression.
- iii. *Chemical imbalance*: Sometimes this is a result of an illness, childbirth, menopause etc.
- iv. *The after -effect*: this is an effect of a prolonged period of emotional or physical stress which can cause depression. This will right itself after appropriate rest.
- v. *Reaction to a major change in life experience*: The loss or change of job, divorce, change of house or retirement, especially when it involves loss of status and friends. In fact, change of any sort

even though it is not a disaster may precipitate depression because change represents a loss of the familiar in which a part of the self has been invested (Atkinson *et al* 1995:300).

Repression:

Peterson states that repression distorts awareness of the situation by refusal to think about the stress in the hope that it becomes less difficult over time. However, on the surface of her personality the individual may exhibit an attitude of passivity further to cover up the anxiety. The situation is such that some people refuse to accept the problem. In the case of death the person is never able to admit the problem long enough in order to cope with the situation (1982:79).

Mrs Wangechi, aged 58 and a retired teacher confessed that it was not possible to accept the situation. She felt rejected, mournful and fearful of the future. She commented that coping with the fact that her husband was no more and an uncertain future was not easy (Oral interview 8.1.2001). “The feeling of rejection, mourning and fear of the future, added to the fact that my husband is no more and he is gone forever. Being left alone, what next? I asked myself...”

The longer the repression lasts, the more intense the internal pressures become. It creates an inner stress that has no name, its major symptom being a feeling of anxiety (Peterson 1982:79).

Denial:

The other thing which affects most women after the death of their husbands is denial. Peterson says that denial distorts the reality of the situation by refusal to recognise the problem at all. The particular stress simply does not exist. As a consequence, there is nothing to cope with in that area. It is a more extreme reaction than repression, which acknowledges the situation, because even to think about the stress is far too painful. The seriousness of this defense mechanism is seen in one common result - the senses conspire to reinforce the denial, for example, during a period of grief, the footsteps of the dead person may continue to be heard as ‘proof’ that he has not died (1982:81). According to Peterson (1982:81) and Oates (1997:31) denial is a reaction of fear. It is a fear of not being able to deal with the stress. Based on the these facts, we see the need of counselling

programmes for widows. It is recommended that the Anglican Church initiates such programmes to give self-confidence and support to help overcome the denial. As Peterson states: “once reality does enter, the denial is broken”. This makes a person vulnerable and ready to adjust to the new situation (1982:81). It is crucial to have a counsellor who demonstrates real care for the person in order to help the client accept rather than deny the situation (Wicks *et al* 1985:44).

In summary, the above are some of the problems which affect widows socially, emotionally, psychologically and physically. According to this research, it is ascertained that 40% of the widows interviewed experienced physical discomforts or illness after their husband’s death (see Table 4). One woman said that she had unspecified pains, lack of appetite, felt weak and dizziness. She further had high blood pressure (Daina Wanjiku, Oral interview 31.1.2001). A larger number of the widows interviewed, claimed that they wanted to stay alone, quietly and indoors as they felt rejected, unwanted and unworthy.

Mrs Wanjiru stated, “I always wanted to stay alone, quietly indoors. I felt like I was naked or everyone saw me naked although I was fully dressed” (Oral interview 8.1.2001)

Table 4 This table indicates a total number of widows affected emotionally in the urban area as compared to rural areas.

EFFECTS	URBAN	RURAL	PERCENTAGES
Could not work due to stress	3	2	66.6%
Felt like weep and uncertain about the future.	5	4	80%
physical disorders backaches, headaches, high blood pressure etc. Avoided friends and wanted to be alone.	15	5	33.3%
Gripped by fear and shock.	5	3	60%
could not enjoy normal pleasures, had sleeping difficulties and felt rejected.	2	1	50%
TOTAL	30	15	50%

Looking at the above table, it is a reality that more widows are affected in the urban areas with loneliness and fears of what will happen in the future. This is because the cost of living in urban area is terribly high in comparison with the rural areas where someone does not have to pay for rent and other facilities. Thus, it is a fact that widows in Nairobi suffer more than widows in the remote areas.

It is against this background that this study recommends counselling widows in the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi.

2.4 Lack of Meaning and Control

The combined experience of cultural marginalisation and emotional stress leads to the third key

experience of widows identified by this research, namely, lack of meaning and control. According to Wamue, widowhood is dreaded by most women with many resorting to a state of loneliness upon realising that they have entered into the class which is considered to be the worst. At first it would be hard for a woman to accept the fact that she is indeed widowed and she would keep thinking and acting as if nothing had happened (1996:45).

Life carries on until a comment is made that awakens her feelings and makes her realise that she is no longer the “wife of” but rather the “widow of”. Others try to seek sympathy from those around them and in so doing lose respect. It is during this time of looking for sympathy that they meet with men who pretend to be deeply moved by their state and are willing to help them financially; the catch being that they agree to be their mistresses (see 2.5). In the process of being helped a widow finds herself carrying a baby. Thus she creates more problems for herself, because in most cases these men already have wives at home and are just having fun, not looking for a stable relationship. She therefore becomes more handicapped and is ridiculed by the society around her. Society is not only insensitive to widows, it treats them as inferior human beings and a liability that should be avoided like the plague. Hughes & Bennet argue that women are considered inferior and often treated badly by men in most cultures (1998:239). This becomes worse when the husband dies.

Hughes & Bennett state that there is a need for Christians involved in development to be alert to the needs of women who may have little time and power to bring their desperate needs to the attention of those who might be able to help (1998:242). While some families keep their distance, fearing to be asked to assist in possible financial problems, others just do not know how to relate to widows. Therefore, they, prefer to ignore them and pretend that nothing has happened, rather than getting involved. It is for this reason that this study will investigate problems affecting widows and finally look at how the church can assist them through advocacy, counselling and involving them in development projects via entrepreneurial-skills development.

Wamue confirms that these external forces lead to internal conflicts within a widow. She succumbs to self-condemnation, consequently blaming herself for her fate. She feels guilty, internalising the fact that she was responsible for her husband's death. This self-condemnation grows deeper and becomes self-annihilating. The widows therefore accept that they are unlucky and have no right to

be cheerful, but only to be perpetually mournful (1996:45). Many questions arise in the minds of widows. Why the circumstances? Why them? The question: Why does God allow such frustration in Christian believers? Is God just? Do they believe in vain? All these questions and many more are continuously internalised by widows in their dark path of struggle (Wamue 1996:45).

Nwachukwu observes that, in addition to emotional and physical problems, a widow may also be experiencing stress due to lack of acquaintances. The society tends to forget a widow and her children after the funeral. She states that former family friends treat them with mixed feelings and male acquaintances want to exploit them sexually and emotionally. Other women feel their in-laws have abandoned them, and the single ones get abused etc. All these factors create internal conflicts within a widow (1992:69).

The general understanding of a widow in Kenya today portrays someone suffering either psychologically or emotionally. We ask why? Because widowhood becomes an abuse of human dignity which perpetuates further psychological violence upon a person who is grieving. It is most definitely a form of sexist oppression because a widow does not seem protected by the society from any stereotype and social stigma (Wamue 1996:45). The long burial tussles, financial and property disposition all turn a widow into a pauper. In some communities there are even enslaving rituals and observations a widow has to undergo during and after the mourning period. A widow succumbs to the unnecessary scrutiny of her life (Oduyoye 1997:114). She is sometimes even omitted from major decisions about her life such as: planning her husband's burial and property distribution (Oduyoye 1997:116).

Dohen observes that :

from time immemorial the widow has been an object of special pity. To defraud widows and orphans has traditionally been considered one of the sins which cry to heaven for vengeance, and when St James detailed the marks of true religion, he said that it was to visit the widow and the fatherless in their grief. (1960:137)

When we look at our current society, we see that the plight of widows is not taken seriously. This is also a challenge to the church because despite its claims to follow Christ's noble teaching, it

seems not to protect the widow in her daily experiences. Nwachukwu confirms this by stating that:

although the Church has intervened to take over some rituals in order to forestall abuse, the Christian widow still remains handicapped in terms of finance and property inheritance. The church does not offer solutions. It is silent about abuse, suspicion, property inheritance and remarriage (1992:69).

Kirwen states correctly that this violence against a widow goes against Christian principles or traditional practices. The widow is therefore left at times to the mercy of those who wish to oppress her physically and emotionally. While churches insist that a woman must be free either to re-marry or live alone without a marital partner, African traditions insist that every woman must get married and have children. The continuity of the family is absolute in Africa (1979:11). Her husband began this process and she must fulfil her sacred obligation in order to participate fully in the procreative process. While the church only gives solution to this through re-marriage, it becomes silent on what a widow should do if re-marriage does not occur (Kirwen 1979:11).

On the other hand, single parenthood, either through death or any other factor is not encouraged in Africa. Loss of protection through marital status also implies loss of status. Victims are therefore left in a confused state not knowing whether to turn to tradition or the church (Kirwen 1979:14).

According to Kirwen:

The consequence of the church's pastoral opposition to a widow's levirate union is such that the unattached widow is able to continue to be a practicing Christian, whereas her levirate counterpart is judged to be in a state of sin (i.e. in permanent condition of sin) and so excluded from the sacrament of the church (1979:14).

It is thus clear that a widow's dilemmas are enormous. It would appear that while she may be living physically and emotionally, she is suffering. The lack of meaning and control in her own life continues to drag her down, re-emphasizing the cultural oppression and emotional stress. This then combines with the fourth key experience, financial insecurity, to and to her woes. We turn now to this issue.

2.5 Financial Insecurity

In Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, women are economically deprived. This situation is exacerbated when the husband, who has been the sole breadwinner, dies leaving his wife with no financial support to look after herself and her children. Traditionally, these women were catered for by the levirate marriage. With the coming of Christianity and all the other ‘blessings’ of modernization, care for widows has dramatically changed.

culture has played a great role in many tribes. In Kenya women are denied freedom, discriminated against and oppressed (Midgley 1995:122). Oduyoye states that through statutory law a widow has the right to inherit her husband’s property but due to their inferior status in society as the looked down upon; the second class citizens; “the shadowy little creatures, they are left without protection” (1997:109). “Even the law acts against them” she asserts (1997:109). Culturally, women are said to be weak. They are said to be of ‘the weaker sex’ (Oduyoye 1997:133). They are not supposed to lead or talk when men are there. Oduyoye further says that culturally women are/were considered as people who cannot think or make any decision on anything (1997:133). She points out that some communities even refer women as children (1997:133).

Above all, the widow faces the likelihood of bringing up her children without any material support. Moreover, in the current church situation there is no room for widows to be catered for from the financial point of view. Peter Maina, the Administrative Secretary in the Diocese of Nairobi says: “it is because of the economic decline” (Oral interview 12.1.2001). He commented that the original intention behind Maridadi Fabrics was to raise the standards of the destitute, marginalised, single women and widows through imparting skills to them (Oral interview 12.1.2001) (After personal communication he referred me to Maridadi fabrics). Maridadi fabrics is a Diocesan institution which was started in 1971 to train single ladies, the poor, widows, and the marginalised in developing entrepreneurial skills. In today’s society with its expensive life-style expectations this is not possible.

An interview with Cynthia Philomena Njambi aged 36 of the level of form four reveals that her financial situation is devastating. She says that after the death of her husband in 1998 things suddenly changed. She was evicted from the house they rented, since she could not afford to pay

the rent. She went to stay with a cousin, who could not afford to feed her and her children. During the time of the interview, she was stranded and was being used by the cousin as a house maid with no pay. The greatest worry was that even the relatives who opted in the burial ceremony that they will support her never turned up. She said:

Even those people who opted in the burial ceremony that they will support us, including my brother in-law, father in-law, relatives and friends, that was the end. (Oral interview 30.1.2001)

The researcher came across an example of a widow who was abused, violated, dumped and persecuted by one of the rich tycoons in the city due to her financial instability (the name withheld). According to this lady, everyone had deserted her and it seemed nobody was ready to come to her rescue. Therefore, when a tycoon in that area showed the interest of assisting her, she was very impressed. She says that due to the fact that this man had a good reputation in the area, she could not expect any bad outcome from this tycoon.

She points out that:

The people of our area calls him 'Boss.' They just gave him that name because he is a highly respected man who has accumulated wealth through trade. He won me in 1998 since my husband died in February 2nd 1997. He came first as an angel of light giving as many promises as he could. He never uttered any word sex at first but all what he said was helping me to educate my two boys whom their dad left. He also promised me job in his projects, shops, flour mills and hotels. I was to be a financial controller. I thought this man was good since he was sympathetic. He began to support me and my children. My children were happy because they could not understand life at this age. I felt that the man was so caring and within a short time relationship started to develop. Finally, I found myself being his mistress. My children dressed well and I lived a high standard of life based on this money (Oral interview 5.1.2001).

According to her, the relationship did not take long before she conceived. She says: "After eight months of deep intimate friendship, I discovered that I had conceived and I was pregnant" (Oral interview 5.1.2001). This made her to be embarrassed because there was no way she could escape the blame, she claims, "people know that my husband was dead. In addition to this they know me as a pure Christian. What a mess". When this widow took a step to go and confront the man that she was pregnant, the interviewee told the researcher that the man was shocked and became rude to

her. He told her violently that she was insane and he knows nothing concerning the issue. This further aggravated her situation of widowhood as she said, “This is where stress has been consuming and melting my life like metal by high voltage flames” (Oral interview 5.1.2001).

As explained in the previous pages, a widow is someone who was once married and who was cared for financially, socially and culturally. As a once-married woman, she does not have access to the social system which is supposed to care for her. A widow with a son may still have someone to protect her, care for her and represent the family in society. Arthur Kariuki, a prominent church elder of St John’s Church Pumwani argues that not all widows are financially depressed because they might have capable sons and daughters who may be flourishing financially. Kariuki nonetheless adds that such widows still need pastoral care (counselling) to help them cope with the situation of widowhood, such as grief, loss and change of life-style (Oral interview 29.12.2000).

2.6 The Church and Widows suffering With AIDS

This section attempts to look at AIDS not because its is a direct problem by itself for widows, but because it amplifies the other four key issues and it has an impact on cultural marginalisation. Based on St Francis of Assisi’s words: “where there is despair let us show hope,” (a statement was made by Kwa Zulu church leaders during the X111 International AIDS Kwa Zulu Natal church Leaders Conference in Kwa Zulu Natal: Anglican News May/June 2000). The church should advise, support and give practical care to AIDS victims. They stressed that by commitment and strategic planning it can be able to assist in practical ways that do not require large amounts of money. In their statement they stated that sub-Saharan Africa has the largest number of people living with AIDS (Anglican News May/June). According to Hubley, AIDS first appeared in Africa in 1982 (1990:2). It is a fact that most of the churches in Africa, by then, were against the use of condoms and were unwilling to allow education on AIDS in their areas of influence. All sorts of speculations were made. Kanyoro held that women were caught in the same syndrome of blame, condemnation and denial. Unfortunately, when AIDS came into our communities it did not visit only those thought to be promiscuous but also those respected in the society. Professionals, educated and religious people

were affected alongside with truck drivers and casual labourers (Kanyoro 2000:25). In Kenya this has been a deadly disease and has caused many women to be widows and many children to be orphans, especially in the city or Diocese of Nairobi where this study is focused.

Kanyoro states:

In fact both Christianity and culture are at fault because neither has directly tackled the inequalities of women and men in Africa. These inequalities are deep seated. AIDS has manifested these tensions and inequalities like nothing before it. The healing of Africa will depend on the culture's ability to meaningfully address the age-old revered cultural, social and sexual practices which are putting women at risk (2000:25).

Kanyoro points out that women bear the brunt of AIDS. They are the most at risk for infection. They are the economically marginalised especially if their husbands die of AIDS. "They are always the people to blame," she explains (2000:25). She alludes that those who develop AIDS are just scapegoats who throw AIDS to their family structures (2000:25). In all situations widows become the sufferers. As society's care givers, women, carry the social, psychological and physical burden of AIDS (2000:25). It is at this point that the church should address the economic and cultural structures that make women most vulnerable, especially widows who are AIDS victims. Educating people about equality ought to be emphasised.

A discouraging situation is an example of a Luo woman whom the researcher interviewed. The name has been withheld at the request of the interviewee. The woman is aged 36 and has form four education, her husband who was the main breadwinner in the family died of AIDS last year (2000). They had both stayed in Nairobi since they got married in 1992. She survived as a housewife, totally dependent on her husband. She claims that after her husband's death, she faced the blame. She says:

Due to the fact that my husband died of AIDS I decided not to be married to my brother-in-law as is according to the Luo custom. Also, given the fact that I was infected I felt it was not wise to infect my brother in-law. The other issue was that I am a Christian. This caused a big conflict between my relatives, families and friends because they couldn't understand why I was not abiding by the cultural regulations of a widow. It was unfortunate that we lived for most of the time in Nairobi, therefore, after the death of my husband the blame was on me. Being married in the church I felt I had a voice in my husband's property only to

realise that after his death I had no voice. My brothers-in-law jumped at me and claimed everything my husband had. Unfortunately, my husband had not written any will, therefore the struggle still remains and now I am depressed and suppressed because the world has turned upside down, not even knowing what will happen to my children in the future. The question is where am I? I am an AIDS victim, the society sees me negatively and at the same time the church does not want to interfere (Oral interview 7.1.2001).

In support to the above, Ngero, a reporter in the *East African Standard* newspaper gives evidence of a widow who was rejected for refusing a cultural rite (15.5.2001). Jemima Atieno comes from central Kolwa whose husband died of AIDS in year 2000 and their last born son Joseph Onyago aged two is also HIV positive. The family was a rich family and owned sewing machines. According to Jemima, when the husband died the in-laws grabbed all the property which they had initially leaving her with nothing. The *East African Standard* newspaper says that she had to appeal to the well wishers for support (15.5.2001). The main reason why Jemima was neglected was because she refused to abide by the cultural regulations of the Luo community. She states that: "My in-laws still insist that I must conform to the dictates of society and must be inherited", reported by Ngero (*East African Standard* 15.5.2001).

Based on the above facts, the Diocese of Nairobi will not be able to successfully address the issue of widows unless it is also willing to deal with AIDS, questioning cherished cultural assumptions and discard those traditional practices that frustrate women, their health and well-being. The church also needs to work towards building mutual relationships, between men and women. It is a fact that AIDS has penetrated the community, as earlier stated, and it has left many disabled families. The question is: Should we watch while people are suffering? We have seen that women have been victims of circumstances, especially widows. This study therefore supports Nicolson's assertion that we have no choice about the ministry to those suffering with AIDS. He says, "All of us are part of the problem because we share the same world which has created the condition of AIDS" (1996:86). We should be committed as God's people to those who are suffering. He argues that we cannot be God's people without having a concern for those who are suffering (1996:86). Therefore, it is the church's concern to minister to the widows with AIDS.

2.7 Conclusion

First we looked at the cultural marginalisation of widows. It was observed that those customs which are oppressive to widows should be condemned. It was also ascertained that once a woman got married she was regarded as their responsibility and thus answerable to the husband's clan. This is simply because of the bride price paid to her parents (Muriithi 2000:24). Emotional problems relating to widowhood were explored. Also, marriage in the African context was looked at. In many societies, such as the Luo of Kenya, a dowry is described in terms of payment: a 'gift' and 'sign' of marriage. It assures the parental inheritance and identity of the children (Kirwen 1979:30).

The fundamental concern of this dissertation is that most women are left in the critical and crucial stages of either starting or raising their families. This has made the condition of widowhood a dreadful one where a widow is to become, almost inevitably, economically, socially, psychologically and emotionally depressed.

SECTION B

JUDGE

WIDOWS, SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH

CHAPTER THREE

WIDOWS IN THE SCRIPTURE

In the preceding chapter, the researcher looked at widows' experiences in relation to cultural marginalisation, emotional stress, lack of meaning and control and financial insecurity. The chapter pointed out that due to the death of a husband, a woman lives in a state of depression and dire socio-economic stress. The fundamental question thus is: What is the church supposed to do practically and effectively to alter these traditional ways and promote adequate and compassionate care for widows? In an attempt to answer this question, particularly in relation to the church and the scripture, this chapter explores what the scripture says about widows.

3.1 The Old Testament Period

According to Thurston, the notion of protection of widows, orphans and the poor did no originate in the Old Testament for it was a common policy of the Ancient Near East . The protection of widows, orphans and the poor was the will of the gods, the virtue of kings and the duty of the common people. However, when one looks at the Old Testament there is the view that God is the only one who can ultimately bring justice and deliverance to the weak, according to his promises (Exodus 22:21-24; 23:6; Deut 10:18; 14:28-29) (Thurston 1989:14). The widow was entitled to receive maintenance during her husband's life-time and thereafter it was the duty of the family of the deceased husband to provide such on a continuous basis. They were expected to provide life expenses (Cecil and Wigoder 1982:493). Furthermore, she was allowed to stay on in the dwelling she previously shared with her husband. The only difference was that she was not allowed to live in all the sections of the communal house in the same way as when her husband was alive. In addition, she was prohibited from transferring ownership of the dwelling to others nor to let out any part of it . The right of residence but letting out ownership meant that she could maintain a certain status, albeit different from before (Cecil & Wigoder1982:494).

Concerning the apartment she shared with the husband's family, the widow's right was to make use of it while she was still alive. On her death it would return to her husband's family. If a widow survived with small children of the husband, both boys and girls, and the estate was insufficient to maintain all of them, her rights prevailed. If, however, the young children surviving were either all boys or all girls they all shared equally in the estate (Elwell 1996:817).

Whenever the widow became engaged to another man, her right of maintenance ceased because she was then dependent on another man. She found another family in which her name would be defended and her husband's honour would be constituted by the notion of a strong male force protecting her.

The classic example, however, of the care of the widow by the deceased husband's family is that of the levirate marriage, i.e. where the father of the deceased husband had to give the eldest unmarried son to the widow as husband (Cecil & Wigoder 1982:494). Cecil and Wigoder note that the Jewish law provided both economic and social assistance for the widows in different degrees (1982:494).

Another writer who supports Cecil & Wigoder is Ryrie. He says that the Old Testament often defended the cause of the widow and orphan. God is spoken of as the judge of widows, and the mosaic law pronounced a special curse upon those who afflicted widows. According to Ryrie the levirate, that is the marriage of a widow by her brother-in-law after the death of her husband, helped to protect the rights of the widow (1978:81).

- **Levirate marriage and the challenge of injustice.**

A good illustration of the issues involved in the levirate marriage is found in the story of Tamar. In Genesis 38:11-14, Tamar is a widow. According to custom, the father-in-law of a widow had to give his eldest unmarried son to a widow as husband. The responsibility for this act was that of the father-in-law. According to the story, her husband, Er, passed away. It is clear that Tamar had no children during the lifetime of her husband (Meyers *et al* 2000:161). According to the levirate

marriage practice, Tamar's father-in-law Judah, assigned his second born son, Onan, to take care of his brother's wife . He had to be a substitute of the deceased brother by helping his widow to conceive an heir (Von Rad 1979:355). Besides that, the substitution also implied a continuation of the name of the deceased brother in the community of Israel, such that: "his brother's name may not be blotted out of Israel" (Von Rad 1979:358). However, since Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, he spilled his semen on the ground whenever he engaged in sexual intercourse with his brother's wife so that he would not give offspring to his brother (Genesis 38:39). When he did this Judah told Tamar to live in his house until his other son, Shelah had grown up (Meyers *et al* 2000:161). ⁴ When Shelah had grown up and still failed to fulfill his duty, Tamar devised a plan to get Judah himself to help her conceive a child (Meyers *et al* 2000:161). She decided therefore to procure her right by herself a "nasty plan which could cost her both her honour and her life" (Genesis 38:14); (Westermann 1986:53).

The challenge is that although the concept of levirate marriage might be perceived to be patriarchal, at least there was one redeeming dimension: widows were catered for. But in the case of Tamar there was perceived injustice and, as a result, death was meted out upon her brother-in-law (Von Rad 1979:358). By trapping Judah to make her pregnant she risked her pride as well as her life. According to the law, if a widow was found to be pregnant by a man other than the deceased husband's brother it could cost her life (Meyers *et al* 2000:162).

She resorted to pretending to be a prostitute and enticed her father-in-law to sleep with her. Prostitution was common in the Mediterranean world but for the Israelites, it was strictly forbidden. Deuteronomy 23:17 says, "None of the daughters of Israel shall be a temple prostitute; none of the sons of Israel shall be a temple prostitute." The fact that Judah himself slept with a prostitute may be because he, himself, was a widower (Meyers *et al* 2000:162).

⁴ It is worthwhile noting that the Israelite story has some similarities with the researcher's own cultural background because the issue of continuity of name is much emphasised in the Kikuyu community.

Tamar became pregnant and this was communicated to Judah. He wanted to have her banned as was the custom. When she showed the sign, the cord and the staff which she took from him on the night of sexual intercourse, Judah acknowledged his mistake (Genesis 38:24-27); (Meyers *et al* 2000:162).

The story of Tamar illustrates the predicament of widows the extent to which they had to go through the religious and cultural understanding of the levirate marriage and the religious cultural penalties involved.

- **The implications of the law towards widows in the Old Testament**

According to Elwell, the Old Testament attempted to provide a social security net for the widow. She was not to be exploited (Exodus 22:21-22; Deuteronomy 27:19). She was specifically permitted to glean the fields and vineyards during harvest time (Deuteronomy 27:19). Tithes were to be shared with her. It was clear that provisions for her were made during religious festivals and her garment could not be taken as collateral for a loan (Deuteronomy 24:17). It is also noted that the levirate institution provided for her an heir for the land, if she was childless, and also helped her to be integrated back into the society.

Moreover, the supreme measure by which a ruler in Israel was to be judged was whether such powerless ones were cared for (Jeremiah 22:16) (1996:817). This moral code challenges today's society, where nobody cares for the widow or her children.

In the Old Testament, the maltreatment of a widow or orphan is forbidden by God. Since God wants to see justice for all society, this justice includes those already socially disadvantaged due to their social positioning. The quality of such a concern is showed towards Israel by God when they were aliens in Egypt (Exodus 22:21-24).

Exodus 22:21-24 says:

You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when any cry to me, I will surely heed their cry; my wrath will burn and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall

become widows and your children orphans.

