**Economic Discipleship**

***An Exploratory Study among Pastors in Kibera Slum***



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**Abstract**



This research explores the views and practices of economic discipleship among pastors in Kibera slum, Nairobi. The community is not experiencing the economic uplift of the gospel. This qualitative study analyzes the responses of 28 semi-structured interviews of members of a pastors’ network in Kibera. The findings show that economic discipleship is generally occurring among individual churches, and there is room for greater partnership among Kibera churches. The biblical economic paradigms portrayed in this study show significant correlation to Grigg’s ten principles of economic discipleship, demonstrating their applicability to Kibera slum and suggesting their generalizability to urban poor contexts globally.

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**Table of Contents**



**I. Introduction**…………………………………………...……………………………………….5

**II. Literature Review**…………………………………………...…..……………………………7

**III. Theological Reflections…..**………………………………...………………………………11

**IV. Methodology**……...………………………………………...……………………………….15

**V. Research Findings**………………………...………………………………………...……….21

**VI. Research Analysis**………………………...………………………………………...……....28

**VII. Recommendations**………………………...……………………………………….……....33

**VIII. Research Significance**………………………...………………………………………......36

**IX. Conclusion**………………………...………………………………………...………………38

**Bibliography**………………………...………………………………………...………………...39

**Appendix I – Interview Questions**…………………………………………...………………...42

**Appendix II – Project Budget**…………………………………………...………......................43

**List of Tables & Figures**



**Table 4.1:** Economic Discipleship Meaning…………………………………………………….21

**Table 4.2:** Areas Where People Need Economic Discipleship………………………………….21

**Table 4.3:** Economic Discipleship Practices of Surveyed Churches…………………………....22

**Table 4.4:** Future Plans for Economic Discipleship…………………………………………….22

**Table 4.5:** Positive Examples of Economic Discipleship among Kibera Churches.....................23

**Table 4.6:** Areas of Improvement for Kibera Churches………………………………………...23

**Table 4.7:** Correlation Between Activity & Awareness of Economic Discipleship…………….24

**Table 4.8:** Ten Principles of Economic Discipleship & Their Relation to Kibera……………...25

**Figure 3.1:** Transformational Conversations Approach……………….......…............................17

**Figure 3.2:** Aerial view of Kibera……………….......…............................………………..........18

**I. Introduction**



*Pastors are leaders in the community, both for members and for those who are not. So if pastors are aware of economic discipleship, they can help people in the community.*

–Pastor Moses Adie, Christ Victory in Faith

Churches abound in the informal settlement of Kibera, located in Kenya’s capital city, Nairobi. One cannot escape the shouts of “Hallelujah!” on a Sunday morning, or the enthusiastic preaching of an energetic pastor during an outdoor evangelistic crusade. With the multitude of Christian witness, why is there immense poverty in Kibera? Is the Christian message that is able to save one’s soul from hell powerless against the realities of the slums?

The theological answer is an astounding, “No!” Yet the realities on the ground beg the question, “Where is the disconnect?” Many pastors in Kibera have training in hermeneutics and spiritual discipleship, and churches have done significant work in caring for the social needs of their members and others in the community. However, Kibera’s Christians are having difficulty addressing the root causes of poverty, which rears its ugly head in every aspects of society. God has a solution from eternity past waiting to be intentionally implemented by his followers: economic discipleship.

Globally there are cases of slum transformation, where the fullness of the good news of the kingdom is experienced by the poorest of the poor, the least of these (Matt. 25:40). Sicknesses are healed, children are educated, the hungry are fed, and relationships are restored. This is the good news, the abundant life that Jesus came to bring (John 10:10).

Following an immersion approach to research, I have observed that poverty negatively affects all aspects of life. Living in Kibera