This text also shows that the cry towards God for help will surely bring his justice upon the alien, the widow and the orphan. Moreover, such justice on their behalf is positioned within the faith tradition of God as a warrior and liberator: a God who liberates from oppression and leads the exodus. The text also shows the threat of the Israelites themselves becoming widows and orphans. God is concerned about those who are already socially disadvantaged: those who experience no care, no compassion and no justice in their interaction with other people. Thus, God places Himself directly in the role of a special protector (Elwell 1996:817).

In this section the Old Testament understanding of widowhood has been explored. One thing which has also been noted is that the levirate marriage was a way of caring for widows. It has also pointed out that the law was strictly observed. Thus, according to Elwell (1996); Henry (1973); Gehman (1969); Meyers *et al* (2000), the law limited the possibilities of the social and economic exploitation of a widow. Justice was followed (Gehman 1969:993) and oppression of widows under any circumstance was counted as sin (Henry 1973:709).

When one looks at our own context and that of the Anglican Church, the questions which arise are: Has the church seen the need to engage in a holistic ministry and to ensure a fulfilment of the social and physical needs of widows? How are these going to be met so that all widows can retain their dignity?

3.2 Jesus and Widows

What was said about widows in the Old Testament is equally applicable to the New Testament. Widows formed a class which suffered financially because of their social deprivation (Thurston 1989:19; Ryrie 1978:81). Thus, in the New Testament widows formed that group of people to whom both Jesus and the early church ministered. In a sense they were part of the ministry. According to Thurston, “Mark uses Jesus’ reference to widows in 12:38-44 to show how Jesus stepped forward

as the true advocate of the oppressed and exploited” (1989:22).

Thurston states:

In this sense they were the object of the effective ministry of believers. However, they were also indicative of a spectrum of disadvantaged groups in the society and, as such, were representative of the ministry’s focus: those who are marginalised, those who do not have systems caring for or representing them, in short, those who suffer injustice. (1989:20)

The Gospel reveals ample evidence relating to Jesus’s relationship to women and the involvement of women in his life and ministry (Luke 7:11-15) (Thurston 1989:23). Jesus accepted and affirmed women as persons of worth even though they were neglected or rejected within the society. Jesus taught women and included them as his disciples. This confirms their involvement in the proclamation of the Good News (Green 1992:880). Jesus’ attitudes stood in stark contrast to the larger Greco-Roman society in which the male view of women was usually negative and the place of women was understood to be limited to the domestic roles of wife and mother (Thurston 1989:15).

Furthermore: “women were described by male writers as responsible for most sins and especially for sexual temptation and sin” (Green 1992:880). Through his actions, Jesus challenged such mind-set and the understanding of the status and role of women (including widows). He did this, by showing his compassion and care to all sectors of society. His attitude of accepting women as human beings contrasted with the attitude of religious functionaries (Ketshabile 1996:177)

Jesus did so even though he must have known that the law and the way it was practiced did not allow any man to have social interactions with women. This law certainly prohibited men from speaking with, or touching a woman in public. Jesus, however, purposely broke this law. (Thurston 1989:22).

Jesus was a man who had the intention of transforming the negative attitudes of Jewish society towards widows and women. Ultimately his objective was to put himself forward as a trustworthy model for both sexes. Despite the fact that he only chose twelve male apostles, it appears from the text that he still had a keen sense of not allowing the superiority of man or the inferiority of women

(Wayne 1980:65-69). Jesus appeared to have had no problems in relation to the status and position of women. All four gospels depict his relationship with women as easy and natural. He allowed women to touch him, accompany him, serve him and listen to his teachings (Thurston 1989:21-28). Jesus's approach shows a radically different understanding of women and widows in society. He was not offended by their status and position as others were (Luke 4:25-26; 18:1-8) (Thurston 1989:23).

Wayne supports Thurston by saying that Jesus was a person who was able to approach all classes of people in society with compassion. Furthermore, he was able to reach the outcasts, the sick, publicans and prostitutes with love and forgiveness (Wayne 1990:69). In his approach he gave women special attention. This is especially evident in his openness and his acceptance of women. He regarded them as equal with men in the community of faith (Luke 4:25-26). Mckenna (1994:147) confirms the fundamental reasons why Jesus loved widows: "Jesus had a special fondness for widows because his mother was one for most of her life" (Mckenna 1994:147). Widows formed part of the *anawin*: the poor ones of Yahweh. People regarded them as outcasts, marginalised and problematic to society. No one would choose to be part of this group, which was usually seen as suffering, and lonely (Mckenna 994:147).

Mckenna further points out that the attitude and the quality of interaction with women served as criteria for one's faithfulness to God (1994:48). "This was so because it was expected of believers to treat them with love and honour to reveal integrity and faithfulness to the covenant community of God's people . As in the Old Testament, failure to comply with the covenant of God (Yahweh) provided a situation where God (Yahweh) would send a prophet to remind them about the covenant" Mckenna states (1994:148). Symbolically then, to honour God meant to care for the poor. The Jewish community knew the impact of failing to take care of the poor. Mckenna asserts: "In the Jewish tradition, the poor, (the *anawin*) constitute a privileged presence, where the people of God practice their obedience to the covenant and reveal to the nations the presence of God in their midst" (1994:148).

This is well illustrated in the story of Anna, the daughter of Phanuel who prophesied at Jesus' circumcision. She was a widow up to the age of eighty-four after seven years of marriage.

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after marriage , then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. (Luke 2:36-38)

It is significant that she served as a prophetess and that it is as such that she knew that the child was the Messiah. There are at least three important points here: Firstly, even though she was '*anawin*', she could function as a prophetess. The prophetic office in the Old Testament was particularly critical of the injustice of social structures and of the unjust behaviour of leaders. It also communicated the will of God (Thurston 1989:24). The fact that she was a woman, even more importantly a widow is significant, in this area.. Secondly, and related to the previous point, the status of Simeon was completely different from that of Anna. Although he was: "righteous, devout" and guided by the Spirit, he only came into the temple that day. Anna, who was in the office of a prophetess, never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. It is in this situation that she not only function as 'prophet' but also as a mediator between God and her nation (Tucker 1992:97). Thirdly Thurston says that widows who abstained from a second marriage were regarded as 'honourable' and fulfilled the required qualifications of 'enrolled widows' (1989:25).

In all these three contexts, we have Anna as a widow functioning within the tradition. That which is dishonourable of being a widow in the eyes and system of society, is made the most important within this context. Jesus, in his relationship and ministry, kept this perspective alive. Let us look at the story of the raising of the widow's son (Lk 7:12): when Jesus raised the son of the widow, he revealed his compassion and power over death and his attitude towards widows. In Luke 7:12 it is written: "As she approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from town." I think Jesus was moved by the fact that the dead man was the only son of his mother and that she was a

widow. The widow was now all alone in the world without a ‘male protector and provider’ (Morris 1983:140). She was left alone and in a state of deprivation. Thurston elaborates by saying that the widow of Nain lost her ‘legal protector’ together with her ‘social security’ (1989:23). Thurston depicts the widow as a social, economic as well as a legal category.

It is in these contexts that Jesus’ compassion must be understood. The story points to the fact that Jesus’ has power to raise someone from the dead and to show that his compassion is a real compassion dealing with the social, economic and legal deprivation of the widow. When Jesus gave the child back to the mother, he restored both the life of the widow as well as that of the son. Through her son she had a future again with responsibility and at least some dignity. She could again be represented in the society, in legal matters as well as in economic affairs. If this did not happen, the widow could have been devalued to the level of a beggar. Without her child she could be put outside the confines of the town to beg, because the child was the hope for daily life and: “the law stipulates that the first born son cares for his widowed mother until he was thirty years of age” (McKenna 1994:156).

By raising the son from the dead, Jesus saved two lives. Through that, he dealt with social, economical and spiritual matters of which pastoral care must follow suit.

3.3 Widownhood in the Wider New Testament

This section will explore widownhood in the wider New Testament and the early church. It will look at what the book of Timothy, James and Acts says about caring for widows.

The grouping together of widows, aliens and orphans as a category of persons who suffer injustice in society is one of the many strands of tradition which the New Testament shares with the Old Testament. Ryrie observes that under circumstances of failure to honour a levirate marriage, widows were left to make their own way and at the same time become objects of charity (1958:81). Ryrie says: “so neglected had they become at the time of Christ that the Jews had to establish a fund in the

temple for the purpose of relief to widows and orphans" (1958:81).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, these people were usually not cared for by the society since they were people who lacked one or more of the basic elements which make a person a full participant in the society. Widows lacked husbands, orphans lacked fathers and aliens, even the male aliens, did not have rights in the society. The fact that both the Old and the New Testaments treat this problem in the general context of social injustice these group of people experienced in the society, shows the sensitivity towards social and economic injustice presented in the Bible (Henry 1973:709). This sensitivity is also indicated in the cry for God's intervention in relation to justice to an inhumane society (Gehman 1969:993). Elwell asserts that God's intervention, again, shows divine compassion, a compassion after which society was expected to (model itself 1996:817).

According to Henry, one of the first major problems in the early church to which the apostles had to give attention was the needs of those widows who were being neglected in the daily offerings (Acts 6:1); (1973:709). Elwell points out that the early church defined the essence of true religion as demonstrating compassion to the poor and the needy, in particular the widows and the orphan (James 1:27); (1996:818). This is to support what James says: "Religion that God our father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted from the world" (James 1:27); (Henry 1973:709). From this understanding it is clear that the care of women whose husbands had died was always regarded as the prime duty of the people of God. They were free to remarry. In that case the situation was totally altered. But as long they were "widows indeed" Paul instructs Timothy they were to be treated with solicitude, care, and concern (1Timothy 5:3). Indeed, under the Deuteronomic law, if a man did not leave his wife with anything, it became the responsibility of the man's brother to act as husband to the widow (Henry 1973:709; Artkinson *et al* 1995:892).

Writing to Timothy, Paul urges that young widows should remarry (1Tim 5:11). At the same time he stresses that those who are definitely widows, i.e. those without relatives to support them, and who are in regular attendance and observance of their religious duties, should be accorded a special

status within the church and be given priority in the financial resources of the church (Henry 1973:710). Tenney & Barabas emphatically state that by the time the Pastoral Epistles were written the Christian community had not changed its basic attitude towards widows but experience was forcing reconsideration (1Tim 5:3-16); (1977:928). Tenney& Barabas therefore state, “ There was need to distinguish between those who really needed and those who could be left to the care of the relatives” (1977:928).

In Acts a special fund was instituted for widows and the church proposed that mature young widows were to remarry while others were maintained economically (Acts 6:1-6); (Ewell 1996:818). What the above writers are trying to expound is that widows were categorised in the early church according to their needs and age (Henry 1973:710). Thus, the particular status of widows within the church today should never be forgotten. According to Henry, most churches have members like such godly women who are committed to prayers. He says that it should be the unfailing responsibility of the church to cherish and nourish such (1973:710). He asserts that to leave them in their problems of the ravages of want and fear is totally unchristian (1973:710).

In this section, we looked at the care of widows in the New Testament and we also highlighted the ministry of Jesus towards widows. It was noted that widows were marginalised and exploited; but through Jesus’s ministry, compassion and care was offered to them. It was ascertained that the early church took the responsibility of caring for these people. Morris and Thurston argue that Jesus met the social, economic and legal needs of widows. According to the information gathered in this chapter, it has been ascertained that it is a biblical tradition to care for destitutes, the widow, orphan, the stranger and the poor. These are people who do not have sufficient social means to have representation in social, economic and legal situations.

The main theological argument can be formulated as follows: God saves people. He first saved Israel but later he wants to save all people from materially oppressive situations. He continued this mission through Jesus’ ministry. The task of the church is to continue this tradition in its ministry and organisation, i.e. to act and interact in liberatory ways and to organise the church in a way that

brings about not further repression, but freedom (Hulley *et al* 1996:101; Cochrane *et al* 1991:96).

3.4 Widows and the Church Through the Centuries

This section attempts to look at widowhood and the church through the centuries, that is, how the church fathers, theologians and leaders dealt with the issue of widowhood.

3.4.1 *Patristics*

Patristics are the books of church fathers whose writings were considered orthodox after the death of the apostles (Henry 1973: 489). In spite of all the differences in terms of culture, methods of reasoning and presuppositions, they wrestled with challenging issues affecting the church in that particular time (Richardson & Bowden 1988:434).

Richardson and Bowden say that the major issues in this time were questions about: God and his relationship with the world; his creativity; and his essential nature, faith, knowledge, science, revelation, meaning and interpretation. Other questions raised were about the nature of prayer, providence and matters like the doctrine of the trinity and Christology. Issues on how to handle widows were also looked at (1988: 435). According to Bercot, some of the outstanding bishops during this time like Tertullian, Cyprian, and Clement of Alexandria supported the honouring of widows (1988:435). Widows were given an opportunity to serve God and were content with the subsistence from the church (Bercot 1998:684). Bercot explains that Cyprian went to the extent of contributing from his own portion. “I request you be diligent to take care of the widows, the sick, and all the poor. Moreover, you may supply from my own portion” (Cyprian in Bercot 1998: 491). Clement and Ignatius argued that presbyters should be compassionate and merciful, also being committed in visiting the disadvantaged and not neglecting the widows (Bercot 1998:491). Another enthusiastic preacher, theologian and leader of the time who looked at the welfare of widows was John Chrysostom (347 to 406).

Harry Boer says:

For fourteen years he addressed vast crowds, extorting them to simple faith and uprightness of life. During these years he also wrote with high praise concerning the monastic life,

virginity, and continued widowhood after the death of a husband. (1976: 155)

According to Barclay, Ignatius, a church father and a theologian, confirmed the church's commitment to supporting widows by pointing at the apostolic constitutions:

O bishop, be mindful of the needy both reaching out thy helping hand and making provisions for them as the steward of God, distributing the offerings, seasonably to every one of them, to the widows, the orphans, the friendless and those tried with affliction. (1960:123)

According to McNeill (1559: 1269) and Bercot (1998:683), the order of widowhood was only eligible to the aged but this did not restrict the assistance of young unmarried widows. Supporting this idea Douglas points out that older women were not supposed to remarry but give themselves to the service of the lord in the life of the church (1989:409). In supporting the order of widows Tertullian commented,

Choose your ‘widows’ not less than sixty years of age, that measure the suspicion of a second marriage may be prevented by their age. For if you admit a younger woman into the order of widows . . . and she marries, she will bring indecent reflections on the glory of the order of widows. And she will give an account to God not because she married a second time, but because she has “waxed wanton against Christ,” and has not kept her promise. Therefore, such promise should not, be rashly made but with great caution. (Bercot 1998:683)

Calvin, a well-known theologian, said “widows were taken under protection of the church that they might be supported out of the common funds” (1856:120). In his *Commentaries on the epistle to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, he pointed that widows deserved honour (1856:120). Honour did not mean respect but special care to widows by bishops in the ancient church, he asserts(1856:120). (1856:120). In recognition of Paul’s theology in 1Timothy 5:3-8, Calvin also categorizes widows into two: those who are sixty and above, and those who are sixty and below. He recommends those below sixty to remarry while those above sixty to be taken care of by the church (1856:128). Calvin points out that widows were received by the church to relieve their poverty and at the same time offered an opportunity to serve as far as their health allowed (Calvin 1856:128).

Luther, who is known as an outstanding theologian of the Reformation and who believed in salvation by grace, in his works *1 Corinthian, Lectures on 1 Timothy, and Philemon* had a similar

argument with Calvin that only those widows who are sixty and above and had nobody to support them deserved, the support from the church (Oswald 1973:335).⁵

Luther in Oswald suggests:

This widow has no kin for whom she can care. She is simply by herself. She is also the sort who has set her hope on God. This is a great statement. She has no one for whom to care. Such women have been abandoned that they have nothing left except to hope in God. They should be called into company and nurtured. (1973:335)

According to McNeill, Calvin made a distinction between a nun and a widow. He said widows joined the ministry due to their position but a nun sacrificed herself throughout her life for God's service. Widows who joined the order of widows vowed not to remarry (McNeill 1559:1269).⁶ The church through the centuries has been supportive to them, Barclay says, "no people have ever cared for the needy and its aged than the early church did" (1960:122). According to Jewish law which the church accepted during the time of marriage a man vowed to provide for his wife but in the event of his death, the church cared for her (Barclay 1960:122).

According to Luther, the church is only supposed to assist the really destitute widows, those who have no families to support them while those who have capable children and families are to care for themselves (Oswald 1973:337). When one looks critically at Luther's and Calvin's theology on widowhood, one definitely recognises that they base their theology on Paul's teaching to Timothy in 1 Timothy, 5:3-8.

3.4.2 Anglicanism

According to Hillerbread in the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation, Anglicanism has its origin

⁵ Since this dissertation is specifically on widowhood, for more information about reformation see: Pelikan, J. 1923. *The Christian Tradition. A History of the Development of Doctrine: 4 Reformation of Church and Dogma 1300-1700*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

⁶ For more information about the distinction of widows and nuns, see: McNeill, J. (ed) 1559. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*. U.S.A.: The Westminster Press.

in the Nineteenth century in England (1996:38). It began with the supposition that a national state is an independent political entity, which rightfully was to take charge of its own affairs while maintaining continuity with the earliest church, the scripture and the first four general councils, with the early church fathers (1996:39). The word Anglican means “‘English’ and in combination with *Ecclesia* refers to the church of England terminology dating from the twentieth century” (1996:38). Wright in Hillerbread points out that Anglicanism referred to a geographical entity and did not, as it did later, involve doctrinal considerations (1996:38).

Hillerbread says:

The phenomenon of “Anglicanism” emerged historically with the development of the nineteenth century quest for the uniqueness of the doctrine and discipline of the English church and with the spread of that beyond Britain to other parts of the world forming the Anglican communion of autonomous church voluntarily adhering to the doctrine and discipline of the English church. (1996:39)

He further states that the bishops of the Anglican communion met in the Lambeth conference in 1930. During this conference they recognized that “the term Anglican at one time had purely local connotations but now referred to the doctrine of the Catholic faith as contained in scripture, stated in the creeds, expressed in the sacraments of the gospel and rites of the primitive church as set forth in the book of common prayer by Cranmer in 1549 (1996:39). “It is on this basis of understanding that the quest for Anglican identity and Anglican root has been conducted” (Hillerbread 1996:39).

When we look at the theological understanding of the Anglican ecclesiology, firstly, the church was viewed as essential in every detail of human life. Secondly, to be in Christ was to be in the church, his body, to be baptized in the sacrament of justification and to be participant in holy communion, the sacrament of sanctification (Hillerbread 1996:39).⁷ However, in terms of widowhood, correspondence with the Lambeth palace library in England has uncovered that the Anglican church has never produced a document or made a resolution about care for widows (Linehan 25th June

⁷ For more information about Anglicanism and its doctrines see: Hillerbread, H. J. (ed) 1996. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Reformation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2001).⁸ Perhaps the best we can infer is that the church was concerned with every detail of human life, i.e., the poor, orphans, disadvantaged and the widows. We also need to understand that it followed the steps of the church fathers as earlier stated

3.4.3 *Mothers Union*

The mother's union is a world wide society of Christian women in the Anglican communion or churches in communion. It is under the patronage of the archbishops, bishops, and priests. It was found in 1876 by Mary Simner at Old Arresford in Hampshire near Winchester. It was in her house where she called many women from all different walks of life together. In the parish her husband ministered by informing them of the importance of a mother's union. Mary's main work was to pray and run meetings in the parish for all mothers. One of the things she did was to encourage them to give their children religious education. Her desire and vision were to uphold Christian family life and the unity of all mothers. Due to her commitment and determination it grew from strength to strength. This made them feel the need for a union and the importance of ministering to homes which have been met with adversities. This ministry had to include widows, widowers and orphans.⁹ This section clarified that widows were classified into two categories, first category was those who were sixty and above. The second category was for those who were sixty and below. However, below sixty they were permitted to marry, whereas for those above sixty, the church took the responsibility (Barclay 1960:126).

Barclay assumes that this was a picture of the early church where there was an order of widows who were set apart for special duties in the life and work of the church (1960:126).

In summary, this section looked at widowhood during the Patristics. It was clear that widows were recognized, supported and given a place of honour in the church. Thus it was noted that the church throughout the centuries has taken responsibility in caring, recognizing and supporting widows.

3.5 Widowhood and the Church in Africa

⁸This information was received through a letter from the assistant librarian of the Lambeth Palace library in England on 25th June 2001.

⁹ This information is from the Mother's Union Service Book. Diocese of Natal.

We will now look back at the time when the missionaries brought the good news to Kenya in the 20th century (Anderson 1988: 4-7). When the missionaries introduced Christianity, some changes took place within the culture of the society such as marriage contracts, the attitude towards polygamy, customary and church marriage, death rituals, levirate unions and so forth. So the question would be what effect did Christianity have on the life of a widow?

The introduction of Christianity, Westernization, and capitalism reduced the value and importance of the extended family (Sono 1994:61). Indeed, it created an individualistic ethos hitherto unknown in African culture (Sono 1994:62). Children become the “property” of just two individuals: the father and the mother (Sono 1994:62). On the occasion of the death of either parent, the children then become the sole responsibility of the surviving parent. Christianity has also introduced monogamy. The church is completely against the levirate forms of marriage and has instead encouraged either re-marriage or living alone after bereavement. The church views any other form of union after this death of the spouse as sin (Kirwen 1979:11). Kirwen observes that ‘levirate’ unions were seen as bizarre and unworthy of women of ‘class’ and the Christian faith (1979:11). He says this is due to Western influence, which argued that:

this levirate practice is incompatible with the Christian way of life and the church declares it to be an unlawful type of sexual union, a type of polygamy and they thus opposes the custom by placing sanctions on Christians who practice it. These churches insist that a woman is ‘free’ either to remarry or to live alone without a marital partner on the death of her husband (Kirwen 1979:11).

It is also clear that the churches insisted that a woman is ‘free’ either to remarry or to live alone without a marital partner on the death of her husband (Kirwen 1979:12). This has resulted in a serious cultural conflict between Christianity and African traditional beliefs. Christianity demands that a woman must have children only within marriage. However, denying a woman a chance to have children in the event of a spouse’s death only serves to reduce her status in society. Women are recognised in African society through their role in procreation (Wamue 1996: 43).

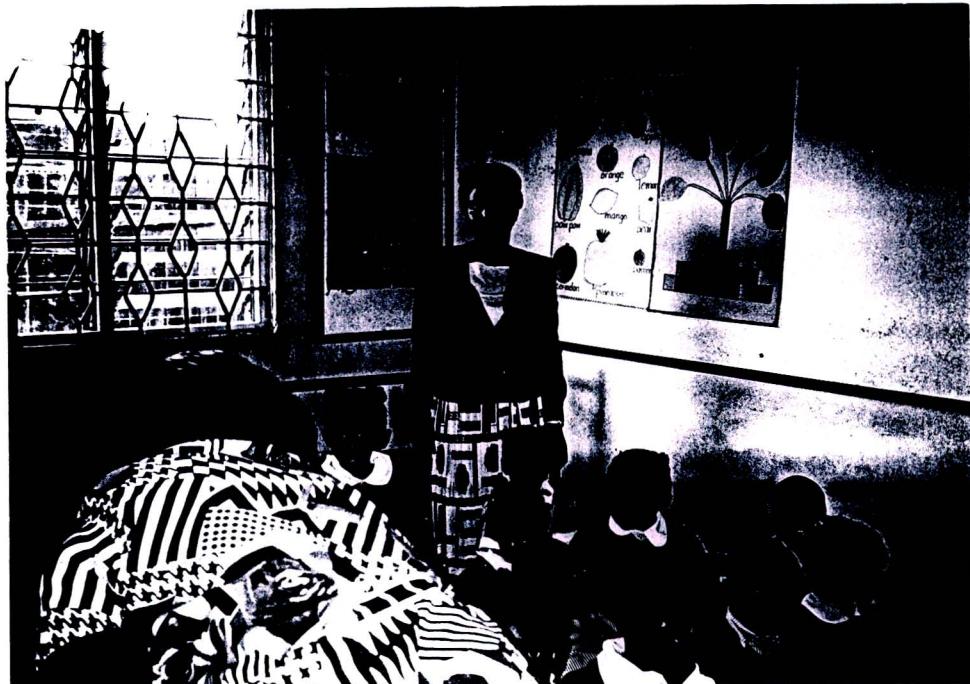
According to African tradition, life comprises psychological, physical, social, economical and spiritual participation in a group (Sono 1994:61). This is fulfilled in marriage (Mbiti 1969:133). The church does not offer specific solutions to protect a woman’s status outside marriage. The church

seems to oppress women more by leaving them alone during bereavement. Mrs Nyaga, (see picture1) who sustains her living through child care and one of the members of St Patrick Kayole Parish (Nairobi) states:

The response I had from the church and my husband's family at home was very devastating. Soon after the death of my husband, my husband's brother together with my mother in-law teamed up in accusing me of my husband's death. It was very devastating and depressing because the wound in my heart of being left by my dear partner whom I loved, had not yet been healed. The second thing they claimed for themselves was my husband's property which I felt was totally unprocedural. Since we had wedded in the church I thought of looking for assistance in the church and in that case to point at the truth. My mother was a mother's union leader in the Parish but at this time cultural practices overwhelmed her and she even teamed up with the relatives to snatch whatever my husband and I had earned as a couple. It was very unfortunate that the church threw me back to the clan, even after realising that I was being oppressed. I felt very lonely, depressed and developed high blood pressure with non-stop headaches. This is a situation which was not easy for me because no friend could come close to me. Depressed as I was, the church had no concern for me at this time when I needed counselling. Finally, the matter ended in court, but even now, no ruling has yet been made despite the fact that my husband died in 1997 (Mrs Nyaga, Oral interview 8.1.2001).

The church, we hereby ascertain, needs to have a clear stance towards this matter because in today's world widows face many odds once they are confronted with the deaths of their husbands. Immediately after their husbands die, the long dark path of hopelessness commences. It does not matter what may have caused their husbands' death: natural causes, sickness, accident, suicide, murder and so on: Whatever the cause, the widow is blamed (as evidenced in Mrs Nyaga's report); (see chapter 2). Life becomes one long bitter struggle. The widow has to adapt immediately and attempt to cope with the criticism and socio-cultural stigma attached to widowhood. Cases of violence against widows have been rampant in the society. These are characterised by disturbing burial disputes, widow invasion by in-laws, property grabbing, among others, all which occur instantly after their husband's deaths, sometimes even before burial (Oduyoye 1997:106). For example, during the death of bishop Okulu, Archbishop Gitari challenged the oppressive cultural practices such as the forcible seizure, by the husband's family, of house goods, live stock, and other property from the widow. He told the journalists: "Widows normally suffer twice on the death of

their spouse, the loss of the husband and [then] the loss of property" (Sam Gonza 1999:1).¹⁰



Picture 1: Bending is a picture of a widow (Mrs Nyaga) who sustains her living through child care. while standing is a teacher trained by the Ministry of Education.

On the surface, the traditional approach towards widowhood looks very positive. The widow, being a community wife, was a communal responsibility for all concerned. All things were done to provide her with emotional, social, physical and material support. It also helped the widow to continue with life and to adjust to and cope with death (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:54-73). However, these practices had their own problems. It was somehow oppressive because a woman was viewed by the traditional society only through her role to procreate (Kenyatta 1938:163).

3.6 Conclusion

We have now examined the biblical witness concerning widows and seen that it was a biblical tradition to care for the widows. We saw this was confirmed by the leaders and theologians through the centuries. We turn in the next chapter to an in-depth survey as to how the church in one community has tried to deal with these questions.

¹⁰Sam Gonza 1999.'Kenyan Synod introduces New Rules for Cheaper Funerals" *Anglican Journal*. Church of Canada.p1

CHAPTER FOUR

THE MINISTRY OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA IN NAIROBI, ITS HISTORY AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE.

This chapter examines the history of the Anglican church and its administrative structures. General ministries to the poor in Nairobi are looked at. Research findings and data analysis are discussed. Listening to the word of God and the cries of the widows is emphasised. Finally, a holistic framework of the four key issues is formulated.

4.1 The History of the Anglican Church and its Administrative Structures

4.1.1 A brief history of the Anglican Church

According to the Churchman's diary (1995:5) and Anderson (1988 : 5), the first missionaries to bring the Christian gospel to Kenya were Johann Ludwig Krapf and Johann Rebman from the Church Missionary Society of Germany. Krapf arrived in Mombasa in 1844 accompanied by his wife, who died of malaria immediately after arrival. Two years later, Rebman arrived. They teamed up and worked with determination proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ in East Africa. In 1846, they established a Church Missionary Society station in Rabai. Rebman decided to explore in the directions of Taita and Krapf moved towards Ukambani (meaning Kamba land) where he translated Genesis 1-3 into Kiswahili. In 1850, Krapf translated the first Kamba scriptures of St. Mark's Gospel. The first Anglican convert was baptised in 1875.

The first administrative diocese was formed in 1884 with the name of Eastern Equatorial Africa (combination of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika). James Hannington was the first diocesan bishop. The church grew rapidly with the establishment of academic institutions and divinity schools to educate Africans. In 1898, the diocese of Mombasa which combined Kenya and Tanganyika was formed with the name 'Church of the Province of East Africa,'. In 1903 the first Kikuyu scriptures were published through the help of the CMS and in 1906 Maseno high school was established and

in 1926 Alliance high school was established. After about ten years of ministry through the missionaries, northern Tanganyika was separated from the diocese of Mombasa, which covered the whole of Kenya.’. First African Bishops of the Anglican church in Kenya (Festo Olang and Obadiah Kariuki) were consecrated in 1955 by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1964 the diocese of Nairobi was separated from the diocese of Mombasa and in 1970 Bishop Festo Olang was elected as the first African Archbishop of church of the Province of Kenya. The Church remained with the same name until 1998 when it changed through the provincial synod from the Church of the Province of Kenya to the Anglican Church of Kenya. Currently, the Anglican Church of Kenya is divided into twenty two dioceses, Nairobi being one of the dioceses. It is a member of the Anglican communion worldwide.

4.1.2 The Structure of the Anglican Church

The structure of the Anglican Church is hierarchical with an episcopal type of government. The head of the Anglican Church of Kenya is the archbishop and under him there is the diocesan bishop who heads the diocese. The diocese is divided into archdeaconries with the archdeacon as the head. The archdeaconries are divided into deaneries with the rural dean as the head of the deanery. From there we have the parish headed by the parish priest. Lay ministers are to assist the parish priest. The parish is divided into local congregations under the parish priest as the head. Those mentioned above are the ones responsible for the physical and spiritual development of their respective locations.

4.2 General ministries to the poor in Nairobi

The church in the city has been trying to improve peoples’ lives through socio-economic developments and change; but due to marginalisation, widows needs have not been met (Shorter 1991:77). Temporary solutions are adopted as crisis measures, but always with long term solutions in view. According to Gatei, an assistant manager of St John’s community centre, people from the squatter self-help areas are targeted to be helped by the church in order to acquire a share in urban services, but only minority enjoy the benefits thereof. The centre focuses on imparting

skills to the disadvantaged in the surrounding areas of Manjengo (Oral interview 8-1-2001). It has been assisting a few members of the disadvantaged community members to improve their material, spiritual and social welfare.

The church, although not documented, through its preaching and teaching ministry, social apostolate and care of souls, has fought against disease in the city by educating people and offering basic medical services, such as the clinic at Holy Trinity Parish, Kibera. It has also been in the forefront of the fight against illiteracy, insanitary conditions and drug-taking (researcher's experience). The church has also risked unpopularity with the authorities by campaigning against injustice in the government system: corruption, intimidation, exhortation and police brutality. Currently, it joined hands with other religious bodies to mobilise the amendment of the national constitution (*Nation Newspaper* 2.5.2001).

The substantial assistance given to the underprivileged by church linked organisations and institutions, private Christian groups and individual believers is well known and quite commendable (Kayonga 1989:217). According to this information, it is noted that the church has been effective in some areas but the challenge remains that it has not been able to break the silence concerning gender inequality and the dominance of men over women in the society. Women have always been sidelined in development. As we shall see in the later chapters, widows have been victims of suffering after their husbands' death. The church has done very little to alleviate the suffering of widows (Shisanya 1996:192). This is very worrying, because, as Gutierrez (1973:13) puts it, "the church should be seen as a major liberating agent which should show practical commitment to the oppressed". In this regard, the church needs to address various issues that affect women in the event of the death of their husbands. For this reason this study recommends a holistic strategic ministry to widowhood.

Kayonga supposes that the history of the early church had always shown a genuine concern for the destitutes, widows and orphans among Christians (1989:217). Most of the widows, as discussed in the previous chapters, lack the provision of basic material needs. They are not only deprived of material possessions but also of the right to participate in many aspects of life and activities of the

local community, particularly regarding health care and job acquisition. They are deprived, as well, of social justice and human dignity; they face a constant struggle for survival without relaxation, creativity or happiness (Kayonga 1989:214).

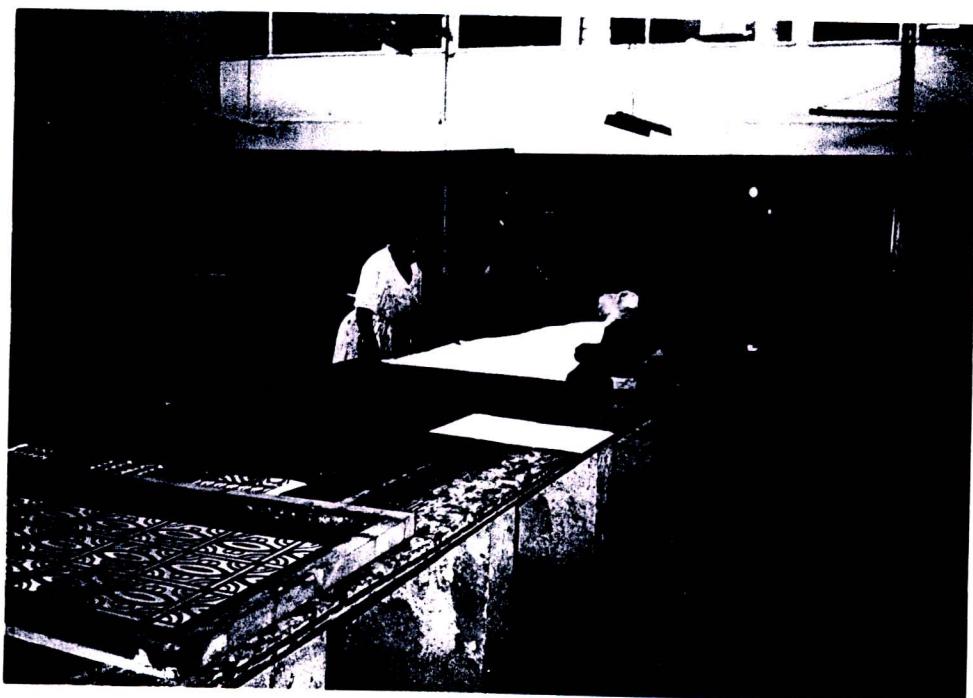
The ministry to widows provide an for the church. The opportunity is not to increase its own members or authority, but to serve: “I am among you as one who serves” said Jesus (Luke 5:22-27); (Nicolson 1996:184). This should be the motivation for involvement to serve, Some of those to be served might be Christians, others not, some sick and poor, others very old, marginalised, orphans and finally widows. The main task of the church is to serve; its mission being to love, support, and care for the neglected and the oppressed (including widows).The question is whether the church has been able to be a servant to the widows who suffer economically, spiritually, physically and psychologically. The problem is that most of the time the churches have played the role of a charitable organisation by addressing the needs of the poor by simply giving handouts (Weaver 1991:371). This has caused problems because it creates a sense of dependency and people sometimes entirely depend on the church to do things for them as they wait patiently for food, clothes etc. The other factor is that the powerful do not expect the marginalized widows in this context to have anything to contribute since they have been labelled as lazy, ignorant, or unworthy as stated earlier. This is very unfortunate because even Christians treat the poor (widows) in a similar way (Christian 1998:37). This leads this people lose hope and feel unwanted.

4.3 Ministry to widows: Research findings

As mentioned in chapter 2.1 research was undertaken in Kenya in December 2000 and January 2001. The findings about the experiences of widows were dealt with there. Here we turn to examine the findings about the ministry of the church to widows.

In the four dioceses the observed lack of specific projects focusing on the welfare of widows indicates the church’s inadequacy in dealing with the issues of widowhood. The only clue was from the manager of Maridadi Fabrics and the administrative secretary of the diocese of Nairobi

who said that Maridadi Fabrics' original aim was to provide skills (entrepreneurship) to single ladies, the poor and widows. Unfortunately, the manager stated, it has been inactive due to economic crisis and lack of proper management in the past. She claims that if given proper support, 'Maridadi' can achieve its objectives (Oral interview 9.1.2001). (see pictures 2 & 3).



Picture 2: The pictures above shows to two ladies involved in printing at Maridadi Fabrics who were the pioneers of the institution before it left its original aim.



Picture 3: This is also a picture of a lady who was trained by Maridadi Fabrics when it retained its original aim.

The overall observation concerning the idea of addressing cultural oppression (advocacy), the church counselling widows and helping them gain skills as an approach to improve their standards of living, was given full support by all clergy, laity and widows interviewed. Three quarters of the clergy interviewed supported the issue being enshrined in the church constitution. Sixty percent of the widows interviewed declared that although one of the objectives of the Mothers' Union was the care for widows, it had been realistically impracticable. Many retreats organised by the diocese focused on married families, thus isolating women whose husbands had passed away. Most of the people interviewed, including the clergy, laity and widows recommended that widows be represented in all forums and be involved in developmental matters. To avoid conflict, this study recommends a widows' ministry which should work harmoniously with other church bodies. It is recommended that it works under the umbrella of the Mothers' Union. They should

be contacted from time to time in decision-making. This will diminish the perpetuation of dictatorship of the long serving Mothers' Union leaders in the parish.

Table 5 Response of the questionnaire distributed to widows.

Distribution and response of the questionnaires to the widows.

Item	Distribution	Return	Percentage
Diocese of Nairobi	40	30	75%
Diocese of Mount Kenya central	20	10	50%
Diocese of Embu	5	-	-
Diocese of Mount Kenya South	10	5	50%
Total	75	45	

The above table indicates the response of widows interviewed in four different dioceses for the purpose of comparison.

The response rate of the widows in the urban areas indicated that most widows living in the urban areas were more affected than those living in rural areas (see Table 4). It was due to the fact that widows living in the rural areas have land to till whereas those in the urban areas struggle for survival. This supports the suggestion of involving widows in small businesses. The low response rate in Embu (Table 5) is due to the fact that the researcher visited the area during the Christmas holidays when people were either away from home or busy with festivities. Due also to the time factor, the researcher was not able to get much information in Embu.

Table 6 Distribution and Response rate of the questionnaire to the clergy.

Name of Deanery	Distribution	Return	Percentage
Kayole Deanery	4	1	25%
St John's Deanery	6	3	50%
St Francis Deanery	3	1	30%
St Monicah's Deanery	5	1	15%
St Mark's Deanery	3	2	75%
St Stephens's Deanery	3	2	75%
Cathedral Deanery	-	-	-
Total	24	10	40%

According to the response from the clergy it was ascertained that there is a need for a holistic ministry in order to cater for the needs of the widows.

The low response rate of the clergy was due to the fact that the researchers had a very short period for his research (see Table 6). Financial limitations was another factor because of the travelling expenses from one deanery to another. Another factor was that the research was done in the months of December and January when the clergy were nervous because of their transfers. Finally, it was a very busy month for the clergy. However, the response was affirmative. The overall response was that the need for widows' ministry was realised. Counselling and assisting in the development of entrepreneurial skills was recommended by all. Dealing with poverty in the widows' lives should not be neglected. Also, because the clergy are influential leaders in their respective parishes, their role in development activities is crucial. Hence, co-operation and unity cannot be underestimated.

The majority of the clergy stood for the fact that the synod should be consulted on matters pertaining to widows and that a clause to protect widows' rights be included in the church's constitution. Out

of the 10 clergy interviewed only 2 felt that the issue of widows' needs and protection should be dealt with by clergy on a parish level and another 3 opted that widows should come up with a registered project facilitated by the church.

4.4 Listening to the word of God and the cries of the widows

In the previous sections, we saw the current ministry to widows and noted some of the strengths and weaknesses. It was noted that in order to develop a holistic ministry, we need to draw from two sources: the word of God, as seen in chapter three in relation to their suffering as seen in chapter two. Therefore, the key concern, as this study perceives it, is to see the church being involved in ministry to widows in order to bring care, development and liberation to them (Wall 1987:113).

God's concern for the poor can be noted in the prophets' messages. Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, for example, warn against two grave sins for which divine judgement would be meted out upon Israel and Judah (Kayonga 1989:218). Kayonga points out, that the main reason why God sent the prophets was due to the violation of justice to one another, oppression, greed, deceitfulness, robbery and violation of the rights of the fatherless, the widow, the poor and the stranger. This was to confirm that he hears their cries and he condemns those who oppress them (1989:218). The prophets condemned the injustices of the rich against the poor. When we compare today's situation, it is not much different as the majority of the church members tend not to hear and not to respond to the needs of the oppressed.

Bright criticizes the church by asking: "What degree of knowledge of one another is necessary for people to be members of a Christian congregation? Should our membership of one another be primarily expressed by our congregational position, or as fellow employees? How much should one attempt to live a 'community' life where one lives?" (1971:110).

Bright further states:

A theology of community and psychology of community which does not result in solid action can only lead to an anaemic body. Perhaps one of the greatest criticisms of the church is that the community of worship has been so dissociated from social action. ‘We are members one of another, people have said in their liturgy, and have knelt and received the consecrated bread in the same congregation, unaware that one member of the congregation lives in a hostel for the homeless and another in comparative luxury. Communion and community have seemed two different words, two different worlds (1971:110).

According to Bright, to be a communicant is to be in communion with God and at the same time with God’s family (humankind). Love and charity with your neighbour is critical (1971:110-111). Another writer who challenges the church is Haddad. She points at the oppression of women saying that the church has participated in oppression and hindered the development of women due to its structures (1996:205). She points out that most of the literature at present is male dominated (1996:205). This makes it difficult and hardens the lives of women especially when their husbands die. Haddad’s criticisms are summarized thus:

There is not a great deal of literature written by African women which analyses their position in the church in South Africa today. What has been written presents the church as an oppressive, male dominated structure that hinders rather than enables, disempowers rather than empowers women (1996:205).

Haddad goes on to say that there can be no argument that the church is one of the most oppressive structures in the society today, especially in regard to the oppression of women. Ramodibe too says that women are treated as minors and inferior to men, just as they are in the society (in Hulley *et al* 1996:206). In agreement with Haddad, the church seems to be willing to re-educate people on every issue except the issue of the dignity and equality of women.

The neglect of women in the society is sadly adopted by many contemporary churches. The church as an institution often lags behind in recognizing the God-given gifts of women. Its leadership structures continue to be heavily dominated by men. (Hughes and Bunnet 1998:256)

As analysed in chapter three, Jesus’ ministry, which was ‘holistic,’ especially as rendered by St Luke, concerned itself very much with the poor (Luke 4:18). In the book of Luke Jesus quoting

Isaiah 61:1-3 Says:

The Spirit of the Lord is on 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 favour (Luke 4:18).

Kayonga's work points Matthew's view of Jesus' ministry:

According to Matthew too, the sign of the Messianic era is that the good news is given to the needy and poor. Throughout his nearly three years of ministry, Jesus did not only preach to all including the poor, but he also acted in favour of the latter. What makes Jesus' theological vision different from that of the Pharisees is that he was not legalistic like them, but human. Jesus healed the sick and accepted sinners to associate with him (Luke 7:36-50). He even ate with publicly known sinners, like the tax collectors, Levi (Matthew 9:10-13), and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). Jesus healed the crippled man on the Sabbath. Jesus did not preach verbally on healing to the crippled man, he healed him. Jesus' action is a liberating gospel which restores wholesomeness especially to the sinner, the poor and the suffering. Jesus' correct vision of religion contradicted that of the Pharisee. He strove to liberate all people from the burden of legalism and sin (1989:219).

Through their cries, widows are calling the church back to a redefinition of its original goal: commitment like that of Jesus Christ (Kayonga 1989:219). These people are challenging the church to rethink its mission and overcome its unjust priorities in the light of its redemptive role in human history as proclaimed in the gospel. The challenge is that the church should evaluate its real identity in the world and condemn oppression (Phiri 1997:117).

What is the self-understanding of the church which is called to preach the message of good news to the suffering, poor, destitutes orphans and widows? Has the church really chosen to be the servant of Christ who identified himself with the oppressed? The gospel stresses the fact that the poor, including the orphans, widows and destitutes should be the priority of the Church of Christ (Ddungu 1989:21). Thus, concern should be taken. Moltmann regards the church as part of God's Trinitarian history with the world. He says the church can only be understood in terms of relationships and has to be a place of open and critical encounter. In ideal terms, Moltmann regards the church as a community of disciples who are called to participate in the eschatological *Missio Dei*. He emphasises a democratic understanding: the church is a community of equals liberated and empowered by the Spirit. As such, this community is called to live a life of acceptance towards others and to practice solidarity and community with the poor (1974:326-331).

According to the papers from a consultation on theology and development held by Sodepax in Cartigny Switzerland, spiritual value cannot be preached without practical involvement in the material everyday life of church members (Gerhard 1969:71). Dhavamony sees it in a different dimension. Still supporting the above, he points out that when Christians talk about development we cannot limit ourselves to the mere material sphere, “to the economic and industrial progress of man” (1972:304). According to him, it is the integral development of humanity and advancement in all human dimensions, i.e. in the economic and social as well as the cultural, educational, spiritual and religious spheres: “Christian development means the progress of the whole human person” (1972:304). Evangelisation necessarily has a social dimension. One of its aims is to gather people into a community that is the body of Christ (Dhavamony 1972:304-305). Dhavamony sees development as a genuine way of evangelisation (1972:304).

This is to say that through development widows will experience in the church the love of Christ that cares for their bodily needs as well as their spiritual needs. The message of salvation will be real in their lives and liberation will be realised (Cochrane *et al* 1991:208).

Kee confirms this by saying that:

To a great extent the church’s role within today’s continuing social change will depend on how we as Christians understand development in relationship to God’s continuous creativity towards the completion of his creation. (1977:81)

Weild brings out the advantages of developing women:

Targeting women in development policy could lead to increasing the priority given to unpaid over paid labour and would involve social as well as economic policy (1992:77).

Weild recommends an increase of training courses to increase the skills of women (1992:76). They challenge the policy-makers because of policies that favour men and which see women as housekeepers (1992:76). Shorter says: “Pastors who share the daily life of the urban poor over long periods of time rightly forfeit credibility if they condone or ignore the obvious social injustices with which they are surrounded” (1991:77). He points out that in helping people to improve their living conditions, care must be taken in order that a fundamentally unjust system is not made permanent (1991:77).

Shorter alludes that churches in urban areas, like Nairobi, should embark on improving the conditions of the people through socio-economic liberation and change (1991:77). The church should be a catalyst in fighting injustice and at the same time promoting the social and economic liberation of widows. They ought to be helped to improve their material and social life and to make this improvement an on-going feature (Shorter 1991:78).

Jeune asserts that if the church is truly to become a viable and dynamic agent in the glorious new day that God has promised us, then it cannot choose to play it safe by adopting policies of neutrality. Even more, it must not ally itself with the powerful when the well being of the marginalized are at stake (1987:222). If we look back to the words of the prophets, the life of Jesus and witness of the early church all challenge us to participate in the suffering of widows (see chapter three).

Jeune further elaborates that the church as a custodian of the message of the gospel cannot remain uninvolved and indifferent (1987:222). It is impelled to side with the suffering instead of the forces in the society that create oppression, dehumanization, marginalisation, paternalism and poverty (Jeune 1987:222).

Thus, the cries of widows and the word of God directly challenge the church “to denounce injustices, recognizing that silence in the face of oppression even speaks louder than words” (Jeune in Samuel & Sugden 1987: 222).

Jeune further points out:

The mission of the church is thus threefold: first, to plead the cause of the poor, defending the weak and helping the helpless (Prov.22:22;12:5; 10:17-18); second, to stand for equality and social justice (Prov. 14:21; Ps. 41:1); and third, to institute structures that will create a just and a more equitable distribution of wealth (Lev. 25:28). (1987:223)

According to the above writer, the mission of the church is threefold: namely, to plead the cause of the poor, defending the weak and helping the helpless; to stand for equality and social justice and to institute structures that will create a just and a more equitable distribution of wealth. While this study contends for a holistic ministry to widowhood, the four key concerns are inseparable. As a matter of fact the above quotation does not disagree with this study but agrees in principle that the

church should focus on a gospel that allows no separation between the spiritual and the physical needs of humanity. For this reason, let us now turn to the holistic framework of the four key issues, advocacy, counselling, empowerment and job creation.

4.5 A framework for a response to the 4 key concerns

- **A Holistic Ministry**

When we looked at the experience of widows, we identified, cultural marginalisation, emotional stress, lack of meaning and control and financial insecurity.

These are the four major issues that the church needs to look at in the ministry to widowhood. Therefore, a holistic ministry needs to touch all four issues. It should be noted that the framework has been designed for the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, but it can be used by any other church involved in the ministry of widows. Where possible, I have tried to show how the church can be concerned with the ministry to widowhood, but my emphasis is on the four key aspects which lead to a holistic strategic ministry to widowhood, as it will be discussed in the later chapters.

4.5.1 Advocacy

Pearsall and Hanks define advocacy as “Public support for or recommendations of a particular cause or policy.” According to them, it originated from the original ‘late middle English: via old French’ which is from the mediaeval Latin word ‘advocatia’ abstract noun or ‘advocate’ a verb meaning ‘call to ones aid’(1996: 26). According to Robinson and Davidson advocacy means “recommendations or active support of an idea”. In other words an agent who speaks on behalf of the other (1996:19).¹¹

¹¹ For further definition about advocacy see: Pearsall, J and Hanks, P. 1998. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p26.

Robinson, M. & Davidson, G. 1996. *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*. Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers. p19.

According to the information gathered in this study, it is clear that widows have been culturally marginalised. Therefore, in response to cultural marginalisation, it is recommendable that the church takes the role of advocacy seriously. Samuel and Sugden proposes that the church should emulate her master (Jesus Christ) in identifying her concerns, her interests, and her life style with the poor, weak and the oppressed in the society, in this case the widows (1981:109).

Jesus protested against the way in which the Sabbath and laws were utilized to control and diminish life and creativity. The healing of the paralysed, the restoration of the weary and the renewal of life are precisely the objectives of the Sabbath rest. Where the healing of the lame man and the restoration of life is rejected and declared unlawful in the name of the Sabbath law, the purpose of the Sabbath rest, that is, restoration and recreation, is destroyed (Draper 1999:43). According to Draper, legislation to protect the marginalised must enable the fulfilment of the worker's life and creativity rather than restrict and undermine. "He has come that they may have life and have it in all its fulness" (Draper 1999:43). Therefore, it is with this perspective that this study challenges the church to emphasise its prophetic role in the society. To be an advocate to those who have been voiceless and to conscientise them about their rights and dignity (widows) (see chapter five).

4.5.2 Pastoral Care and Counselling

The purpose of counselling is to empower the client to cope with life situations, engage in growth producing activities and make effective decisions (Lartey 1997:56). Lartey emphatically points out the goals of a counsellor as: "The aims of their endeavours are that clients be enabled to explore their thoughts, feelings and behaviour; to reach clearer knowledge and understanding of themselves and as a result find strength and resources to cope more effectively with life" (1997:57). On the other hand, Lartey says pastoral care is a form of counselling with similar goals as that of counselling in general. It emphasises the centrality the transcendent, i.e. recognizes God's presence and activity as central to the process of counselling (1997:5-9). He claims that it is linked with the definition and identity of the pastor, which distinguishes him or her from other counsellors in the secular world (1997:6) (see chapter six).

Pastoral care consists of helping activities, participated in by people who recognize a transcendence of human life. Which by the use of verbal or non verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communications, aim at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with, anxieties, pastoral care seeks to foster people's growth as human beings together with the development of ecologically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives (Lartey 1997:9).

Campbell asserts that pastoral care and counselling involve the utilization by persons in ministry of one to one or small group relationship to enable healing and growth to take place within individuals and their relationships. It is in the broad, inclusive ministry of mutual healing within a congregation and its community (1974:19). Death separates someone from her/his beloved ones. This separation will have an effect on someone's life, and thus pastoral care and counselling will be essential to help widows regain their dignity and self esteem after going through the stress of death and separations (Switzer 1974:146). We will deal with this in chapter six.

4.5.3 *Empowerment*

According to Lartey the term empowerment is used, "in more recent discussion to point to the process of re-valuing self and personal characteristics together with finding and using available resources outside oneself, in such a way as to enable and motivate persons and groups to think and act in ways that will result in greater freedom and participation in the life of the societies of which they are part" (1997:41). When it comes to the process of considering options, making decisions and taking relevant action one is automatically faced with the questions of power (Lartey 1997:41). According to Lartey, due to marginalisation poor people endure enforced and internalized helplessness. This is as a result of continued experiences of oppression, increasing poverty and social exclusion (1997:42). One of the most exciting things is that empowerment takes various dimensions. Lartey says:

'Empowerment' takes various forms. It is seen most often as a communal affair. Some of the ways which it expresses itself include working together with people to attempt to restore community spirit; trying to make governments more responsive to people's needs; encouraging groups based on one or other identity issue; political education and consciousness raising; organizing user or service groups and encouraging groups to develop their own alternative economic power base. Supporting and working with people in these ways can make the difference between personal well-being and psychiatric illness (1997:41).

De Beer & Swanepoel point out that to empower is to let the community take control of their own lives and have a sense of worth, meaning and purpose in life (2000:272) (see 7.1 and 7.4).

According to Coetzee & Graaf empowerment in development is where initiatives, decision making and responsibility start and end with the community (1996:323) (see 7.1). From the above writers it is clear that empowerment is related to creating confidence, self-esteem and other personal characteristics required for effective action in the society (1997:41). Lack of meaning, control and purpose in life has been a major issue in widows' lives (see chapter two). Chapter two clarified that widows undergo terrible situations of dehumanization, victimization, and exclusion after their husbands' death. This is because neither the church nor the society comes to their rescue. It is in this perspective that the church should empower widows in order to let them take control of their lives (see chapter seven).

4.5.4 *Job creation*

Unemployment have increased in the society, and widows are also affected. Widows' experiences has shown us that most of them live under poverty (see chapter two). Poverty in widows is believed to be the result of many things, including cultural oppressive systems that favour men, as earlier stated, spiritual, physical and social injustices. Pixley and Boff posit that the poor are the product of a conflictive process. They constitute a social phenomenon that has been produced, thus a phenomenon that does not come about naturally. They have been reduced by the forces of a system of domination (1987:3). They are poor because they are exploited and rejected by the society. The death of a husband and lack of employment leads these women to starvation and homelessness. Widows taken as the oppressed class fall in the category of the marginalised (Pixley & Boff 1987:7). The marginalised are those who are still outside the prevailing economic systems or are positively excluded from them(Sugden & Samuel 1981:46).

When poverty is internalized it has psychological effects. A widow lacks confidence and motivation, has low self-esteem and feels helpless. The church as the community of God's people is obliged to understand and seek answers to these crises (Sugden & Samuel

1981:47). Therefore, it is in this understanding that the church should emphasize the issue of job creation in order to provide income and employment. This will encourage the widows to be self-reliant and to be able to participate in economic development (Van Aardt 1997:89). This is the focus of chapter eight.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the history of the Anglican church and its administrative structures. General ministries to the poor were examined. Listening to the Word of God and the cries of widows were looked at. Having looked at the holistic framework of these four key issues, it was clear that advocacy is aimed at conscientising the community against cultural marginalisation, thus seeking justice for the voiceless. Counselling on the other hand, is aimed at helping widows to cope and accept the situation during and after grief. Empowerment is aimed at giving widows a sense of worth, meaning and purpose of life and involving them in decision making (see chapter eight).

Finally, job creation is aimed at improving their financial status so as to enable them regain their dignity (see chapter eight). Through this understanding, let us now turn and discuss these four key issues at length in the following chapters.

SECTION C

ACT

A HOLISTIC STRATEGIC MINISTRY TO WIDOWHOOD

No less the heart of the gospel, however, is the prophetic announcement of Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth: the promise of good news for the poor, release the captives, sight for the blind and freedom for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-3); (Hunsberger and Van Gelder 1996:186).

CHAPTER FIVE

ADVOCACY IN RESPONSE TO THE CONCERN OF CULTURAL MARGINALISATION

This chapter looks at the role of the church in advocacy, mainly in response to the concern of cultural marginalisation. Questions relating to the gospel, culture, gender and church will be discussed and a conclusion made.

5.1 Gospel and Culture

When dealing with the gospel and culture, we need to consider the way in which Jesus Christ dealt with cultural issues in redemption. When God took the initiative to redeem humankind, he came among people as a human being (Bate 2000:38). Thus, he became human, a man in a culture. He took a cultural name, spoke a local language, received cultural education and conformed to the morals of his people (Niebuhr 1951:12). He did not become a Roman, Egyptian, or an Asian but a very identifiable Jew (Jacobs 1972:6). He became the universal ‘human’ as well as a member of a Jewish home, a part of a small town community, and a Galilean by sub-culture (Jacobs 1972:6). In order for him to be completely man, he chose to participate in a particular culture and performed deeds of mercy among his people (Niebuhr 1951:3).

The first thing we need to think about is, what is the gospel? Hunter says that it is the good news of the new face put on life some two thousand years ago when God gave humankind Jesus Christ (1978:27). Mugambi asserts that the gospel is understood as the mission of the good news of Jesus Christ to the world (1989:28). He states that: “In the New Testament mission is understood as ‘going out’ into all the world to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15); (1989:28). In other words, the gospel message was that Kingdom (reign) of God which was exemplified in his ministry, death and resurrection of Christ (1989:28).

He says that the early church was motivated by the great ‘commission’ of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15), (1989:28). According to Okure, one aspect of the gospel is incarnation, and a very

important dimension of that is that the son of man revealed the father in a particular cultural tradition (1990:59).

In obedience to the great commission, Mugambi points out that transmitting the gospel from one culture to another in Africa raised many challenges which was due to cultural beliefs and the understanding of the people (1989:28).

Van Engen states that in order for the church to be able to communicate the gospel meaningfully and serve effectively as God's prophetic agent, calling for conversion and transformation of people, societies and cultures, it must know the social-cultural and historic contexts in which it lives and ministers (1996:11). It is through this understanding that the gospel brings unexpected surprises and radical changes, new directions, almost unbelievable transformation in the midst of human life: personal, social, physical, economical and structural (Van Engen 1986:28). Jacobs asserts that when the gospel comes to a culture, it must be like the good Samaritan who came where the wounded, oppressed man was. A carrier of Christ's healing must meet people where they are (1972:5). Jacobs points out that the more the church knows about the condition of the people, the better it will be able to serve them (1972:5). Hunter contends that Jesus met people where they were and perfected his image in them (Hunter 1978:27). Looking at the context of this study, the church is under attack because of its tendency to turn its back upon the injustice, oppression, and destitution, especially in relation to widows in the society. Jacobs says that in some places in Africa it has become almost a sub-culture (1972:4). He gives an example of how many Christians behave:

Too many of them trust Christ for certain things and the ancestral spirits for others. They hold to Christ with one hand and to the ancestral spirits with the other. They look to Christ for forgiveness and life eternal, and to the local spirits for fertility and daily protection (1972:5).

According to the above quotation, some of the churches have not been able to make a difference in the society of pointing at the truth and rebuking oppression and injustice. The challenge is that the gospel must itself judge the culture; evangelising that which is oppressive to the community

and accommodating that which is compatible with the scripture (Jacobs1972:6).

Arias, Mortimer (in Hunsberger and Van Gelder), says that there are two dimensions to the gospel: one is the gospel about Jesus. He says: “the gospel about Jesus is the message that gives our evangelism its personal form and includes the priestly work of Christ and the atoning grace through which we are reconciled to God. Two, the new life we experience through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is pivotal to this message, which brings lost, sinful human beings to repentance and forgiveness” (1996:189).

If the only aspects of the gospel with which we evangelise is the invitation to personal forgiveness and reconciliation, our message can easily become personalised to the point of losing its objective (1996:189). Thus, the prophetic good news of Jesus Christ, his advocacy of God’s justice for the poor and abused of the world, needs to be addressed by the church (Hunsberger and Van Gelder 1996:189). Based on these arguments, it is the role of the church to emphasise a holistic ministry ministry to the poor, the destitute and widows as perceived in this study. For too long the churches, especially the Anglican Church in Kenya (Nairobi) has concentrated on the spiritual aspect rather than focussing as well on the physical, psychological and economic situation of its members as analysed above.

As this section is focussing on the relation between gospel and culture, the second question we need to ask ourselves is, what is culture? In the previous section we looked at the meaning of the gospel and its aim. This, has helped us understand the role of the church in a particular culture. According to Bate, culture is a set of rules or guidelines governing a society in a particular locality. Each culture has its ways of doing things. Culture involves behaviour, language and way of life (lifestyle). It is learnt and it involves language, it deals with its own symbols including rituals and myths. It gives meaning to our life and it is mainly about communication (1999:13). Niebuhr defines culture as “an artificial secondary environment” which people superimpose on the natural (1951:32). He says: “it comprises of language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organisations, inherited artifacts, technical process and values” (1951:32). Therefore, we are who

we are because of our culture.

In this study, the aim is to formulate a holistic strategic ministry in response to the cultural marginalisation of widows and the oppression they undergo after their husbands' death. According to Niebuhr, the challenge is to conform it with the gospel of Christ. He sees Christ as a great hero of human culture in history. Thus, his life and teachings should be regarded as the greatest human achievement (1951:41). Critically, African culture has many positive aspects which can be utilised for the sake of the gospel but, on the other hand, cultural oppression should be addressed. Bate recommends inculturation as a tool to be used in spreading the gospel into individual cultural contexts. He challenges those theologians who think that inculturation is making the church more African (1999:1). The truth is that it is beyond that: it is making Jesus Christ understood in individual contexts. What it means is making the gospel being relevant and applicable to one's culture (Bate 1999:3). Observing Neibuhr's works, one would see the message of Christ supporting what is good in the culture and eliminating what does not agree with the Christian faith (1951:41). To support this challenge he says:

...in him it is believed the aspirations of men toward their values are brought to a point of culmination; he confirms what is best in the past and guides the process of civilization to its proper goal. Moreover, he is part of culture in the sense that he himself is part of the social heritage that must be transmitted and conserved (1951:41).

Hinfelaar also sees inculturation as a helpful tool in making the gospel penetrate into individual cultural contexts. According to him, it is witnessing the gospel in the midst of people in order to help them live a more just and human life (1994:8). Therefore, the church has a task to transmit: to explain and interpret the word of God in a way that liberates the society. It also has a task to play its prophetic role in the community as observed earlier. Looking at it in this perspective, we see a need for the church to understand the society and their cultures in order to have an effective ministry in their lives. Hinfelaar states:

To make inculturation real and down to earth one of the first tasks is to make Christians conscious of their identity, their own history, their own weakness and their own values. They must not only come to see but also to affirm their differences from others in order to liberate

themselves from any form of oppression or dependency. The main way is indeed to return back to the pain of history, to its failure and not sweep things under the carpet and hide it all behind a huge smile or a laugh (1994:9).

Not overlooking the success and the good work the Anglican Church of Kenya (Nairobi) has been doing, this study points out that it needs to learn from its previous mistakes of neglecting the destitute, oppressed and widows. The reason for this is that the church is growing and needs a holistic ministry for its members. It can only break the silence of cultural marginalisation by pointing out evil in the society. The other point of importance is making the gospel real in the society (Bate 1999:3). As observed in this dissertation, most African cultures have been oppressive to women and the poor. Widows have been marginalised in many societies in Kenya, especially in Nairobi.

According to Keane, the message and mission of Jesus shows that his aim was to engage people in their own liberation from sin, ignorance, poverty, social injustice and other forms of oppression. She says: "this message was transformative unlike the beliefs and practices of the time" (1987:5). This is applicable to the church today. Its aim should be to transform and liberate people from social injustices. Keane makes it very clear that Jesus had a positive attitude towards women. Looking at the position of the women, she says the gospels present a positive relationship between Jesus and women. According to her, the position that Jesus took should be understood in the context of his time. He was a Jew living in first century Palestine. Let's us not forget that the Jewish culture was patriarchal as most African cultures are today (1987:5). In the gospels Jesus transformed and liberated the lives of both men and women (1987:5). Keane contends that:

Feminist theologians have tried to account for the anti-women feelings frequently demonstrated by the early fathers. Certainly they do not take their cue from Jesus, for New Testament sources do not attribute to him a single negative statement about women. More than that, he makes it clear that relationships within the Christian community were freed from dominance (Matthew 23:7-12). Jesus did not subscribe to the social norms of the Graeco-Romans world which distinguished between people on the grounds of race, class, religion or sex. He made it possible, not only for the 'ethne' and slaves, but also for women, to participate in the missionary leadership of the church (1987:5).

Schussler-Fiorenza says: "In this movement women were not marginal figures but exercised

leadership as missionary founders of Christian communities, apostles, prophets and leaders of churches” (in Keane 1987:5). These two quotations help us to understand the true message of equality as delivered by Jesus Christ in a patriarchal society. According to Mbiti:

The question of relating the gospel to culture comes up automatically when the gospel is proclaimed in any given place and time. Culture is the voice which responds to the gospel, the voice which welcomes or rejects the gospel, the voice which interprets the gospel, the voice which propagates the gospel and the voice which celebrates the gospel (1995:1 & 2).

Culture is a medium used to transmit the gospel. Thus, according to the above information, one can grasp the real meaning of the gospel as related to culture. It is thus recommended that the church proclaims the gospel (good news of Jesus Christ) holistically in every society. In this context, the widows are suffering due to cultural marginalisation and the church needs to break the long existing silence.

5.2 Church and Culture

The church in Kenya, as elsewhere, is expected to be prophetic in order to promote justice (Kee 1977:70). This means that the church has to preach the gospel and at the same time denounce all that stands in the way of God’s saving action for his people. We have to acknowledge, especially we church leaders, that in the past we have feared exposure endangering ourselves individually and as an ecclessial community and institution (Kanyandago 1989:71).

As prophets, our reactions and actions are to be inspired by compassion, the kind of compassion that moved Jesus when he met with human suffering. When Jesus met some people carrying a dead man (the only son of a widow of Nain) he “felt sorry for her”. But the great word, ‘*splag knisomai*’ is stronger than just feeling pity (Kanyandago 1989:71). According Kanyandago, it refers to strong emotions, which provoked the movement or yearning of the bowels (Luke 7:13; 10:33; 15:20); (Matthew 15:22). The Diocese of Nairobi of the Anglican Church should not sit back and watch the injustice laid upon widows. For example, in December 1986 a prominent Nairobi lawyer died in a car which was taking him to the hospital. Nearly five months later, in April

1987, his body was still lying at the city mortuary while a complicated legal wrangle was taking place between the blood relatives and in-laws over the right to burial. The lawyer was a member of the Luo tribe in western Kenya, Mr Silvanus Otieno. He was married to Virginia Wambui, a clan distinguished member of the biggest tribe of Kenya, the Kikuyu. He rarely visited his ancestral home in Siaya District of Luo land (Shorter 1991:6). Shorter says: "instead of building at his home land, he invested his property at upper Matassia on the outskirts of Nairobi and it was on this land that his widow announced her intention of burying her late husband" (1991:6). Unfortunately, when his widow announced the burial, the members of the husband's clan (Umira kager) refused Wambui's plan of burying her husband at a place convenient for her (where they had bought land). According to the members of her husband's clan, the burial could only take place at Nyalgunga a remote village in the Siaya District (1991:6). Due to this conflict, Wambui obtained a court order from a Nairobi judge forbidding the clan from taking the body. The clan immediately contested the court's decision and, in January 1987, three appeal judges issued an injunction in favour

of the clan restraining Wambui from carrying out the burial in any place other than Nyalgunga (1991:7). According to this culture, a woman does not "own" the husband. Wambui filed another injunction and it was a failure (Shorter 1991:7). Shorter states:

Ancient customs and 'superstitions' were described by witnesses for the benefit of the court and were fully reported in the press. It was alleged that a Luo tribe's man could build a house in Nairobi, but never a 'home'; that no genuine Luo was even buried outside Luo-land; that if customs were flouted, the spirit of the deceased would 'haunt' the living; and that women had no authority in any of the matters under discussion. The long line of witnesses included a herbalist, a bishop, a professor of philosophy and even a grave-digger (1991:7).

The question is: where was the prophetic voice of the church for the voiceless? Did this widow have her rights over her husband's body? This thesis challenges traditional beliefs and oppressive customs and recommends that the church fights for justice in the society. Kanyandago writes: "sometimes our reactions have to be those of indignation, manifesting anger and disapproval, especially against intolerable injustice" (1989:71); (Mark 3:5).

In this perspective, a prophetic action should be historically contextualized. Kanyandago affirms

that it should be done in a particular way, with a relevant interpretation and apt reading of the signs of the time. A prophet or a prophetess never settles down in any kind of security, but is watching at what is happening around him or her and drawing out actionable exhortations (1989:72). The preaching of the gospel and the undertaking of liberative actions that go with it call for personal and communal involvement in evaluation and action. As a church we have to start by examining our attitudes and systems. There are some injustices committed in the name of the church or out of legalistic obedience to its leadership. Boff pertinently states in his book *Church, Charisma and Power*:

In spite of the inevitable gap between proclamation and implementation, there is today another gap, that results from power structures, institutional deficiencies and distortions both practical and theoretical inherited from models that no longer reflect reality. These are violations of human rights within the church itself. These are not those abuses of power, which are temporal in nature, we refer to those that are the result of a certain way of understanding and organizing the reality of ecclesial structures- a somewhat permanent state of affairs (1985:33).

Boff gives examples of centralisation of decision-making within the church: the empowerment of the laity and the recognition of women. In the Anglican church leadership from top to bottom has been emphasised because the Bishop is the authority. According to Boff, authority should be structured bottom to top. The top-to-bottom approach makes it difficult for the congregation, because their needs are not highly esteemed. This study recommends a full participation in decision-making which will give room for the oppressed to air their feelings, especially the widows who are suffering from injustices and poverty in this context. If the church becomes an example then it will be in a position to give light to the society and condemn evil practices.

The church has a dual nature: On one hand, it is an institution created by God that represents the presence and anything of God's reign on earth (Hunsberger & Van Gelder 1996:285); on the other hand it is also an organisation constructed by humans for the purpose of living out a corporate life and mission. This dual nature of the church always means that the visible church lives in tension within any particular historical period and cultural context (1996:285); (John 17). The location of its life is to be not "of" the world (1996:285).

Hunsberger and Van Gelder states that:

This is looking at it in a prophetic and in its missiological context. The life and mission of the church is defined by participation in the mission of the triune God of all creation. The church then, while existing within a cultural context, also has a responsibility toward that context. It is responsible to live the reality of the redeemed life within its culture. It is also responsible to bring the power of this redemption to bear on its culture as it seeks to welcome into the life of God those who live currently apart from such faith and allegiance (1996:285).

Magessa asserts that the main task of the church is to play the role of advocacy in the society (1991:14), i.e. to break cultural marginalisation. For example, all sorts of injustices have been laid upon widows, as we observed in the previous chapters. It is certain that some have gone to the extent of losing their husband's property while the church keeps silent. For that cause the church should engage in a struggle for the formation of a new consciousness, an alternative way to this people. It should evoke, nurture and nourish a fresh way of 'everydayness' that breaks the dominating and deforming aspects of culture (Magesa 1991:14). Thus, it ought to wake up the community from its slumber and point a finger at its numbness, insensitivity, selfishness and injustice (Magesa 1991:14). The mission of the church is the mission of Christ himself. Like Christ, the church is sent to preach the good news; "As the father has sent me even so I send you" (John 20:21). The church is sent to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, restore sight to the blind and set free those who are bruised (Luke 4:18 paraphrased by Magesa 1991:52). The church cannot fulfill this mission fully and satisfactorily, if it does not discharge the important role of advocacy. Magesa points out that the church is expected to develop a critical and well-informed awareness on economic, political and cultural structures as well as issues judge them according to its calling (1991:52). He explains that the church, as an institution, through its members needs to oppose any organisation or any economic, social, political structure which oppresses people and which denies them their rights (1991:52). Supporting Magesa's view, it is true that the community is entrusting to the church the promotion of justice, alleviation of poverty, gender equality and fighting against cultural marginalisation. According to Magesa, the church should lead Christians to operate and accentuate the dynamics of faith towards responsibility in the social, political, economical and cultural fields, while disregarding the unnecessary dichotomy between faith and life (1991:52).

5.3 The Relationship Between Gender, Church and Culture

Although gender will be discussed in the later chapters, let us briefly describe what gender means in relation to culture. The term ‘gender’ is often used to delineate the different roles and responsibilities of women and men and the resources that each has access to (Cummings *et al* 1998:13). Cummings *et al* say that when we talk about division of labour between women and men in different societies we are talking almost exclusively of what is determined by culture rather than sex roles determined by biology (1998:14). According to Rogers sex is a physical distinction and gender is a social and cultural distinction (1980:12). The intrinsic humanity of culture also reminds us that culture is for and about people, not people for culture. According to Ackerman culture is human policy in the widest sense (1994:219). Culture has defined clearly the roles of men and women. Rogers points out that it is thought ‘natural’ that a woman’s place is in the home and that she has a very specific set of tasks which are thought to be universal because they are based on the biological imperatives of sex (1980:11). In most societies, the most important role for women, defining their entire life, is portrayed as the bearing and bringing up of children (1980:11). They are excluded from wage employment and other avenues into the cash economy. The ideology of their domestic destiny is strongly advocated (1908:40). Rogers alludes that a man, on the other hand, is seen as the ‘natural’ head of the family, its representative in the outside world and therefore the overall boss, the one to control the family (master in his own home) (1980:11). These ideologies have created a problem in many African cultures and even in the church. Oduyoye and Kanyoro sympathise with women because the study of theology in which the intention is transformation has almost fallen into the trap of idealising African culture in an uncritical way. This is because theology starts from the context of African culture which is patriarchal (1992:1). Oduyoye and Kanyoro explain:

African women theologians have come to realise that as long as men and foreign researchers remain the authorities on culture, rituals and religion, African women will continue to be spoken of as if they were dead. Their work addresses a variety of controversial issues which shape the reality of African women’s lives, such as culture, sexuality, rituals and rites of passage. It’s avowed purpose is to seek, find, examine and expose the historical and cultural

aspects of the belief systems that continue to dehumanize women (1992:4).

As clearly indicated in the above quotation, these writers are not against culture and ritual but they are trying to highlight things which have been causing hindrances in the liberation and transformation of women. (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1992:4). In their contributions they often extend invitations to the Christian church to respond positively to those aspects of culture which are nurturing of the community and identity by incorporating cultural rites into Christian practices. Oduyoye and Kanyoro state that through their experiences they find the Bible “was written from a culture similar to our African culture, in which male values were predominant and female values were undermined” (1992:4). Today, in many churches, the majority of the congregation are women, but it is unfortunate that their ideas are not reflected in what the church does. By tradition, as stated above, their ideas are not as highly esteemed as in the case of men (Oduyoye & Kanyoro 1998:78). This is due to gender inequality which has been developed through cultural marginalisation. Oduyoye and Kanyoro also contend that the experiences of women have been devastating in most African cultures. The reason is that they are said to be the weaker vessel and are not accorded the same rights as men. The other claim is that gender roles are clearly defined in African cultures. These prevent our women from progressing. Women are always fearful and uneasy in their lives. It is a fact that this also applies to Christian women, both in rural and urban areas (1997:7).

From a feminist perspective, cultural norms and practices, in most cases, favour men (Ackerman 1994:219). They have a damaging impact on women’s lives and also limit them in making and sustaining the community in a significant way. They also impede women’s participation in the making of a meaningful life and the quest for identity away from the “otherness” coercively imposed on women (Ackerman 1994:219). These elements in culture deserve to be critiqued. Women may well be counselled to perceive things differently and institutions and organisations which discriminate against women should be enlightened concerning gender equality (Ackerman 1994:219). The question is: How does one give up one’s respective culture? According to Ackerman, what complicates matters for women is the fact that religious beliefs and practices are deeply embedded in the all-pervasive nature of culture (1994:219).

In addressing the relationship between women, religion and culture it becomes clear that being a woman is a complex, historical, social, psychic and religious reality (Ackerman 1994:213). “Cultural differences can separate women’s roles and experiences in their respective religious milieus” (Ackerman 1994:213).

Ackerman further confesses:

that a growing number of women in the world religions, among whom I count myself, are however, growing restive and critical and are seeking change. What can the rights concept entailed in the idea of freedom of religion offer women who experience discrimination and lack of freedom with religious systems? (1994:214).

In response to the above quotation, Oduyoye explains that a sense of worth and self-respect should be encouraged. Being used by others for their own ends should be discouraged (1997:124). She says, “just as all people and societies need recognition, women need to be enlightened on their position, identity, dignity, respect, honour and recognition” (1997:124).

5.4 Breaking the Silence

To break the silence, the church should organize more retreats and seminars together with the government in order to educate people on gender issues. It ought to play the role of conscientizing women about their rights (Shisanya 1996:193). This can be done through the formation of women’s groups committed to women’s liberation advocated by the church. Such groups could meet regularly in order to alert their colleagues of their rights and of the need to fight for their rights (Shisanya 1996:193). Shisanya presupposes that in such meetings the problems that women face in the event of death of their husbands can be discussed, and ways sought to alleviate them. For instance, widows might take their brothers-in-law to court if they are raped under pretext of a widow inheritance ritual (1996:193). Oduyoye states that as long as women are poorly educated, the families and the churches where women are of great use will continue to be served by an unprepared lot (1997:83). That is why widows have always been victims of suffering due to gender inequality. Oduyoye points out that the society has to change its established attitudes such as “a woman’s place is in the kitchen” or a belief such as, “a woman and a child’s report have no authority”, as the Kikuyu saying

goes, “*Kiamutumia kana kia mwana gitikagio kiarara*”: Meaning a woman or child’s report is acceptable only after a night, that is after verification (1997:83). This type of attitude can only be overcome by the church taking its role of advocacy seriously. Also, education should be encouraged in every sector of life to help women take control of their lives.

- **Preaching ministry**

Preaching is a powerful tool. Through preaching the minister is able to sensitize the community of the equality of men and women. On the other hand bishops ought to come out with a pastoral letter concerning the oppression of widows. Also, it is recommended that the church be involved in helping widows in legal cases especially those involved in burial problems and material grabbing. This is to say that the church has a duty to advocate the voiceless in the society. Supporting Ackerman, once the critical voices of women are heard in our forums of faith, once the principle of relationality, inclusivity and mutuality are recognised as vital for the survival of the human community in dignity and solidarity, we will be on the right path (1994:224).

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at advocacy in response to oppression and cultural marginalisation. Issues relating to the gospel, gender, culture and the church were examined. The church as a divine institution was urged to break the silence. Gender equality was seen as vital in the society and in the attaining of this, education and retreats were recommended. According to the observations in this chapter, it is very clear that the church needs to take a clear stand on issues of gender and culture. It is also clarified that most problems affecting women are the effects of cultural marginalisation due to patriarchal dominance. It becomes more complicated when the husband dies (see chapter two). It was ascertained that women need protection from the church with a view of liberating them from the misery, since both genders are equal before God (Shisanya 1996:193). Shisanya argues that, through sensitisation, support and advocacy, women will cease accepting the state of subjugation. Instead, they will fight against all injustice that prevents them from asserting their personhood (1996:193). Having clarified the role of the church towards those who make the lives

of widows very difficult, we can now turn to the next task of the church which is to care for the widows' emotional distress and grief.

CHAPTER SIX

PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING IN RESPONSE TO EMOTIONAL STRESS

This chapter looks at pastoral care and counselling in response to the emotional problems that as a widow undergoes after her husband's death. Suggestions for a widow's ministry are looked at and

the necessity of initiating support groups during and after bereavement. Finally, dealing with grief is examined.

6.1 Pastoral Care and Counselling

The overarching framework for pastoral counselling is the discipline of counselling. Before proceeding to a formal definition of counselling, one needs to look at the commonly held view of counselling. The general or common sense understanding of counselling incorporates the following characteristics: a person in distress approaches another person (either a professional or a lay person) for help (Switzer 1974:17). A special relationship is then established which occurs for a specific period of time and is characterised by, amongst other things, confidentiality and mutual trust; the goal being to try to solve the problems of the counsellee (Switzer 1974:19). Lastly, the counsellor is recognised as either having special skills or wisdom that will assist the counsellee in solving his/her problems (Switzer 1974:150). The focus is generally on what is going on inside the counsellee, for example, his/her feelings, distress and perceptions of the problem. In response the counsellors will use his/her skills and experience to assist the counsellee in resolving the problems at hand (Switzer 1974:17).

• A Definition of Counselling

According to Cottle, the definition of counselling is: a psychological process by which a professional person helps a relatively normal client to face, understand and accept a behaviour or situation so that future decisions can be made (1970:1). Cottle explains that counselling can be classified into

at least two categories: one, preventative counselling, and the other, crisis counselling. *Preventative* counselling involves identifying clients who need help, awareness of what counselling can do for them and interviewing them directly so as to provide help. This type of counselling can be used to help widows identify their needs and help them in solving them, as we shall see later. Preventive counselling occurs frequently with clients from lower social-economic backgrounds and its purpose is to reduce or eliminate minor difficulties before they assume crisis proportions (1970:115). The second type of counselling according to Cottle is *crisis* counselling. In this case the counsellee comes for help. The client has experienced enough difficulties in dealing with the situation that he/she need a counsellor. Cottle says that the counsellor can easily help the counsellee because of his awareness of the needs: yet the process is usually more complex and behaviour change more difficult than preventive counselling (1970:115).

Wallis defines counselling as a craft rather than a science. He holds that: "it is concerned with people's feelings, attitudes, values, aims, ideas, the way they react to those who are important to them, the way they react to others, their self-estimation" (1968:4). On the other hand, according to Cottle, counselling is not a problem-solving technique although one result is that problems become less formidable, less disturbing and more amenable to rational thought and planning. Another result is that the client finds other people easier to get along with because he/she is more at peace with others. Wallis believes that counselling is a process that has a meaning chiefly for the individual client where he/she gains from it in terms of tackling life problems which seem intractable (1968:5). However, the counsellor may not be able to solve the client's problem the way envisaged by the counsellee but can adjust to whatever is insolvable or insoluble and get on with the rest of his/her life (1960:5).

Oates sees counselling as

A non-medical discipline, the aims of which are to facilitate and quicken the personality growth and development and to provide comradeship and wisdom for persons facing the inevitable losses and disappointments in life. Persons seeking counselling are usually suffering internal and interpersonal conflict. They feel the need to talk to a competent person who is not emotionally or socially involved in their lives. A counsellor provides objectivity and privacy. It is a formal relationship between a counsellor and a counsellee, i.e. conducted within specific time limits and at a discreet and private place (1974:9).

From the above writers it is clear that the common sense understanding of counselling is fairly accurate. Counselling is generally characterised by the following factors: a focus on the individual counsellee, i.e. is client-centred; dealing primarily with intra-psychic (psychological) issues facing the counsellee, i.e. is problem-centred; occurs within a special professionally relationship, i.e. the counsellor is a professional trained individual with special skills that should assist the counsellee and lastly, the relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee is temporal, i.e. occurs in a specific time and setting focusing on the present need. One of the main goals of counselling is to empower the counsellees to be able not only to deal with the immediate problem, but to learn from their experiences. This professionalism of counselling is a modern phenomenon that has resulted in a ‘fragmented’ form of counselling caused by specialisation (Oates 1974: 9-10). For example, the physical needs of an individual are catered for by a medical specialist, the social needs by a social worker and the spiritual needs by the religious community. This leads for a cry in the church for a holistic strategic ministry to the distressed. The holism will combine the spiritual, physical, social, and intra-psychic, enabling the counsellor to include all these facts. The lack of holism in many forms of counselling has meant that other aspects of life such as socio-political, economic context, gender issues, race and class have been largely ignored. This brings a challenge to the church in respect of a widow who is suffering and depressed financially, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually.

- **Pastoral Counselling**

Having just defined the discipline of counselling, it is clear that the word “pastoral” before counselling forms the key to understanding the uniqueness of pastoral counselling. This is because in pastoral counselling it is the pastor who counsels (Campbell 1990:849). Nowadays, the term pastor is generally used to refer to the ordained clergy in the Anglican Church, i.e. ministers and priests (as it is termed). In the Anglican Church the term pastor is also an inclusive term, because ordained clergy perform numerous duties besides pastoral counselling and, in most cases, pastoral counselling falls under the category of pastoral care. This modern understanding of a pastor differs in some respects from the traditional understanding.

The traditional understanding of a pastor was derived from the shepherd motif found in the Old and

New Testament. As a shepherd, representing God, the pastor's responsibility included disclosing: "God's loving protection and guidance" through the ministries of healing, sustenance, guidance, and reconciliation (Hunter 1990:827). This was to reflect the holistic ministry the church is called upon to perform. Today, this pastoral counselling represents one aspect of pastoral care. Defining pastoral care counselling is not easy as there are many ways of understanding what pastoral counselling is. Hunter says:

Pastoral counselling is a specialised type of pastoral care offered in response to individuals, couples and families who are experiencing and able to articulate the pain in their lives and willing to seek pastoral help in order to deal with it. A pastoral counsellor is a person with a commitment to and education for religious ministry who is functioning in an appropriate setting for the ministry and accountable to a recognized religious community (Hunter 1990:849).

According to Paterson, pastoral counselling is the communication of understanding, respect and help seeking to deal with the emotions and the well-being of a client (1982:18). The length of time needed to heal emotional hurts will depend on the depth of the hurt (1982:18). Campbell further indicates that pastoral counselling is that activity which seeks to help others towards constructive change in any aspects of life within a caring relationship that has agreed boundaries.

- **Differentiation of pastoral care and counselling**

Many people do not distinguish between pastoral care and pastoral counselling. Hulme (1981:8) and Campbell (1985:88) define pastoral care as a supportive ministry to people and those close to them who are experiencing the familiar trials that characterize life in this world, such as illness, surgery, incapacitation, death and bereavement. Campbell points to the book of Job as an example, saying that the purpose of the visit of the three friends to Job was a term of pastoral care. "They made an appointment together to come to console with him and comfort him" (Job 2:11) (1981:9). On the other hand, pastoral counselling, either in a one to one relationship or in a group, is a ministry to persons, couples and friends that assists them in working through problems in their relationships with themselves, with others and with God. It should be noted that both are dialogical ministries, meaning both are oriented to the healing process from pain and suffering (1981:9). Obviously, the purpose of both pastoral care and counselling is related to these other ministries and they are interrelated in their influence on people. However, Hulme

claims that differentiation is a matter of emphasis (1981:10). He gives an example:

This same overlapping is true also between pastoral care and counselling. A hospitalized parishioner, for example in receiving pastoral care may reveal that she is anxious and suspicious over the infrequent visits of her spouse; the need then is disclosed for pastoral counselling in a marriage problem. Psychosomatic overtures also may need to combine his or her pastoral care with pastoral counselling to deal with these. In his or her pastoral care of a bereaved spouse, the pastor may perceive in the inconsolableness of acute grief an unresolved guilt over one's relationship with the deceased. This constitutes an obstacle to healthy grieving. In order to remove this obstacle, the pastor may need to shift to the medium of pastoral counselling (1981:10).

6.2 Pastoral Care and Counselling of Widows

The minister, unlike other counsellors does not need to wait until matters have grown so grievous, miserable and complicated. Due to God's providence, as a shepherd he may detect early signs of difficulties. Often he is able to head off problems that might otherwise lead to dire consequences. This is a gift God has given many church ministers which they neglect (Adams 1979:227). In today's church we anticipate the solving of problems only when a Christian comes for counselling but the church has neglected the challenge of going out and understanding the suffering. It has also neglected the challenge of using counselling skills to prevent problems which might be disastrous to an individual in the future, for example, widows (Adams 1979:227). Many ministers regard grief in purely rational terms as an event that happens and is likely to end with a funeral. They perceive their ministries as having answers and as being able to dispel grief, as Hulme explains (1981:59). According to Hulme, the perception of many ministers has been wrong because grief is more than the instinctual sense of loss that might produce important behavioral conditioning in an animal or even in a young child (1981:59). Jackson says that it is essentially the emotional life of an individual who has reached the state of development where he has the capacity to object to love (1985:18). He points out that: "grief is the emotion that is involved in the work of mourning whereby a person seeks to disengage himself from the demanding relationship that has existed and to reinvest his emotional capital in new and productive directions for the health and welfare of his future life in society"(1985:18). He asserts that in normal grief the reaction may show comparable

symptoms such as confusion, disorganisation, apprehension and poorly focused fear; “but the reaction tends to be temporary and the process of doing so is painful” (1985:19).

A minister who perceives grief as a process will be aware of the importance of timing the ministry to the mourner. Each mourner comes to grips with loss: “in her own time”. It is hard for the minister to gauge the propitious moment by a clock or a calendar, but only by the fullness of time for the particular person. Each human being has a personal *chronos* for grief’ (Jackson 1985:19). Weaver and Kay say that ministers should sincerely look after their congregation as shepherds who look after the sheep, thus strengthening the weak, the bereaved etc. (1997:39-40). He points out that if the weakness is so serious that the person should be confined indoors, then the pastor may need to co-ordinate welfare agencies who can supply help (1997:40).

The ACK Diocese of Nairobi needs to consider that once a husband dies, the widow becomes affected spiritually, psychologically and emotionally, as we have seen before, but the question is, does the church understand what the widow is undergoing? If the church does, then possible measures can be taken to assist. Oates brings the need for gaining knowledge and understanding of the bereaved by saying:

knowledge of the variables in each person’s situation can be gained by listening, careful inquiry and by observation. There is no substitute, of course, for having already known the person to some extent before the loss. Sensing the fullness of time involves more than merely an intuition. Empirical experience, hard data and technical knowhow of what is needed to understand the suffering person is necessary (1976:59).

If the bereaved widow is helped to adjust and cope with the situation then she will more easily come out of denial. Oates suggests that the minister should help the bereaved to adapt and live in the situation as the only way to defeat and cope with grief (1976:59). Oates also states that: “learning to swim in the river of human process-in-time is itself an anxiety provoking experience. The anxiety involved never ends; it is forever being mobilized, it can be disciplined, and it needs to be made productive” (1976:59). This study asserts that it is recommendable to extend visiting programmes for the widows. Widows who have been left by their husbands in the past can be of great help (Oates 1976:60).

- **Supportive groups**

A supportive group made of widows who have suffered the loss of their husbands within a given year can be instrumental in encouraging the one suffering and in a critical situation. Such groups, if supported by the church (ACK Diocese of Nairobi), can become a life support for others (Oates 1976:60). When these people participate in strengthening one another, there is the opportunity of even comforting others outside their group and encouraging their members (Oates 1976:60). This builds up the sharing of ministry of all believers. Weavers summarizes the aim of pastoral work by pointing out that it is “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13); (1997:39). What Oates is explaining is that the ministries in the church are not confined to the minister only but should be shared by believers according to their different gifts and experiences (1997:39).

Oates sees pastoral care, although it is a matter of care, as a reinforcement of action (1997:39). He says that pastoral care empowers and enables God’s people to operate in harmony with others (1997:39). This supports a ministry of widowhood in the ACK Diocese of Nairobi which or whose activities can be to care, teach, manage and comfort. Ministers can easily set aside some days for counselling duties. Although the Anglican Church is an Episcopal Church where roles are defined, this study recommends a ministry of all believers where counselling widows can be shared among the Christian body. This will be an added advantage in that latent talents within the church are made use of. The primary goal of the Anglican Church (Diocese of Nairobi) should be to help widows regain their identity and self-esteem.

Mitchelle and Anderson reveal that: “loss of any kind requires reaffirmation of the self” (in Wicks *et al* 1985:544). That is to say, the primary goal is that the grieving person reaffirms that self which is still there, though changing. Reaffirmation of the self occurs in a “painful process of embracing a future” according to Wicks *et al* (1985:544). Therefore, the church (Anglican Diocese of Nairobi) has a duty of helping the grieving to retain their identity through grief-resolution

therapy. The church should have a future for the grieving person (widow). Melges endorse this primary goal by saying:

... grief resolution therapy involves helping the patient reconstruct his /her identity into the future. However, much needs to happen before the person claims that identity for his /her own future. Impediments to this personal search are real and sometimes frequent (in Wicks *et al* 1985:544).

It should be noted that the ministry of counselling is emphasised in the Anglican Church, but the challenge is that it rarely focuses on widows and their problems. The problem, as revealed in earlier chapters, has been the cultural, social, and economic perceptions of women (Wicks & Estadt 1993:45). Wicks and Estadt add that many clients suffer from a lack of resources and opportunities and counselling can only prove useful when one's basic needs are met (1993:45). Unfortunately, it can be the case that when a minister decides to visit a widow, rumours spread that he is intending to have a love affair with the woman. This was explained to me by one of the interviewees, Mrs Akinyi of St. Polycarp Mlango Kubwa (Oral interview 29.12.2000). She said that a widow lives a segregated life in the community because of her status. She also said that, due to a lack of finances, the close friends sit back and watch her suffer. (Oral interview 29.12.2000). She said that,

The church where I worshiped together with my husband did not dare to visit me after my husband's death. Due to this rejection and loneliness, I developed anger and guilt towards people. Sometimes I would have dreams of my husband. My relatives at home joined hands together to frustrate me and laid the burden on me that I was the cause of the death of my husband. My children dropped out of school. It was such a sorrowful moment when I *needed* encouragement. Till now I feel lonely and yet recovered. It is now six years since the death of my husband. (Oral interview 29.12.2000).

After a free discussion, the researcher asked her what role the church had played and she explained thus:

The church (minister) officiated the burial ceremony of my husband but from then, only a few Mothers' Union members visited us (once). Yet we needed support, comfort encouragement and love as a family (Oral interview 29.12.2000).

The church, as the body of Christ, clearly needs to be challenged, because when one part of the body is suffering, the whole body is suffering (1 Corinthians 12:10). This should apply to widows who are part of the church. Critically, the church has not been able to serve the suffering or afflicted,

especially widows. Therapeutically, sharing with one another is very important and should not be overlooked (Oates 1997:31). Oates commends therapeutic healing through group sharing of one another's plight.¹² He recommends this to those widows who have enough time to work through their grief (1997:31). This method is not commonly used but the church can use it as a model in widows' ministry. A widows' ministry is vital in the church today. According to the observation in chapter two, widows have been rejected due to the patriarchal systems, a factor which contributes to the oppression of widows. Women in the African context are looked upon as inferior (Phiri 1997:117). Phiri criticizes church leaders, for being silent about the issues of widows. Her criticism of leaders is that: "Christian men especially church leaders seem to be sending a silent message that they do not care what would happen to their wives and children if they were to die first" (1997:117). This challenge cannot be ignored by those of us who are serving in the Diocese of Nairobi.

Lee explains that it is only in the last few years that widespread effort has begun to remedy the situation (1968:2). He highly recommends practical training in the techniques of counselling (1968:3). The challenge is ours as ministers to care and be concerned for the suffering, the depressed and the confused (Wicks and Estadt 1993:138). A chaplain from the Diocese of Mt Kenya Central comments that: "our church has emphasised much in marital counselling and couples' seminars organised occasionally. But you hardly hear of widows' seminars" (Oral interview 29.12.2000).

He alluded that widows are left alone to tackle their own problems, giving an example of his mother, who passed away three days before the interview. He commented: "my mother died being discouraged without anyone giving her comfort, hope and encouragement although she had served as a Mothers' Union leader for a long time" (Oral interview 29.12.2000). The Mothers' Union in the Anglican Church of Kenya has been emphasising family life and bringing up children in a good Christian life, but the problem is that they do not go beyond the stage where a spouse dies. What next? In the African context, as shown in chapter two, the husband is/was allowed to remarry (Oduyoye 1995:150). On the other hand, the

¹² According to Lartey, therapy comes from the word *therapeuo*. The Greek word *therapeuo* which the English word derives essentially means 'heal'. "Healing presupposes that something has gone wrong with the proper functioning of bodies, minds, or spirits" (1997:30).

widow was not allowed to remarry unless on certain grounds. She was only to be inherited by in-laws or other relatives (Oduyoye 1995: 150; Kirwen 1979:30).

- **Main objectives of the support groups.**

The main objective of the support group is to meet regularly, talk about themselves and ask questions relating to their common problem. Kinyanjui in his masters thesis, relating to self-support groups in pastoral care and counselling, states: “The participants’ aim at working for or at themselves, achieving change(s) in their life or new goals, but also at establishing a kind of routine, health and contentment. In most cases, many of the self-supporting groups should be linked to bigger networks of self-organisation” (1998:142). According to Kinyanjui, the self-support group system was first developed in Latin America and has developed in a big way in east and central Africa. It can be used as a tool for social, psychological, spiritual and economic empowerment (1998:145). Jackson encourages pastors to be facilitators in encouraging effective group relationships. This is because the problems of grief are essentially social problems involving social relationships (1985:185).

Jackson in his book *Understanding Grief*, suggests six areas of concern to the bereaved which could be legitimately considered:

- the bereaved may want to review the relationship with the deceased. Just talking about this relationship with someone who listens sympathetically is usually adequate;
- the grieving person may want to talk about her own feelings and how they have changed;
- sometimes persons have feelings that they have not had before and consequently may think they are losing their minds;
- the bereaved may want to talk about what she is doing to deal with her changed feelings, and in so doing get a clearer picture of what she can do;
- she may want to verbalise her feelings of guilt: the fact is that she has them, so there is no basis for trying to re-enforce them. The counselor should accept but not amplify;
- she may want to do some verbal experimenting about new modes of living and with someone new. The fact that she has a trusted and sympathetic listener may make it easier for her to

move from verbalization to action on the basis of (her) expressed thoughts. Such things can be done legitimately within the framework of pastoral counselling (1985:158).

Moving to the geographical and environmental factors, it is important to understand that Nairobi is different from the rural areas where people own land (see chapter four). As observed by the researcher, Nairobi is a city of many cultures and tribes and has its own challenges. Many people live an individualistic type of life which is different from the rural areas where people live as a community. When a woman is left by her husband through death, loneliness becomes a reality. As such, preparing of widows for grief is crucial. Not much has been done in our congregations. This is an area the Anglican church Nairobi Diocese is lacking in. Giving hope that carries the widow successfully through the time of grief must be given enough time (Adams 1979:143). Adams states: “hope does not grow out of misunderstanding and ignorance. Hope is based on information” (1979:144).

In summary, the church (Diocese of Nairobi) should discuss grief beforehand (1979:144). This will help people face death and grief more maturely when it comes their way.

6.3 Ministers’ Personal Role To Widows in Grief

The researcher’s mother once said that: “No one who has not experienced the death of a beloved husband can truly understand the agony of such a loss” (Oral interview). This statement was uttered after the death of the researcher’s father on the 11 .5.1999. She could not imagine that her husband was no more. Although the children tried to encourage her, she still uttered the above words which are supported by Marjory and Collet (1991:49). Grief is an intensely personal

experience, something that can never be truly shared, no matter how close we are to each other. In winding up of this section, lets me sum up with the words of Atkinson,

Those who lost a partner through death, call for a careful pastoral support especially in the

period of six weeks to six months after the death and on significant anniversaries. They may need help in coming to terms with their loss themselves, and also in working it through with their bereaved children. Bereavement services have a vital role to play in this. The normal stages of loss must be worked through, and emphatic listening can help a great deal. There is a need to separate from the dead person and from his/her status and role; there is a transition to be undergone from confusion and uncertainty to being able to discover and accept a new status (being partner less) and finally reincorporation into the community. It is realistic to allow up to two years or even longer for this. (1995:892)

Through the inspiration of the above quotation the church should embark and be involved in pastoral support, because being left by a spouse leaves the bereaved in a state of confusion. The bereaved should be made to feel that there are people or a group of people who care and are ready to support her. This support is important in order to help her to adjust and accept the situation and to enable her to know that God is in control.

We hear much from our churches through preaching on Sundays, Bible seminars and even through published books about the facts of life. It is unfortunate that little has been done to prepare widows or others for grief. We even pronounce during marriage that: "for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). We also encourage young people to speak about the subject. I would say we have failed because we hardly prepare people for death and grief and, if it is done, it is very rarely or very superficially (Adams 1979:143). Adams asks: "Is there a course, a book, a study or anything else on the facts of death?" (1979:143). Adams states that death is more universal than the begetting of life and yet we say virtually nothing about the facts of death (1979:143). Early preparation for grief and death will be of great help. Taking the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:13f: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep... so that you may not grieve as others who have no hope." Paul offers a solution by bringing hope out of despair, to give answers to the problems and to give comfort in time of sorrow. He encourages them to comfort one another (Adams 1979:143). Adams points out that the duties of pastors do not end with funerals, but that they should engage themselves in the process of a pastoral relationship that will help the bereaved to accomplish the adjustments that are necessary to restore her to a right relationship with herself and with others (1979:134). The role of a pastor is clearly defined. He is assigned the role,

by the community, of bringing comfort wisely, both for the immediate and distant situation Oates explains (1976:61).

Oates recommends home visits to the bereaved; that the pastor should visit the home of the bereaved at least monthly for the first three months after the crisis (1976:61). When one discerning and competent individual keeps active contact with the person through the important first days, confusion is cut down. A sustained communication with a trusted individual is made possible, emotional stress is relieved and a measure of emotional security in a framework of instability things is guaranteed. In such visits full information concerning physical matters is communicated to the bereaved and the relationship is sustained. Confidence between the minister (counsellor) and the widow is made secure (Adams 1979:152). When confidence has been created between the counsellee (widow) and the minister (counsellor), Adams points out that openness will be realised and a widow may say, I depend so much on him, how can I go on into the future? What will happen to the business? What will happen to the children? (1979:152).

The minister (counsellor) should be able to deliver messages that are relevant to the bereaved so that they can be interpreted and related to other events that are happening. As such, he can help the grieving person to deal with her problems wisely. The minister should not do for her what she can do, but try to relieve the stress where it appears to be taxing (Oates 1976:61-62). As opportunities afford, the minister (counsellor) should help the person to face the reality of her situation and to think through the deeper meanings of her life, new responsibilities, her new relationships and the problems and adjustments (1979:153).

The other thing that the minister (counsellor) should note is that he/she should be quick to accept the feelings of the mourner and should encourage the expression of feelings (Oates 1976:43). It is at this point that understanding of the function of tears is important (Marjory and Collect 1991:49). Marjory and Collect point out that:

much of the distress of widowhood lies in trying to maintain an unnatural composure, as though it would be undignified to give way to grief. But in the early weeks, when stress is

great, it is wiser to let your feelings come to the surface. You will have to go through all the stages of grief in one way or another and only when you have worked through all the disbelief, anger, depression - can you return to normal living. (1991:49)

Fairchild says that an unresolved state of sadness and sorrow leads to depression (1980:23).

Weaver and Kay support Marjory and Collect's suggestion of the importance of mourning by simply saying: "if we can't weep, then we cannot laugh" (1979:164). He points to a biblical precedent of mourning by referring to the death of Stephen:

When Stephen was martyred, devout men made great lamentation over him (Acts 8:2). The early church wept to see one of the bright young Christians of their days stoned to death. So, if the early church with their burning conviction of heaven and of eternal life, were willing to mourn, then we should not be ashamed to do so either (1997:164).

According to Adams, "At such moments, the effect of tears suggest an influence as comforting and soothing as the softness of the tears. Tears, warm and wet, are soothing in and of themselves. Symbolically they can serve as a way of relief. It is the sorrow that is too great that becomes the source of dry-eyed grief" (1979:139). Adams says,

according to the scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments, sorrow is proper. Every emotion is good. God has created and gifted man with the capacity for expressing all of these emotions. Each is proper in the appropriate situation to which it corresponds. The loss of a loved one is a sorrowful event, so it is improper to hold back one's emotion of sorrow at the time of death (1979:139).

Indeed, "psychologically, mourning is a helpful process" asserts Weaver and Kay (1997:164). To conclude, Adams says that: one bitter woman may say, "he left me now just at this time when I need him so much, what will happen now?" Another asks in fear, "what will happen in the future?" (1979:149). The survivor may become angry at the one who died, yet be sorry that he has died. She may be angry that he has left her alone to face the fears of the future. The key then becomes the pastor who can help the bereaved to focus and trust in the providence of God who is able to solve problems of fear. The pastor should be in a position to offer hope and help the bereaved and set her mind at rest that God is sovereign even in a such time (Adams 1979:150).

From the above observation, it is clear that the ministry of a minister is vital to the suffering.

Unfortunately, in the Diocese of Nairobi most ministers are seen on Sundays during worship and those who are available may appear once a week in the office for a very short time. This observation was also made by the Archbishop of ACK and Bishop of Nairobi in the synod meeting held in Nairobi. He stated: "most clergy are unavailable to the parishioners' needs." He emphasised that the clergy should serve the parishioners faithfully in meeting their spiritual and physical needs according to their calling (Synod, February 1999).¹³

According to a report of an interviewee (Name withheld) most ministers demand that you clear your annual pledge (debt) even before they come to serve you during the burial ceremony. She said that such a demand adds to the stress and anger. Most of these cases are happening in the rural areas where parishes are not able to pay their quota (Oral interview 10.1.2001).¹⁴ This goes against Adams' meaning of shepherding God's flock, which is to heal, help the wandering, torn and defeated

who need restoration. He says the good shepherd strengthens and heals (1979:172). Most ministers emphasise their positions as "bosses", administrators, chiefs and people who are unreachable. There is an example of a poor shepherd, of whom Ezekiel 34:4-16 says that he fails notably in the performance of this task. Adams adds : "who will not care for the perishing, seek the scattered, heal the broken, or sustain the one standing?" (Zachariah 11:16); (1979:172). It is unfortunate that God's shepherds have abandoned this ministry of serving the widows who are suffering greatly and are in dire need. The church needs to look at this area in a more serious light. According to the researchers point of view, the healing aspects concerning grief must start among the people most seriously affected by it and who can share their experiences. Facing death, grief and sadness is common to all people, culture and place. According to Jackson, grief can be defined as an important and normal response to the loss of any significant person or valuable object, whether through death of someone, divorce or retirement. This feeling of loss can bring about grief because the person has lost

¹³ This statement was given by the Archbishop of the Anglican church of Kenya during devotion in the special diocesan synod held in Nairobi in February 1999.

¹⁴ Quota is a particular amount of money assigned by the Diocese to be paid by parishes annually to assist the learning of the Diocese.

daily experiences of being appreciated and valued (1985:16-21). In case of death, it happens to every one. As such, it is not only left for mourners to grieve. Those closest to the one deceased are faced with the vacuum to deal with.

In Kenya, especially those living in Nairobi, grief is experienced as a time of silence and wonder. People often indulge in thinking about how to relate to the bereaved. The minister can facilitate the situation by allowing the widows to share what they think. Sharing of grief can be important for the bereaved person because they will not feel utterly left to the worries of their own ideas and fearful images (Oates 1976:53).

The first few weeks after the death of a loved one, widows experience shock and disbelief. Grieving is a reaction to this shock (Oates 1976:20). However, the magnitude of the situation differs.

According to Oates, grief differs from person to person. He says a minister should be able to discern the different kinds of grief for his effectiveness (1976:20). He points out that different forms of grief call for different diagnosis, meaning and treatment (1976:20). Oates analyzes three types of grief: sudden or traumatic grief; chronic sorrow or “no end” grief.

He says:

- anticipatory grief is a double grief, the grief of a person dying with a long term grief over his or her gradual loss of life due to a terminal illness such as cancer and grief of the family and close friends of the dying person.
- sudden or traumatic grief comes without warning. Death comes in a sudden unexpected manner such as a heart attack, accident, suicide, murder, or some other form of tragedy. The bereaved reacts with shock, alarm, disbelief and panic. In shock, the bereaved may hasten back into hyperactive work almost as if nothing has happened. “Grief work may be delayed over a longer period of time. Sadly, sudden death may cause the survivor to be more likely to grieve alone” (1976:21). In this situation, a minister can do much by mobilizing members of the church to provide a community of concerned persons for the bereaved. Persons suffering a sudden death grief are more likely be affected than those persons suffering anticipatory death.
- chronic sorrow or “no end grief” is dramatically different from anticipatory and sudden grief.

Chronic sorrow can mean living with a badly deformed or retarded person, for a long time. Being a pastor to such persons and families is being in the pilgrimage with them for the duration (1976:22) .

These are some of the types of grief mentioned by Oates (1976:23). When the minister understands the situation of a widow, he/she will be able to meet her spiritual, psychological and physical needs. Through the insight gathered in this section, this study suggests that:

- widows talk and share what they are undergoing and not remain silent;
- the church should educate the members of the society so that they do not harbour irrational suspicions;
- the minister may also take some of the pressures of the family by assisting where ever possible.

According to Peterson (1982) and Oglesby (1980), a counselling ministry was practised in the early church as a way of healing those with problems. Thus, counselling started in the early church. Historically, the first counselling facilities were at the beginning of the Christian era, thus many early Christian monks turned their monasteries into psychological cities of refuge. They were places where the problems of men could be met by the healing power of love. Thus, long before the techniques of psychology and/or psychiatry were introduced, the basic principles of healing through love were applied. Why did this happen? Because these early Christians chose to care for the community. Genuine care always leads to counselling: to help the person to help herself and thus become a whole person (Peterson 1982:12). As a result of the Christians who cared, those suffering from emotional problems could then choose to get help (Peterson 1982:12).

Oglesby supports this view by referring once more to the early church. He points out that :

it goes without saying that the importance of pastoral care and counselling has been recognised by the church from the beginning. Bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) is a responsibility entrusted to every member of the family of faith, but it is specially charged to the minister as "shepherd of the flock". The crucial question turns on how it should be done (1980:14).

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter looked at pastoral care and counselling and the importance of counselling widows. An assessment of how the Anglican Nairobi Diocese can be effective in dealing with grief was made. Pastors were encouraged to take initiatives in pastoral duties seriously, taking into account current economic, sociological, and political realities together with the perception of women in our country (Kenya). All women suffer after their husbands' deaths, psychologically, emotionally, sociologically and economically (Haider 1995:150- 152). Thus, action needs to be taken to save the situation. The church is called to care for widows in their distress, and also to be engaged in diakonia (service) to those who are struggling with life, poverty and unemployment. It is to this ministry of development we now turn.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EMPOWERMENT IN RESPONSE TO LACK OF MEANING

Having looked at advocacy and pastoral care, we now move to the third aspect of the holistic ministry to widows, namely empowerment which is in response to their experience of lack of meaning and control by the widow. Their participation and empowerment in development will be analysed.

7.1 Development

According to Weiner and Simpson, development: is “a gradual unfolding into fuller view, a fuller disclosure or working out details by anything, as a plan, a scheme, a plot of novel that which fuller unfolding is embodied or realized” (1989: 564). Robinson & Davidson describe development as “the act of developing or the process of being developed”. To develop (verb) means “to become more mature, more advanced, more complete, more organized and more detailed”. He says it is to be transformed from a simple structure to a much more complex one, usually by passing through a number of stages. Thus to begin to have something; to have an increased amount of it (1996:366).

Development as seen above, is defined differently by different writers, however Brundtland argues that what we need to understand is: “development is that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs” (in Kirkby *et al* 1995:1). In other words, relative redistribution of resources towards the poor and the improvement of their living conditions. De Beer and Swanepoel support this by saying: “in community development it is very important that the presence of a human needs is acknowledged” (1998:51). Thus, the whole philosophy behind development is that people will grow in self-reliance, self-sufficiency and eventually human dignity.

According to the following writers De Santa Ana (1998:133); Bonino (1975:18); Winberg *et al*

(1997:7); Coetzee and Graaf (1996:313-315); Gutierrez (1973:25); Kee (1977:72-73); De Beer and Swanepoel (1998:91-92) :

- Development is the improvement of the economic social and cultural conditions of communities.
- It is to improve people's standard of living.
- It is to improve the conditions of community life.
- The improvement of standards of social and economic life.
- The securing of better levels of living and nutrition.
- Development leads to more social equality based on mutual respect.
- The achievement of economic and political independence. It helps to become more competent to live with and gain control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world by means of personality growth or personal betterment.
- A change in attitude or mind that results in a change of behaviour and the pursuit of a new course of action.

In other words Coetzee & Graaf say “effective development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilise and manage resources to produce sustainable improvements in their quality of life” (1996: 318). According to de Beer and Swanepoel, “the basic element of community development is the self-effort of local people to improve their living conditions” (1998:92). Korten in Coetzee & Graaf further adds that effective development does not emphasise institutional initiatives from outside but identifies the people’s needs and empowers them (1996:318). De Beer & Swanepoel support this argument by saying that development is a process of helping people to help themselves, in a sense that it is people centred. Acknowledges the principle of human worthy, right of self, actualization, participation, and cooperation (1998:43):

Decision-making must truly be returned to the people who have both the capacity and the right to inject into the process the richness- including the subjectivity- of their values and needs. Decision-making process should be fully informed by whatever analysis available experts can provide, but only as one of several data inputs available to the many participants. (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000:273)

In line with the above quote, De Beer & Swanepoel state: "Obviously those affected by development projects are to be the main role players and decision-makers" (2000:272). Therefore, participation is an important issue in development because it is always connected to the 'doing' by communities, groups, individuals, things related to development, improvement or change of the existing situation, to something presumably better (Moser in De Beer & Swanepoel 2000:271). De Beer & Swanepoel assert that the issue of participation can be interpreted in two ways: Firstly, there is a weak interpretation which sees participation as involvement or co-option in which communities are mobilised to support initiatives from outside. Secondly, there is the strong interpretation namely empowerment in which initiatives, decision making and responsibility start and end with the community (2000:271-272) (see chapter 7.3).

- **Power in development**

According to De Beer & Swanepoel development has two basic directions which can and do happen. These are top-bottom and bottom-top approaches (See 7.4). In the former, decisions and directions are provided from people other than the beneficiaries, whereas in the latter the beneficiaries themselves take responsibility for their own development. Top-down focuses on goals, whereas bottom-top focus on process (1998:19-24). De Gruchy states:

Clearly these two directions constitute two different 'ways' of development, but they are really two points on continuum, and most development initiatives locate somewhere along the line between the two poles. However, there is a big difference between these two 'ways' when it comes to a reflection on power dynamics, and the role of development in socio-political context. 'Top-down' development is often the result of someone else's agenda, and does not challenge the overall power relations in the society, whereas 'bottom-top' is designed precisely to challenge those powers relations by 'empowering' the poor. (Class lectures, 6.9.2000)

Bragg states:

Related to freedom is the need for the affected people to play a meaningful part in their own transformation. If people participate in the process of their transformation it becomes meaningful, effective and lasting. The best laid plans of 'developers' have been wrecked by top-down approach that disregards the participation of those involved. Local initiative and control from the beginning of any project are essential for people to commit themselves to it as their own and carry it forward. Any other approach only perpetuates the relationship of

dominance and dependency and the patronizing attitudes of outside developers. (1987:44)

Bragg challenges those developers who legitimize the community through the language of participation by saying:

Many development projects have been vitiated by relationships that rob those who are already oppressed and in need of their dignity. The very language used that characterizes people as ‘target groups’ or ‘recipients’ creates, even in programs founded on the best of intentions, power structures and paternalism. It is no wonder that the ‘recipients’ sometimes internalize a feeling of inferiority. (1987:42-43)

In view of the above quote, such a development goes contrary to what we have conceived as people centred development whose main objective is to help people take control of their own lives (De Beer & Swanepoel 1998:23). Bragg further points out that the concept of self-reliance in development involves a decentralization of power which would “allow all those concerned at every level of society to exercise all the power of which they are capable” (1987:35). He says that redistribution of power is necessary for the exercise of fundamental human rights, right to express oneself without repression, the right for equal opportunity and the right to control one’s destiny (1987:35). Bragg’s argument is that self-reliance is sought in order to promote the participation of all members of society from the lowest levels up, thus, self-reliant development could also be called appropriate development, he asserts (1987:36). Steve De Gruchy states, “As people are affirmed in their own humanity, as their own hopes and dreams are encouraged, as they receive the dignity of being seen as subjects of their own development, rather than objects of someone else’s plans, so the possibilities of maximum participation are increased” (class lectures, 6.9.2000).

This is the type of development on which this study focuses: that which will raise the standard of living of widows. As suggested earlier, Winberg *et al* formulate two aims in their work: firstly, the visible improvement in the standard of living; secondly, the improvement of self-esteem and community awareness (1997:77). When the Anglican church Nairobi Diocese, achieves these two aims towards widows, improvement of the quality of life will be realised.

In contrast, many Christians regard ‘development’ as a purely spiritual process involving spiritual

growth for existing believers and evangelism to non-believers. The focus is on caring for souls. Socio-economic indicators of development are not considered to be a priority in many churches. However, the term should be used to refer to the growth of the whole person. This is what I would term the “holistic Gospel”. Summing up the statement made by Pope Paul IV in his 1967 Encyclical letter, *Populorum progressio*, “development is the growth of each person and the whole person” (in Magessa 1989:113). This dissertation is focusing on the understanding of development that liberates and empowers widows to take control of their own lives together in the society and in the church while remaining faithful to the gospel.

On the same note this study asserts that the church should go beyond caring for widows to being with them. This means entering into solidarity with the widows in concrete ways by sharing their sorrows, joys, hopes and fears. Without this, the attempt to serve the interests of such people would remain patronizing(Kayonga1989:219). It would also make them more powerless, dependent and less appreciative of their sharing with other people the dignity of being human and being children of one Father (God). Solidarity with these people means the need for the church to break out from the complicity of the society and its oppression towards widows. Cultures, customs and regulations which are oppressive to widows need to be condemned. “This calls for the transformation of the unjust structures which institutionalize destitution” (Kayonga 1989:219). As mentioned earlier, unjust structures are those that create room for some people to exploit, oppress or neglect others, including widows (Kayonga 1989:220). At this point one of the questions one should ask should be: How is the required transformation of the unjust structures and eradication of injustice to be achieved?

According to Kalumba (1989:200); Kee (1977:67); and Gutierrez (1973:26) the underlying factors affecting the destitute widows are economic policies that favour some people, the rich. It is also the lack of education and disintegration of community life (Kayonga1989:220). De Gruchy posits: “Allied to the culture of defeatism is lack of leadership and vocational skills amongst the poor and dispossessed. This is both a cause and a symptom of their marginalisation” (class lectures, 6 .9. 2000). De Beer & Swanepoel say that the disadvantage of poor people is that they have not been able to get the necessary training, as earlier stated, and this in turn limits their advancement. The

question arises as to how people can possibly participate fully in their own development, if they lack the skills to lead meetings, take minutes, write letters, produce funding proposals, manage funds etc. For widows to be effective in their own development, leadership training is a challenge for the church in order to ensure empowerment (De Beer & Swanepoel 2000: 272). Having understood the situation of widows, the church as a resource entity inside the community can forge a partnership that sees help and assistance given to meet these needs. This implies that the church is conscious of the dynamics of participation as ‘empowerment’ which does not see this role as an attempt to control (Coetzee & Graaf 1996: 322- 323). These factors lead the Anglican church Nairobi Diocese to focus on development and well planned strategies to change such factors at congregational level in order to create and promote a more just and more humane society.

- **Congregational level**

At congregational level, basic and small communities can promote group relationships and ensure the following:

- interpersonal relationships; more vital and less formal religiosity; and real insertion to life (De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:20).
- that these communities are based in areas in which they live and neighbour hood identity (Coetzee and Graaff 1996:313).
- That social interaction and support starts with the basic community. This is the most basic local group of people capable of engaging in meaningful interaction (Kayonga in Agbasiere and Zabanjugu 1989:220). A basic Christian community at the congregational level would therefore be an ideal for fighting poverty and for assisting widows (Kayonga in 1989:220).

The understanding of Kayonga is that there is an impact of development at the congregational level.

When we look at it in that perspective, the church can start with the basics of understanding the needs of the congregation, especially the widows. Through this understanding from the local congregation the church leaders, clergy, religious and lay people can effectively deepen the impact of Christianity (1989:220). Thus, it is from this starting point that the Anglican Church Diocese of Nairobi can minister and create an environment which widows can

experience love and acceptance.

7.2 Gender and development

When we look at the involvement of widows in development, what strikes us first is the issue of gender. What is gender? People have tried to define the roles of women and men. According to Midgley, social scientists have tried to investigate how different societies define the role of men and women (1995:121). Gender refers to the socially constructed and culturally defined differences between man and woman. In other words, gender is not intrinsic to human nature but socially constructed and defined in such a way that one's role, identity and position in society are determined by one's sex. Roles have been defined culturally (Midgley 1995:121). Most of the comparisons are particularly marked when roles in different societies are compared. Winberg *et al* define gender as a social meaning given to biological and physical differences between the sexes. He says that the society has roles, behaviours and a set of qualities expected of a male and a female (1993:60). These may take different forms in different societies and cultures. De Gruchy stated during his class lectures *The making of a redemptive community* course that: "all cultures have certain qualities and roles which they consider 'natural' and which in most cases favour the oppressor to the oppressed" (11.1.2000). Winberg *et al* support the above saying by asserting that: "In all societies we know of, there is unequal value attached to the two genders, namely what is made male has a higher value than that which is female" (1997:60). This becomes a big problem because women are seen as irresponsible in relation to development. Due to such perception, women have not been recognised in the development sector and it is worse for a woman whose husband has died. The argument here is that widows, just as other people, should enjoy and have their daily needs met just as any other human being and should be recognised and accepted in the society.

Magesa says that:

God does not want worship that obscures or minimizes urgent human needs, The sacrifice that pleases God is that of heart, whose patience compels it to action. If the oppressed, upon hearing the good news of the Kingdom of God, can stand up for their own liberation: so that

they may live in the image and likeness of God, then obviously the beneficiaries of their repression are called to conversion so that such liberation may be feasible. (in Agbasiere and Zabanjungu 1989:119)

Thus, the church should encourage widows in development and oppose suppression, untruth, thoughts and degradation. Hughes and Bennet argue that throughout history Women have not been granted equality with men in the enjoyment of God's blessings to all (1998:236). They contend that women make up the majority of the world's poor (1998:236). Women have been looked at and assigned domestic work. This is because of the division of labour in many societies (Winberg *et al* 1997:60). Rogers points out that, "the dominance of patriarchal ideology in many cultures relegates women to play the gender role of mothers, housewife and nurturer" (in Midgley 1995:121). These roles are not only arduous, monotonous and devoid of satisfaction but they also make women inferior to men. Domestication is accompanied by discrimination not only in the domestic sphere but in a wider society as well (1995:121-122).

Haider supports Midgley's observation by saying that, worldwide, women are paid less than men. He points at the developing countries as an example (1996:155). Hughes and Bennet contend that women make up the majority of the world's poor, due to discrimination (1998:236). It is not the aim of this dissertation to make a comprehensive survey of how women are treated everywhere but to focus on widows in the Diocese of Nairobi who are oppressed by the fact that their have passed husbands. If women are culturally discriminated against in developmental issues, how much more in this case of widowhood? This creates a need for involving widows in development as part of the church's vision. The second question is: If women are affected by the economic crisis, what about the poor widow who sometimes earns less, owns less and controls less? It is for this reason that the Anglican Church of Kenya in the Diocese of Nairobi has to look for ways to change society and implement systems that will favour widows in the society (see chapter two).

According to Grigg, Nairobi city has the biggest slums in East Africa containing 200,000 poor people. Mathare valley is one of the biggest and, according to Grigg, faces one of the most dire

situations in the world today (1992:101). Before the researcher registered at the University of Natal, he was serving at St. Polycarp Mlango Kubwa, of which Mathare valley was one of the congregations. His ministry in this area motivated him to investigate how to raise the standards of the oppressed. For the time he served in this parish he experienced widows suffering economically, socially and psychologically, while the church was standing apart without involving them in development. As such, most of the women practised prostitution and others were involved in brewing traditional liquor, '*changaa*'. It is a fact that most people living in Mathare valley, Korogocho, Gitarimarigu, Maili-saba and Mukuru-Kwa Njenga slums are women and the majority are single unmarried and widows. The living conditions are very poor and unfortunately the church has overlooked development in relation to widows. Practical experiences of the researcher show that most women live in hazardous conditions (see motivation in chapter one). Therefore, it is of great importance that the Anglican Church, Diocese of Nairobi explore the issues affecting widows in development. One of the issues is the general lack of education among women in their early stages which causes them to be housewives even after marriage. Even those women who work are compelled to work for low wages and under exploitative conditions: Employment opportunities are limited due to the economic crisis in Kenya.

Finally, Midgley says that women have been long neglected in development (1995:122). This has created a situation of poverty because development projects have conventionally been designed to serve the interests of men (Midgley 1995:122). It is with this perspective that this chapter acknowledges and supports widows' participation in development.

7.3 Widows' Participation in Development

This section tries to explore why widows should be allowed to participate in development. The major reason why this study emphasises widows' participation is because development is a process of enhancing the capacity of a social system (a community) to adapt to its environment and to regenerate physical resources and human potential (De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:51). The whole

philosophy behind community development is that people will gain self-reliance, self-sufficiency and eventually human dignity”(1997:3). Coetzee and Graaf say participation transforms people’s consciousness and leads to a process of self-actualization which enables oppressed people to take control of their lives while simultaneously challenging the dominating classes. Participation helps people to realise the need to combine with others in an organised fashion in order to improve their standard of living. This leads to what is known as “popular participation” with the aim of achieving power (1996:315). Coetzee and Graaf point it out as :

... A special kind of power, people's power, which belongs to the oppressed and exploited classes, groups and organisations and the defense of their just interests to enable them to advance towards shared goals of social change within a participatory system. (1996:315)

Participation is an approach to development that looks to the creative initiative of people as the primary developmental resource and to their national and spiritual well-being as the end that the development process serves (De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:46; Lienberg and Stewart 1997:27). Employment of widows is the objective of people-centered development, of which the training of communities simply becomes a tool in the process. When the church is giving training, it should bear in mind that it is a servant, therefore power should be given to the community, the widows in this context, as the study observes. Participation is a key area that the ACK Diocese of Nairobi ought to emphasise for the success of widows in development. The reason is that it allows the oppressed widows to make their own decisions and meet their needs. Lienberg and Stewart contend that it is a self-sustaining process to engage free men and women in activities that meet their basic needs (1997:27-28). This supports De Beer and Swanepoel's view of community as a geographical locality of shared interests and needs (1998:17). It also supports the views of Edward and Jones that the community is “... a group of people who reside in a specific locality and who exercise some degree of local autonomy in organising their social life in such a way that they can, from that locality base satisfy the full range of their daily needs” (in de Beer and Swanepoel 1998:17).

When one looks at the situation of widows, one may seemingly see incapable people as far as development is concerned. However, according to the above writers, it is ascertained that widows

can succeed in development if empowered and given an opportunity to make decisions according to their needs and locality.

7.4 Empowerment (Bottom up development)

Empowerment will help the targeted community (widows) feel a sense of ownership and at the same time identify their specific needs. It is only through empowerment that the oppressed community (widows) will be able to prioritise their project objectives (see 7.1).

It is a learning process: Singsby in De Beer and Swanepoel says: “community based support programmes can help increase their awareness of what can be done to help them select from a range of components. The programme can therefore act as a facilitator of community needs and not as an implementor of preconceived proposals” (1998:24).

It is collective action: it is a collective action because people have the freedom to express themselves and group sharing is harmonised. The group has a mutual interest, concern and togetherness. According to Clerk the key word is “collective”“collective action may lead to small success”. Such small success should not be undermined because according to them, “...such minor success can instill great confidence in the poor, confidence which if skillfully channeled quickly leads to ambitions of tackling much bigger problems through their new-found weapon of collective action” (in De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:24).

Empowerment creates self-awareness, in other words, it helps people to take control of their lives. This awareness builds dignity in widows because, when empowered, they get a better chance to address the developmental needs in their situation and at the same time formulate objectives for the success of their future endeavours. When the widows see themselves as a suffering entity, but active, they will be able to change the situation and the environment through participation. This is also applicable to any other oppressed group (De Beer and Swanepoel 1998:25; Coetzee and Graaf 1996:312; Winberg 1997:77). One of the reasons why this study recommends widows’ participation in development is that they will be able to identify their problems and the

church will give them the opportunity to make their own decisions and choices about how they intend to resolve them. Therefore, the Anglican Church of Kenya, Diocese of Nairobi, must seek ways of empowering widows and uplifting their financial position.

A practical example is from the Baptist mission in South-West Haiti. According to Jeune two hundred and seventy churches belonging to the Baptist mission in South-West Haiti tried to improve people's lives but for forty years it was unsuccessful (1987:224) "Yet forty years of successful gospel proclamation did not change the people's physical situation" (1987:224). Jeune states: "That the churches' attitude towards the poor had long been paternalistic, until they finally realized that they could not remain passive before the social and economic challenges" (1978:224). In order to face the challenges, missionaries, pastors and lay people of these organization met to analyse the church situation in Haiti. The meeting resolved that for the churches to play a major role as agents of change as well as to proclaim the gospel they decided to empower the people (1987:224).

Jeune says:

By motivating village people too powerless to speak for themselves, the program seeks to bring the poor to a new awareness of their condition. It helps them struggle for a better life by means of development programs that stem from and are carried out by the local community. These give the people a stern of dignity, achievement, and hope. (Jeune 1987:224)

- **Sense of meaning and purpose of life**

Empowerment releases people from the poverty trap because it gives a sense of meaning and purpose of life. According to De Beer and Swanepoel release does not come through confirmation but through transformation (1998:25). This means that transformation follows a process of further development. Efforts are geared, here, not just to bring relief to people in the trap but also to free them from the trap so that they can gradually and personally improve their situations and be self-reliant. This falls in line with the main objective of this thesis that: "widows gain their dignity and at the same time become self-reliant".

Picture 4: This picture shows Mrs Murugo who enjoys making African bags as part of her living. She also gets some assistance from her family.



7.5 Self-help projects

According to my research, most widows are unemployed. Due to the fact that getting employment in Nairobi is a problem. This is due to the economic and gender reasons (Haider 1996:33). One should look at the skills widows may have at their finger tips for example, baking, gardening, house minding, childcare, sewing or knitting (Marjory and Collect 1991:68). One of the things the

church can do is to initiate and promote, self-help projects at the local congregational level. It is at this level that co-operative economic development could be affected. Involvement of the members of the self-help projects would ensure the right to an equitable share in accruing benefits and by that the raising of the standards of the poor. De Beer supports this idea of community participation and involvement of members by saying: "it ensures a successful development and it is aimed at assisting the community discover their possibilities of exercising choice to become capable of managing their own future by giving them an opportunity to participate fully" (in Stewart and Liebenberg 1997:22). It is in small communities that efforts could easily be made to improve informal economies so that many of the widows' social, spiritual and economical needs could be satisfied. To boost these projects the church should support them. Sometimes connections could be made with the international community to support widows. It has been observed that foreign aid agencies are keen to give priority to people who respect local cultures and who help themselves by working towards developing self-reliance, autonomy and productivity at the local level. Basic Christian communities could set good examples that could challenge the government to take steps for further improving the social and economic conditions of the people, including the poor (Kayonga 1989:221).

It is true that the church, that is, believers in the gospel, must take action for the widows, because the widows are embraced by the same gospel. Ryrie analyses the story of Dorcas in relation to today's church;

The story of Dorcas further illustrates that widows as a class were prominent in other Christian communities. It also indicates that these widows were nothing more than the recipients of relief and were not bound together in any sort of order- the only bond being their common need. That Dorcas was a widow, need not be assumed. Luke's probable meaning is that she devoted herself to charitable work and that the widows who came to lament over the body were those who profited from her work. Dorcas was probably instructed to do such work by her knowledge of the Old Testament and example of Jesus. (1978:81-82)

Repeatedly one sees the mission of the church to be caring and responsible in fostering solidarity with the suffering, poor, orphans and widows. It is for this reason that this dissertation recommends caring for widows and the fostering of solidarity among them in the Anglican Church of Kenya in

the Diocese of Nairobi. James the apostle underlines true religion by saying : “pure unspoilt religion in the eyes of God our Father is this: coming to help orphans and widows when they need it and keeping oneself uncontaminated by the world” (James 1:27); (see chapter three).

The existence of widows in our society is not new nor will it ever be totally eliminated. However, we can look for ways to accept and improve their situation. In some countries like Uganda, when the problem of widows, orphans and destitutes was great, scholars came up with possible solutions. One of the cases studied was Bukumi parish which is located in the South West of Hoima Diocese Western Uganda, 128 kilometres from Kampala via Mudedde and 64 miles of equally rough marum road from Hoima town (Kyaligonza 1989:226). The work of Kyalingonza support and document the strategies which were implemented by the Catholic priest in Bukumi Parish in 1987 towards integral development. When the researcher looked at the plans and methodology used for the success of the development, he became interested. Although the strategies were undertaken in a rural area, there were some similarities and differences in relation to an urban setting. Therefore, my study will contextualize the methods to an urban setting to fit widows suffering in Nairobi city. The main reason for this being the efforts that the church made towards integral development for the benefit of the community, the poor, marginalised, widows and orphans. According to Kyaligonza, the Catholic priests of Bukumi parish decided to conduct a house to house pastoral visitation in 1987 (1989:226). The exercise, apart from its pastoral aims, helped in discovering the number of people who lived in that area and how they lived. All the journeys were made on foot, the priests being led by the local church leaders. At the end of each village visitation, the community would be requested to assemble and discuss methods and plans of improving their conditions of living. Hundreds of requests were recorded and sent to the parish priest. These ranged from the building of a village chapel to the setting up of development projects (1989:226). Adopting the above method, the Anglican priest in Nairobi should visit the widows, discuss their problems freely, allow them to come up with possible needs that require attention and suggest methods and plans to improve their conditions. This would help inaugurate projects which would be of great help. The church, therefore, should work as a facilitator.

One of the projects which was started by Bukumi Parish was Amani Farmers' Foundations

(AFF), which was eventually registered by the government. Its aims were :

- To organise for the education and upgrading of rural farmers.
- To provide a forum for the articulation of farmers' views.
- To promote projects already started on a self-help basis.
- To assist farmers in the production, storage, primary processing and marketing of their produce.
- To benefit from the facilities' of the rural farmers scheme through the Uganda Commercial Bank, the Catholic Founded Bank and the Rural Century Development Trust (Kyaligonza 1989:226).

Borrowing the insights, methodology and strategies of Bukumi Parish, the following should be noted:

- Because Nairobi is a city, farming is not applicable.
- People depend on employment and businesses.
- Life is expensive.
- Projects have to be business oriented.

In understanding the above, we can now compare Bukumi Parish, a rural Parish, with a Parish in the Nairobi Diocese to enable us to formulate objectives for integral development in Nairobi in order to assist widows in entrepreneurial skills.

The researcher suggests that:

- The Anglican church helps the widows to identify their needs. De Beer and Swanepoel say: "community participation is not mere provision of free labor for projects but a motivating idea shared by the people with a common problem that affects their lives. In other words the community should come to important aspects of the knowledge and understanding of their need" (1998:46).
- Widows should be involved in decision making.
- The church should educate them on how to tackle problems together.
- Finally, the anticipated projects should be to improve their living standards and way of life.

If the church ensures that there is maximum participation and freedom of expression, the next stage would be to consult the widows on initiating the project and empowering them to run the project.

With that mentality the church should :

- * educate them about business and the running of projects;
- * promote projects already started on a self-help basis;
- * assist them with loans;
- * play the role of a catalyst and facilitator;
- * assist in the marketing of their goods and processing.

Finally, the ACK Diocese of Nairobi, should allow the widows to prepare their own plans, budgets and schedules and monitor their progress. Chambers says that people are creative and capable of doing much on their own (1992:18). The weak should be empowered (Chambers 1993:4).

7.6 Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, one can say that if the community (widows) are not involved in developmental projects or poverty alleviation projects, it would be naive to believe that the provision of funds alone could lead to the development of the oppressed. Thus, the church needs to give maximum support and encourage participation in development. We are now in a position to look in more detail at the church's participation with widows in small businesses development in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SMALL BUSINESSES

In the previous chapter the issues of gender, widows' participation in development and empowerment were discussed. The chapter ascertained that if the church ensures maximum participation in development, widows will regain their dignity, self-esteem, confidence, and sense of worth and their lives will become meaningful. It was also clear that, through empowerment, they will be in a position to participate in the economic development of community and that they will become more fully subjects of their lives rather than objects of other people's control (Abrahams 1999:25) (see chapter 7.1 and 7.4). Thus, as we turn to this chapter it should be noted that work does not only raise one's financial standard but also restores one human dignity. Abrahams states: "Work has to be seen as an expression of dignity and solidarity with others in creating history. It serves to humanize people and holds within it the possibility to form and shape the world" (1999:25).

The chapter attempts to indicates why the church should be involved in assisting widows with entrepreneurial skills. It also looks at the possibility of supporting widows in small businesses. Possible developmental projects are discussed as well. The suggested four phases of church involvement in small business, Education, capital, marketing and prayer, will be looked at (see figure 1).

8.1 Advantages and Disadvantages of small businesses for widows

Small businesses are more flexible than big enterprises. Production, planning and other procedures do not need to be so elaborate. They do not have many of the communication and human relation problems of larger or more hierachal and bureaucratic bodies (Bates and Hally 1982: 26; Clarke 1972:26).

The church is in many ways more suitable in facilitating the initiation of small businesses in the lives of widows than the government or NGOs. This is because of the following factors: firstly, the church is a permanent organisation in a community and has the confidence of the local people, thus giving credibility to project initiatives. Secondly, the church has a diverse membership and thus

has access to most groups; Thirdly, the church is aware of the local political structures and power struggles and is able to negotiate with the appropriate groups, thereby preventing later resistance and opposition. Fourthly, the church has both national and internal links for assistance with planning, funding and other resources. Fifthly, the church is an ecumenical body with a wide range of connections that may be of assistance. Lastly, the church as a charity organisation may be able to secure food and other materials at a lower rate for those operating small businesses.

Furthermore, Liedholm and Mead believe that small enterprises use resources more effectively than those that are larger (1988:12). They further provide income and productive employment for the unemployed in the community through which widows can gain new knowledge and skills such as business and financial management.

According to Streeten the *International Labor Office Employment, Incomes and Equality*: a strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya, small business activities involve:

- a. ease of entry;
- b. reliance on indigenous resources;
- c. family ownership of enterprises;
- d. small scale operations;
- e. labour-intensive and adapted technology;
- f. skills acquired outside the formal educational system;
- g. unregulated and competitive markets (1995:157).

Cater and Mathews believe that small businesses can utilize practical skills that people have at their finger tips such as knitting, baking etc. However, the problem here is that many businesses are based on this principle, thus causing an over-saturation of a small range of products (1989:12).

Oosthuizen says that small businesses should be established in accordance with real community needs for products or services (1988:12). It should be in accordance with those who already have incomes living in the area and who are in a position to support the businesses (1997:100).

Alternatively, needs in wealthier communities could be met by small businesses being developed by the entrepreneurs, who are the widows in this case. It is a fact that when widows are involved in small businesses the income of the family is likely to increase, resulting in better chances for adequate nutrition and the education of children. This in turn helps the widows to regain their dignity and become self-sustaining.

Oosthuizen says that informal employment does not solve the problem of poverty. It is only a way open to improve living standards. The solution, according to Oosthuizen is for churches to embark on and assist the poor in starting small businesses (1997:100). According to him, conventional conventional wisdom argues:

That small businesses are therefore frequently advocated as an important strategy for wealth, creation, providing an alternative route to personal economic empowerment for those who are not in formal employment. (1997:100)

Thus, the entrepreneur (widow) will be able to participate in economic development which creates a sense of job satisfaction. The following section will look at the disadvantages of small businesses.

One of the problems of small businesses is finding money at the right time because funders will always look for surety (Grigg 1992:61; Lambden and Targett 1990:21). One of the things banks will always ask when one needs a loan is the guarantee of security of money to be borrowed (Lambden and Targett 1990:23). Grigg says bank accounts and entrepreneur credits are available to wholesalers and middlemen but not to artisans and small scale businesses. He points out that people involved in small scale business cannot offer enough guarantees and therefore are seen as people who will not pay their bills in time. On the other hand, banks offer big loans to big businesses (1992:61) (see pg 136).

8.2 Four Phases of Church Involvement in helping Widows Start Small Businesses

This section looks at the suggested four phases of helping widows start small businesses as illustrated in figure 1 (next page).

Phase 1: Education

Education is a very powerful tool in any field as stated in earlier chapters. Training in areas such as business management, finance and marketing is generally considered useful for those running their own businesses. However, Stearns warns that much of the training that is conducted has two major limitations. Firstly, the trainees are often subjected to training without recognising the need for it and thus do not benefit as much as they could. Secondly, trainees often struggle to apply what is taught in theory to the realities of their businesses, if in fact they see their newly acquired knowledge as relevant in the first place (1988:22). Liedholm and Mead believe that training is most effective when it is based on a need survey which allows entrepreneurs to identify the gaps in their own knowledge. Further, training is usually more effective when it addresses a single missing ingredient in the knowledge base of trainees, not when the curriculum covers the entire range of business skills (1988:217). The skills training facilitates the need for empowerment. The main reason for undertaking skills training is to use them in starting up small businesses. Church based skills training centres that provide trainees with practical skills but do not back this up with training necessary for establishing and running small businesses make it difficult for the trainees to achieve their goals. Entrepreneurial awareness, business skills and Christian values in business are important in offsetting this problem (Kotzie and Gavin 1996:103).

Entrepreneurial awareness. This includes the strengths and weaknesses of small businesses. They prepare the entrepreneur to get into business having learnt what goes on generally.

Broad-based business skills. Examples are: business management principles, marketing, merchandising and selling, financial planning and budgeting, purchases, pricing, costing, advertising and selling techniques. Knowledge on how to apply these skills is important for the growth and sustaining of small businesses.

HOW THE CHURCH CAN HELP WIDOWS START UP SMALL BUSINESS

Phase 1

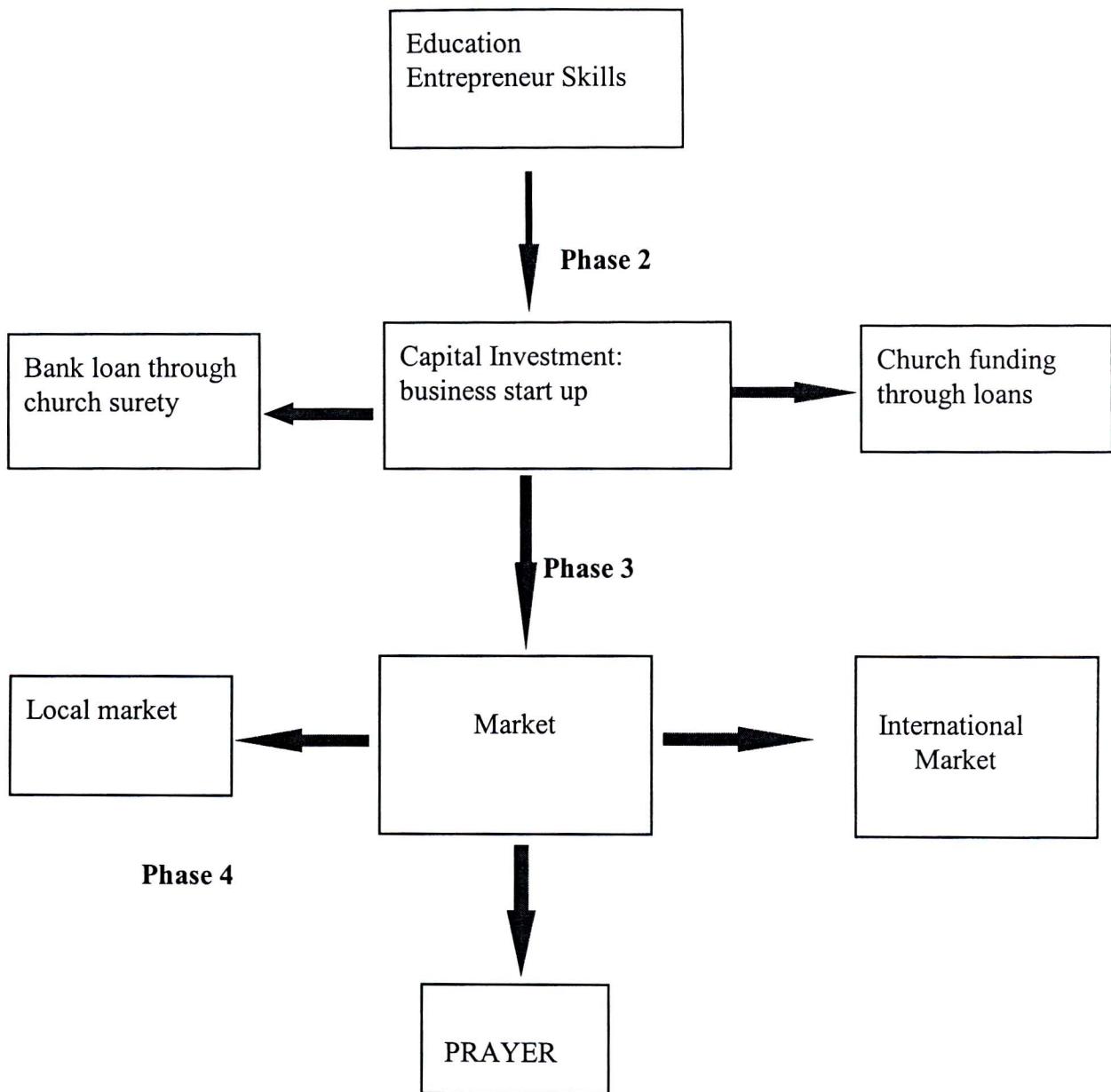


Figure 1.

Additional skills for forming and running a business can be done by retired or semi-retired members of the congregation, particularly tradesmen, who can help to train and work with people, thus transferring skills and facilitating independence and entrepreneurial initiative. In order for the trainer to be effective in the training programme, he/she has to have the correct skills, knowledge and attitude towards widows in small businesses (Kotzie and Gavin 1996:105). It should be noted that the trainees become trainers in the future. The church as the mentor should provide a lot of encouragement and ensure that the methodology is flexible enough to meet the widows' needs. Training should be done gradually and in stages (Naude 1997:136). Finally, the overall aims should be set for each key area of the training programme and specific learning objectives set for each task. This will encourage trainees to do what is expected.

Identifying the entrepreneurs' skills. The trainer should be able to identify the entrepreneur's gift because God has blessed us with gifts of many kinds, making it possible for each of us to play a part in the life and work of the community to which we belong. These gifts are intended for us, and they are not to be wasted. The purpose of God for an individual, and for the society as a whole, is being thwarted by unemployment. Society as a whole suffers if the gifts of God are not used properly as they are meant to complement one another. The church should realise this and help people develop and put their gifts to use.

Example: if a group of women are interested in a catering business and given that there is a market for such a venture in the community the church should build on this by offering training in baking skills and other skills that the women may need to ensure that a catering business is established and sustained (see picture 5). A skills training programme that creates room for new skills that can be applied to develop sustainable small businesses will help in overcoming the problem of a saturated market. Most of the time funders support training of common skills like brick making, sewing, woodwork, candlemaking and handicrafts (Oosthuizen 1997:49-54).

Picture 5: The picture shows a woman who is involved in baking and selling cakes at the flea markets



Phase 2: Capital

One of the largest obstacles in establishing a small business is lack of access to credit facilities. It is certainly risky to lend money to entrepreneurs who have no collateral and who may never repay the money (Bates and Hally 1982:12). Liedholm and Mead point out three ways in which banks and organisations can make money available to these people and minimize the risk involved. Firstly: they believe that applicants for loans should be screened on the basis of their characters. Secondly, money should be loaned for working capital rather than fixed capital. Finally, initial loans must be small

with a short repayment period so that borrowers prove their credit worthiness before being allocated larger sums of money (1988:17). Due to the underlying factors, the church ought to give assistance and, where necessary, give the security to the bank. Oosthuizen says this programme of fighting poverty is seen as an outreach programme which offers material assistance (1997:49).

One of the objectives of this study is to assist widows gain entrepreneurial skills but this cannot be achieved without the application of their skills. One of the ways to apply their skills is to establish small businesses. To help them to be in a position to apply their skills, it is important that the church knows how these businesses will be formed and financed. Without finances or resources to start with, it would be impossible. Thus, if serious attention is to be given to actually improve the standards of these people and address their problems then financial support will have to be looked into. It is important that the church be involved in helping people establish financial support, especially because very few formal lending institutions maintain promises in the areas in which small entrepreneurs are likely to be active, for example, the NCCK at Buru Buru premises which hosts *Jua Kali* artisans. '*Jua Kali*' is a Kiswahili phrase meaning 'hot sun'. These artisans are called *Jua Kali* because of the hard work they do on shadeless premises. Added to this is the fact that the financial institutions have a combination of restrictive approach and high interest rates which create major obstacles to the development of small businesses. Therefore, it would be difficult for widows to obtain credit to establish small businesses from the formal lending institutions as discussed earlier. It is sometimes expensive to travel to areas where these institutions are likely to operate (Naude 1998:136).

Widows who are in need of financial aid, as observed, are unlikely to get a loan from the bank due to their status. Oosthuizen points out that community based credit unions can be one source of informal credit that can be a source of financing small businesses. Another would be the church itself, giving loans to widows to enable them start up small businesses. The church can also offer surety to the bank to allow people borrow money for repayment during a certain period (1997:38). As Oosthuizen points out, a community-based credit union can be of great help if the church supports it (1997:38). Weaver sees this as a bridge for low-income people who have been denied participation in the most crucial areas of life. He sees a community-based credit union

as a way to meet the economic needs of the oppressed people in a particular community (1991:19). When implemented, it can provide small loans to members and pool the resources of members which can be a source of necessary credit for the inauguration of a productive enterprise. However, the church should work as a facilitator but not as an administrator. In other words, the small businesses are linked to the church but not established as a monopoly of the church (Wilson and Ramphelé 1989:282). What we are trying to say is that widows in a geographical area should initiate a revolving fund for crediting one another. Oosthuizen calls it *stokvels* or *Imiholisano* (1997:83). In Kenya, some groups call it *Merry-go-round* or *Milandi* which is a Swahili name meaning co-operative or partnership groups to assist one another. This study recommends that the church should provide the starting capital. If this is done successfully, according to Oosthuizen, it will create a social environment of mutual support (1997:93).

An alternative finance scheme is the church itself as an institution offering loans with collateral from the widows and at an affordable rate. Oosthuizen points to African Independent Churches as an example (1997:93). It is a fact that the church should be friendly and non-threatening, especially when it comes to the issue of borrowing money. Clark clarifies that it should be easier for widows to approach the church for financial support than any other financial institution (1996:38). Clark says that the advantage of using communal networks for financial support is that the entrepreneur (widow) will seek more to promote the upliftment of the wider community than those established by individuals who have been able to draw upon the support of an impersonal lending institution that is ultimately concerned only with prompt repayment of the loan and the interest incurred. It is also an advantage in that the support of the social network creates a system of obligations and expectations which would not be acutely felt if the small business is set up with support from outside the social network (1996:39).

This study assumes that it would be of great importance for the ACK Diocese of Nairobi to launch projects while at the same time ensuring support for sustainability. Oosthuizen's identifies the forms of support that small businesses should receive from the church.

These include:

- providing labour for small businesses entrepreneurs during the construction of the premises;
- securing the necessary physical plan including premises and equipment;
- establishing civil society institutions to aid small business operators and promoting the formation of local-level civil society bodies to help small business operators work together to confront their many problems;
- patronage of the small business by the church members;
- as an institution (rather than the individual members) becoming a client of the small businesses;
- improving people's access to finances, information and markets;
- offering intangible forms of support,. including prayers for the success of the small businesses and for solidarity during times of hardship (1997:55).

The above approach is also applicable to the raising of standards of any other oppressed community especially those living in poverty. It is a fact that many people in Nairobi live below the poverty line. William, says that it is only 3.2% of the total population in the city who get employment in the formal sector (in Sethuraman 1981:28). This leaves the rest unemployed.

In summary, the church should be optimistic about small scale businesses, because they lead to economic empowerment. Kirkby *et al* encourage us by saying that the most successful institutions are those that start their projects small and cheaply. They promote uncomplicated design and do not try everything at once (1995:141). When the ideas and interests of widows, and not just their labour are sought and incorporated fully in developmental projects and programmes, then conventional indicators of developmental success will be met (1995:142). Kirkby *et al* say: "Effectiveness is improved as people feel an ownership of the developmental change and are willing to contribute to maintenance; and efficiency is better as cost recovery improves" (1995:142).

Phase 3: Marketing

In order to be more effective in helping widows to establish viable businesses that will generate an income, the church needs to systematically study customers' needs, wants, perceptions, and satisfaction. Markets should be used to determine the forms of small businesses undertaken by the entrepreneurs. Kotler and Armstrong state that those forms that do not enjoy community support are likely to fold because they have no client base. The varied needs of the clients ensure diverse small businesses (1994:16). Determining the needs of the products or services that entrepreneurs want to offer is probably the most important factor in determining the future success of a prospective venture. The church therefore ought to do market research before skill training takes place.

The market can be investigated through:

- surveys;
- focus groups; and
- members of the church whether living in the same community or coming from different communities that have experience in marketing. These people can carry out a survey in their respective communities.

The other thing to look for is a strategic place where there is a flow of people. For example, one should note what people are carrying with them when they disembark from a *Matatu* or a bus, coming from town.¹⁵ When the market demand is given and there are areas identified, the Anglican Church of Kenya Diocese of Nairobi can ensure that widows receive training that will equip them to produce quality products appreciated by the targeted market. Another possible method is to explore the flea markets and do research on current demands for certain situations. It should be noted that demand for goods depends on time and situation.

¹⁵ The mini-buses used in transporting people from one place to another are known as Matatu's in Kenya



Picture 6: This is a picture of Alice Wangui who has been involved in flea markets. Items sold are normal ladies' bags, school bags and African bags from Kenya.

According to an interview with Alice Wangui (researcher's wife), one of the tricks of small businesses is knowing your products and learning where and how to buy the goods. She says that prices should be a little lower than those in retail shops most of the time for instance 10% lower. According to her, the secret is selling items that are hard to find at any price in retail stores (for example hand craft items). Another key to running a profitable flea-market business is to have a wide range of items in low to medium ranges so you have something available for everyone. As a small business owner she usually keeps a variety of items many, of which are

from R2 to R80 and by this she attracts people to her site. The small sales add up and keep her busy the whole day. The items chosen, according to her, should not be prone to fading in the sun and should be beautifully displayed. In case of rain the things need to be quickly covered with plastic and with the help of clips to keep the plastic firm. Alice travels around the city participating in flea markets. Last year she attended the *Fantasia* in Pietermaritzburg where she made a very good profit. The biggest mistake people make in working in flea markets, she says, is not being business-like. The necessary licences need to be obtained and the tax laws respected. She also holds that planning is very vital. "You can't do things half-heartedly" she states. You have to learn it like a business (Oral interview 12.1.2001).



Picture 7: The above picture shows a lady who earns her living through selling of crafts.

Another way to make money is to use the resources God has given us, for example, the making of

crafts. A University of Natal farmers' appraisal magazine project, *Mlazi Catchment News*, highlights Mrs Babongile Cele as a role model in financing herself. She earns an income from making and selling her crafts. She also trains other women who have little or no formal education to improve their craft so that they too can earn a living through the opportunity at hand (1991:1). There are a variety of ways to make money in crafts, but for many handicraft businesses, the profit is low compared to the time expended (Oral interview 8.1.2001). The trick to increase profits is to have items that cost little to make and that can be made quickly. Selling other people's crafts on consignment, selling craft supplies and selling your own original patterns are other ways to add to craft income (oral interviews with Mrs Kamene at Karioko market in Kenya 13.1.2001). According to Mrs Kamene, if one develops a unique product or design that proves extremely popular that could be mass produced and also licensed to large manufacturers, one might be able to make money (Oral interview 13.1.2001).

The church as an institution, through its social networks, can appeal more to organisations that may be approached for assistance with funds, and information or any other form of assistance than individual entrepreneurs can. Also, the church as a religious body has the advantage of receiving donations of equipment and other materials to be used in business. Through this mechanism and connections, the church could be in a position to market the entrepreneurs' goods internationally. This does the power to the owner of the business but helps the individual gain credibility in the international community.

Phase 4: Prayer and Pastoral support

Having gone through all the phases, it should be noted that prayer is necessary as a spiritual activity. Also a matter of fact, in such situations, there needs to be a lot of encouragement so as to create a sense of hope in the businesses. Also, it will be good to let the widows understand that God is in control in every situation and that hears our prayers. Even in their businesses God is still their encourager and will see them through. Thus, this is a phase of encouragement and hope.

Here we can see the integration of the four-fold holistic ministry. It is through ongoing prayerful ministry of advocacy, counselling and empowerment that widows receive the kind of

Here we can see the integration of the four-fold holistic ministry. It is through ongoing prayerful ministry of advocacy, counselling and empowerment that widows receive the kind of pastoral support that will enable them to succeed in business. In this way the whole four-fold ministry to widows is seen to be fully integrated and holistic.

8.3 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the importance of involving widows in small businesses. It considered the giving of loans to the entrepreneurs and also assisting them in getting loans from the banks through surety. Seeking donations from international communities was suggested, and it was clear that the church, through social networks, can help to raise funds for the entrepreneurs to start up small businesses. Local markets were encouraged and methods of selling goods were analysed. It was recommended that the church explore the international market. Finally, prayer was suggested as a spiritual activity.

CHAPTER NINE

A PRACTICAL WAY FORWARD FOR ANGLICAN CHURCH, DIOCESE OF NAIROBI

We have now examined the four-fold holistic ministry to widows, looking in detail at advocacy, counselling, empowerment and job creation.

This chapter takes this vision of holistic ministry forward in the shape of nine concrete proposals to the Anglican church of Kenya in the Diocese of Nairobi. This is intended to contribute directly to the life and work of the Anglican church of Kenya.

9.1 Proposals

Proposal One: Intervening to restore the dignity of widows. As seen from this research, widows who belong to the ACK Nairobi feel undignified, rejected and isolated in the church and the society. This is due to their state of widowhood. They feel that they have lost their former status, that people treat them with suspicion that they caused the death of their husbands, or that their presence could cause death. One widow commented that her mother-in-law uttered bad words every time she came across her, for example, “we shall co-operate when you bring my son to me alive” (Oral interview 8-1-2001). Mrs Daina Wanjiku, aged 69 and uneducated, pointed out that widows are regarded as a class of people who are helpless and cannot participate in anything (Oral interview 5.1.2001). As the church is one of the most important social groups where such

issues can be addressed, the church is called upon to intervene in addressing these issues. This will hopefully assist the widows in improve their quality of interaction with others both in the church and in the society.

Proposal Two: Mutual care. Most widows contacted claimed that there was a lack of pastoral concern after their husbands’ death. Therefore, lack of pastoral care caused them to fail to face and deal with the crisis and with the grief. Critical issues such as shock, numbness, confusion and depression could not be dealt with. The failure of the church in attending to such

needs caused the widows to see themselves as useless, empty, unworthy, unaccepted and unwanted, giving rise to the overwhelming feelings of loneliness. As a way forward, church members must be educated concerning these feelings. Widows who have undergone such experiences can also assist in educating the rest of the congregation on issues of death and bereavement. It will be of great help if widows are trained to know how to help one another. This will lead to mutual care. Mutual care is an aspect of Christian ministry whereby congregants take care of one another. It is a spontaneous ministry which does not need much training. Clinbell says “instead of being one person’s band who play each Sunday for passive congregations, pastors should be conductors of orchestras, who can help each person make his /her unique contribution to the symphony of the good news” (1992:395). That is to say a minister will be successful in the widows’ ministry if she/he works hand in hand with the affected.

Proposal Three: Encouraging remarriage. Women who lose their husbands while young, still have sexual desires and sometimes engage in love affairs to satisfy such desires. According to Mary Akech, aged 31, whose husband died in 1999, young women are involved in love affairs in order to:

- * quench their passion and
- * have sympathizers and financial assistance.

Unfortunately, Mary Akech says, the society does not give room for widows to remarry outside the clan. . Rather, according to most cultures, a widow is required to be married to a brother in-law or a relative acknowledged by the family (Oral interview 2.1.2001). She feels that this is humiliating because one is forced to go against one’s will.

Widows who can understand this must explain it to the church members and to other widows. Here, one needs to draw a code of conduct and widows can be instrumental in this. This will prevent them from becoming involved in secret affairs, which bring disgrace to the church and consequently aggravates their situation with regard to the church and the community.

Most widows find it difficult to comply with leviratic union because they consider the death of their husbands as the end of the relationship between them and their husbands’ families. They feel that they should be allowed to make their own decisions in terms of remarriage, rather than to be

compelled to comply to the wishes of the larger kin group. This is more important in situations where there is a tradition of abuse in a family (Oduyoye 1997:115). The Mothers' union leaders, widows and other women must intervene in such situations. They should help in educating people of the importance of personal involvement in decision-making. This also can be a good forum to educate people on how to deal with injustices and cultural oppression in the society.

Proposal Four: Entrepreneurship. Due to the economic crisis in Kenya today, it is observed that life is very difficult, especially for the widows living in the slums (see chapter eight). Everything is centred on money. In the rural areas, while in some cases they have plots to till, they often do not have the financial means to initiate agricultural projects. Where land is not easily available, for example in Nairobi, widows together with other women must work out ways and means through the church, women's organisations or through government structures to acquire developmental skills. The church is advised to assist widows with the development of the skills of entrepreneurship. This can play an important role in poverty alleviation by the following ways:

- appoint a full time development co-ordinator;
- establish a training programme in the church that will focus on entrepreneurship development;
- establish a programme/project where widows can be employed for income earning;
- establish a sponsoring programme where widows can be assisted in different training institutes to learn these skills;
- secure funds for widows to establish micro business or small scale enterprises(see chapter eight);
- establish networks with relevant institutions that focus on the plight of widows;
- facilitate the establishment of widows' support groups for experience sharing as stated earlier;
- befriend them, help them materially and provide emotional support where necessary.

This would call for practical help like assisting with school fees, food and clothes (Wamue 1996:47).

Proposal Five: Family attitudes. For the unemployed widows, life is miserable in the sense that there is no direct income for them. Since it has been observed that most widows suffer financially after their husbands' deaths, it is advisable that the church approach the families, teach and encourage them to support the wife of the deceased. Other women and widows who are stable financially, especially in the church, should also support them. This is followed by the church's teaching about widowhood. If done properly, it will change the society's attitude towards widowhood. (see chapter eight).

Proposal Six: Pastoral care to the family. Pastoral care to children and widows should be emphasised. Widows have a heavy responsibility in terms of relating properly to their own children. Mrs Florence Wamuyu, aged 70, uneducated, and whose husband passed away in 1997, says "after the death of my husband my oldest boy became a drunkard and involved himself in drugs. It has been very painful to me because he does not even respect me as his mother. Sometimes he does what he wants." She points out that such a situation is demoralizing (Oral interview 30-12-2000). Due to a lack of authority in the family, widows experience many similar

difficulties in bringing up their children. That is why this study supports the education of children by the church. Widows should be assisted by the ministers to deal with such problems.

Proposal Seven: Support groups. Widows encounter problems of running their families due to the elaborate demand of household chores, shopping, payment of bills and other needs that used to be shared with the husband. Here support groups are suggested, because in them the widows can assist one another by combining some of these activities and doing them.

Proposal Eight: Renovation of John's centre. One older widow Marion Njeri, aged 75, commented that older widows do not have people to talk to and are left alone (Oral interview 9.1.2001). Also, due to the fact that older widows are weak, it is advisable that somebody should be appointed

by the Diocese to take care of them on a daily basis. It is also important that financial contributions be made by the parishes towards this project. The person employed should be in a position to deal with such cases. Therefore, he/she should be trained in pastoral care. This study proposes that the St John's centre (see chapter four) should be renovated to be able to accommodate more old women.

Proposal Nine: Advocacy. The church should condemn cultural values which are oppressive to women. This is because widows find it difficult to accept and fully deal with cultural values and rituals which are imposed on them. The literature review and the interviews, it have shown that some societies, cultures and customs have proved to be very oppressive and humiliating especially towards widows. Proper pastoral care should deal with not only the psychological and spiritual implications of death but also the emotional turmoil widows go through after the death of their husbands in terms of the sociological, cultural and customary pressures they are exposed to.

On the issue of culture, this study recognizes that there are many positive aspects of African culture that Christians can relate too. However, it is clear to the researcher that the levirate union is not one of those. Therefore, the ACK Diocese Nairobi has a task of both supporting the positive cultural values and challenging the aspect of dehumanizing of women and widows in particular (Wamue 1996:47).

9.2 Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, the researcher supports Wamue who sympathises with the widows that are left by their husbands when young. She says that: "many are not formally employed nor are they even literate and may have no supportive family, friends, or children. All they had was their husband who substituted for all of the above. After his death, life may become a long dark valley of hopelessness"(1996:48). What these people need desperately is a ministry of reconciliation through encouragement and corporation. This should come from all groups and in whatever way possible. Widows should meet God and discover their spiritual identity. It is only through this that widows may accept themselves and hence live a healthy path (Wamue 1996:48). The church as a body of Christ is seen to have a duty in assisting widows financially and helping them in building

human dignity and self-esteem. It is of great importance for the church to assist them to be self-supporting. Finally, the church has a duty to talk to them, document their information, counsel and guide them (Wamue 1996:47). Wamue states that it is important to encourage them to look beyond the grave and beyond material possessions and trust in God, even when everything looks bleak (1996:47). For this reason, this study recommends further research in the area of integrating counselling and development in the life of a widow.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The problem that was investigated in this research is: how will an African woman, living in a changing world, be able to continue with her life socially, economically, and spiritually once widowed. Considering the fact that she is living in a male-dominated society where a woman is only seen and recognised through a man. The purpose of the study was to raise questions that needed critical examination in relation to the plight of widows and then to offer the church options for assisting them. The major concerns were: Firstly, to highlight what widows experience after the death of their husbands, highlighting the fact that they are often denied support, comfort, counselling, or guidance from either the church or the society. Secondly, to challenge the church to seek ways and means of dealing with practical issues affecting widows or redress the cultural regulations in the society and church, which favour men in light of God's word (Biblical perspective).

Thirdly, to examine the current role of ACK Nairobi Diocese and also conscientise the church and the society regarding the problem and its future implications to the widow if readdress is not undertaken. And finally, look at the effectiveness of the proposed four-fold strategic ministry to widowhood.

The basic assumption of the study was considered. The assumption was that if the ACK Diocese of Nairobi, gets involved in the role of advocacy, extends counselling to widows, empower and involve them in development and assists them in developing entrepreneurial skills (job creation) it will help them regain dignity, identity, financial stability as well as enable them to become self-reliant. That leads the church to focus on a holistic, strategic ministry to widows. The assumption was followed by a brief historical background of Nairobi and an overview of how Nairobi originated to its current situation.

In chapter two, an attempt was made to analyse the cultural marginalisation of widow. It was noted that those customs which are oppressive to widows should be condemned. Also, problems

related to widowhood were explored. Marriage in the African context was discussed. It was ascertained that once a woman gets married, she was/is regarded as a family responsibility and thus answerable to the husband's clan. This was/is because of the dowry paid by the husband's family (Kenyatta 1961:163). According to Kirwen's work, dowry in most societies is/was perceived as a form of payment a 'gift' and 'sign of marriage security' (1979:30). The concern of women who were left during the critical stages of either starting or raising their families was raised and looked at critically. It was seen that such a situation led to economical, social, emotional and psychological depression.

Widowhood in the Scripture was explored in chapter three. It was noted that 'levirate' marriage was a way of caring for widows. This chapter also affirmed that the customary law was strictly observed.

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protected a widow socially and economically, thus reducing the possibilities of exploitation. Justice was observed. It was ascertained in this chapter that the oppression of widows in any circumstance was counted as sin.

Also, this chapter looked at the care of widows in the New Testament. The ministry of Jesus towards widows was highlighted. It was noted that during Jesus' times, widows were marginalised and exploited, but through Jesus' ministry, care and compassion was offered to widows. Jesus met the social, economic and legal deprivations of widows. It was asserted that it is a biblical tradition to care for the destitute, widows, orphans, strangers and the poor. It was observed that before modernisation and the coming of Christianity, widows were in the Bible and culturally catered for. Critically looking at the situation today, the church has no specific solutions in place to protect women outside marriage and therefore it becomes indifferent to widows when they are left alone during bereavement. The issue of in-laws grabbing whatever is left by the deceased was seen as magnifying the misery of the widows. Thus, due to these factors, the church was challenged to take up the role of protecting and caring for widows.

Finally, the theological argument of the saving power of God was advanced. God first saved Israel

and later extended it to all people, especially the oppressed. God continued his mission through Jesus' ministry. The purpose of the church was seen as that of continuing with this tradition in its ministry and organisation, i.e. to act and interact in ways that bring about no further repression, but freedom (Hulley et al 1996:101; Cochrane et al 1991:96).

Chapter four looked at the response of the Anglican Church of Kenya in Nairobi. A brief historical background of the Anglican church and its administrative system was offered. This was to give an overview of the church departmental bodies and its hierarchy. The cries of widows in relation to the word of God was noted. General ministries to the poor were explored. The research findings of ministry to widows were analysed in this chapter. It was clear that the interviews conducted confirmed that the counselling of widows was essential. Also the need for equipping widows with skills to enable them to engage in small businesses was highly supported by the people interviewed. It was further noted that widows need to be protected in the society. A framework for a response to the four key concerns, i.e. advocacy, empowerment, counselling and job creation was examined.

Chapter five explored the issues and questions relating to gospel and culture. Issues relating to gender, culture and the church were examined and the challenge was that the church needs to have a clear stance. The prophetic role towards widows was assessed in this chapter. The challenge was that the church needs to re-examine itself and at the same time rebuke the society of injustices against widows.

In chapter six an analysis of pastoral care and counselling as a way of helping widows cope with the situation after their husbands' death was given. It was noted that widows become affected emotionally, economically, psychologically and socially after the death of their husbands. It was also suggested that churches should encourage and facilitate the starting of small support groups to encourage one another. Ministers were challenged to take the responsibility of caring for the suffering.

In chapter seven it was stated that through their involvement of widows in developmental projects their dignity in the community will be restored and at the same time their needs will be addressed. Widows have been denied participation in community development for long. The need for being empowered and becoming the main role players in decision-making was looked at. A suggestion was made that widows should participate fully in development projects in order for grassroots entrepreneurship to be promoted in the local congregation. However, it was noted that integral development will come about mainly as a result of the church having a clear vision and careful plan for development projects.

In chapter eight small businesses as a means of poverty alleviation and job creation were suggested. Assisting widows to develop entrepreneurial skills to help them in small businesses was emphasised. Ways of funding were looked at. It was recommended that the church as an institution, should help widows start up these businesses by firstly, educating; secondly, giving loans and being a surety when bank loans are needed; thirdly, marketing their goods locally and internationally, and fourthly, by supporting widows in prayer and encouragement. All these were seen as ways of raising the standard of living of the widows in the society. It was anticipated that through small businesses they will be self-reliant and at the same time be able to support their families.

Finally, chapter nine gave a practical way forward to the ACK Nairobi Diocese. In response to what has been observed in this research, nine proposals were suggested in this chapter.

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Appendix 1

List of Respondents

Name	Date
Mrs Wanjiku Kamau	30 th December 2000
Mrs Marion Njeri	9 th January 2001
Mrs Diana Wanjiku	5 th January 2001
Mrs Irene Wambui Mwangi	29 th December 2000
Mrs Florence Wamuyu	30 th December 2000
Mrs Joan Muta	8 th January 2001
Mrs Kamene	13 th January 2001
Mrs Joyce Muthuma	10 th January 2001
Mrs Agnes Wambui Caleb	5 th January 2001
Mrs Grace Wanjiru Mwangi	10 th January 2001
Mrs Margret Waithira Mbuthia	1 st January 2001
Mrs Beth Wanjiku Mwai	12 th January 2001
Mrs Susan Muthoni	11 th January 2001
Mrs Elizabeth W. Nyaga	8 th January 2001
Mrs Beatrice Wanjiku	6 th January 2001
Mrs Charity Wandithi	7 th January 2001
Mrs Ziporah Kamamia	8 th January 2001
Phyllis Lowe	31 st Dec 2000
Cynthia Philomena Njambi	30 th Dec 2001
Leah Athiambo	4 th January 2001
Faith Wangechi	8 th January 2001

NB: Other names are withheld to safeguard the confidentiality of the interviewees.

LAY PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Mr Arthur Kariuki	29 th December 2000
Mr Peter Njenga	6 th January 2001
Joseph Kinyua Miano	7 th January 2001
Robert Griffin	21 st October 2000

MINISTERS INTERVIEWED

Rev. John Maina	8 th January 2001
Rev. Joshua Omungo	7 th January 2001
Rev. Kimata	10 th January 2001
Rev. Refus Githaiga	7 th January 2001
Chaplain Josto Kiiru	2 nd January 2001
Rev. Peter Maina	9 th January 2001
Rev. Charles Manje	8 th January 2001
Rev. Cyrus Manje	10 th January 2001
Rev. Epeity Kamuyu	10 th January 2001
Rev. Samuel Thumbi	31 st January 2001

MOTHERS' UNION

Assistant Mothers' Union Coordinator - Mrs Theoopista Mashayo Irungu 5th January 2001

MARIDADI FABRICS

Manager: Irene Wanjohi

9th January 2001

St. JOHN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE

Assistant Manager: Mr Peter Gatei

8th January 2001

This questionnaire will contain two areas: part one will be used to interview the widows themselves, and part two will be used to interview the clergy and the church leaders.

Part One

1. Background Information:

- a) Name of the interviewee _____
- b) Age _____
- c) Residence _____
- d) Church Affiliation and Place _____
- e) Educational Background _____
- f) Marital Status _____

2. When was the death of your husband? Year _____

Can you remember your economic status before your husband's death? If you can, explain with few words.

And what is your current economic position?

3. Relationships

3.1 Indicate three things which happened to you after your husband's death:

- a) in relation to your children
- b) in relation to the society
- c) in relation to your culture (indicate some cultural practices which you feel were harmful to you)

3.2 What role do you play in the church?

3.3 What is the cultural perspective of a widow (Your opinion)?

3.4 What is the Christian perspective of a widow?

4 Are you employed or do you hold any business? Indicate what type of work you are involved in.

5. If you don't work, how do you get money each month?

6. Do you think it is important for the church to offer Pastoral Counselling programmes to widows?

6.1 If it is important, indicate reasons why

1.

2.

3.

6.2 State three things which affected you adversely after your husband's death

1.

2.

3.

6.3. Indicate three emotions/feelings, which would have been dealt with by the pastor counsellor after your husband's death.

1.

2.

3.

7. Sometimes people suffer some physical discomforts & health illness when death occurs to their loved ones and in this case their life partners.

7.1 If you experienced any physical discomforts and/or health illness, state three symptoms you experienced and briefly describe them.

7.2 If you did not experience any physical discomforts and/or health illness, please briefly explain what your feelings were.

7.3 Did you get any kind of support from the church? If you did, state the kind of support (economical, social, spiritual, psychological and physical dimensions)

8. Do you think it would be appropriate for the church to plan to involve widows in the development of skills to support themselves and in order to earn money for a living in to support their families?

Give your comments below:

8.1 Indicate why a widow should be involved in business opportunities

8.2 What type of business would you prefer to be part of?

8.3 Why do you think it will be successful? (according to Q 8.2)

8.4 Can you give some ideas and suggestions of how to learn it?

Part Two.

1. Background Information.

Name the Clergy/Church leader _____

Church Affiliation _____

Position in Church _____

Years of Service _____

2. Have you come across a woman whose husband has died during your ministry?

- A. If yes, Which problems were related to the death of her husband?
- B. What problems do you think are related to widowhood, in social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economical perspective?

3. Do you personally hold widows seminars and retreats in your congregation?

- 3.1 If yes, which area do you look at?
- 3.1 If no, why?
- 3.2 Do you think there is a need for pastoral care to widows?

4. What is the church (your denomination) doing towards the ministry of widows?

5. Do you think the church should involve widows in development of skills of entrepreneurship in order to sustain themselves?

- 5.1 If yes, how? Give some suggestions:

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
PRIVATE BAG X01
SCOTTSVILLE
3209
SOUTH AFRICA
Dear Interviewee

Appendix 3

MOTIVATION AND STRATEGIES FOR HOLISTIC MINISTRY TO WIDOWS: THE ROLE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA IN NAIROBI IN ADVOCACY, JOB CREATION, DEVELOPMENT AND COUNSELLING

This questionnaire intends to be used in the collection of data. The information needed is about the problems widows are encountering economically, psychologically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. It is hoped that the data will inform the church, society, counsellors and development workers of the importance advocacy, counselling of widows and their involvement in development. And finally, assist them with skills of entrepreneurship.

All information acquired through this questionnaire will be treated in strictest confidence and used in the preparation of a thesis in fulfillment of the Masters in Theology (Theology and Development) degree of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Your assistance will be highly appreciated.

Sincerely

Rev. Humphrey I Muraguri
School of Theology, University of Natal
Private Bag X01 Scottsville 3209
RSA

Rev. Dr. Steve de Gruchy
Director: Theology & Development Studies
School of Theology, University of Natal
Private Bag X01 Scottsville 3209
RSA

M/s Edwina Ward
Director: Ministerial Studies (Practical Theology)
School of Theology, University of Natal
Private Bag X01 Scottsville 3209 RSA



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

LAMBETH PALACE
LIBRARY

Rev. Dr. S. de Gruchy,
Director, School of Theology,
University of Natal,
Pietermaritzburg,
Private Bag X01,
Scottsville, 3209,
South Africa

25 June 2001

Anglican Church and widows

Dear Dr. de Gruchy,

Thank you for your fax of 22 June, which the Librarian has asked me to answer.

I am afraid that I have been unable to find official Church of England resolutions or statements on widows or widowhood in the publications of General Synod or Convocation. As far as I can tell from the Library's catalogue of printed works, there is nothing helpful in published proceedings of the Church Congresses, Lambeth Conferences, World Council of Churches and related ecumenical bodies.

There may be relevant information contained in more general works on marriage or the family. The Library does not have sufficient staff to undertake extensive research for enquirers, but if you have any specific references with which you would like assistance, I would be pleased to do a limited check for you.

I hope that this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Gabriel Linehan

Gabriel Linehan (Ms.)
Assistant Librarian



THEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG
Pvt. Bag X01, Scottsville, 3209, South Africa.
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<<http://www.hs.unp.ac.za/theology/&development>>

22 June 2001

The Librarian
Lambeth Palace Library
Fax: 0944 (0)20 7928 7932

Dear Sir/Madam

INFORMATION: ANGLICAN CHURCH AND WIDOWS

Greetings from the School of Theology in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

A Masters student of mine from Kenya is currently doing research on the Ministry of the Anglican Church in Kenya towards Widows in Nairobi. One aspect of that research is to draw together world-wide Anglican resources about ministry to Widows.

We are wondering if your library has reference to any documents that might point to official Church of England resolutions or theological statements on Widows and Widowhood.

If you do, we would appreciate some contact with you about this and wonder if you could email me at the above @ddress.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Dr. S. de Gruchy
(Director)

By Ngero Siteti

AN HIV/Aids widow says she has been shunned by relatives for refusing to be inherited.

Jemimah Atieno who hails from Central Kolwa has refused to bow to pressure from her in-laws to be inherited. As a result she has been neglected.

Her case was brought to the limelight two months ago by the *East African Standard* after she rejected demands that she be inherited.

She works in a plantation to earn money to fend for her family since her in-laws have rejected her.

"My in-laws still insist that I must conform with the dictates of society and must be inherited," she complains.

She narrated her ordeal to this reporter who had gone to deliver a message to her from the US Embassy in Nairobi. The embassy wants her to participate in a workshop for people living with Aids this June in Nairobi. Atieno appealed for help from well-wishers to see her five children through school.

"I better die now but my children should not suffer in my absence because of their parents' misdeeds," she said.

Her last born son, Joseph Onyango aged two, is also HIV positive. Her husband died last year after a long illness suspected to be a HIV/Aids-related affliction.

She says that before her husband died they were a "rich family" and owned sewing machines. "All these were stolen after my husband's burial by my in-laws grounding our source of income," she laments.

Atieno said she wanted to counsel other widows on the dangers of wife inheritance.

[Provincial News | Home](#)

Saturday, September 22, 2001

Widow declares she has HIV

By NATION Correspondent

A mother of three whose husband died last year of Aids-related complications yesterday publicly declared she was also infected with HIV.

Mrs Joan Kirubi, a housewife, was speaking as the Kangema Constituency Aids Control Committee was launched at the Kangema stadium, Murang'a District. She complained that friends and society had mistreated and shunned her, adding that raising three school-going children had become difficult.

She stunned a crowd at Kangema stadium in Murang'a district which included the area Member of Parliament Mr John Michuki when she made the declaration in a public meeting.

She said: "Life to me has come to a complete standstill and I have three school going children. I am jobless and even discarded by my in laws who assume that I bewitched my husband and that was not the case."

The woman went on: "What we people need is for the society to assist us to turn life into days and not days into life since by God's will an Aids victim can perform much in five years than what others can in 20 years." After saying so the crowd roared into claps and again went dead silent to listen to her.

Mrs Kirubi told the rowed that since her predicaments started unfolding she was indebted to Mr Kajumbi whom she noted assisted her a lot before and after the burial of her late husband.

She accused men of spreading the killer disease claiming that for the 14 years she was married she had remained faithful to her husband and appealed to other women to stick to their marriage vows.

She said that with immediate affect she would assist any Aids eradication teams in the country in preaching on the evils of the disease.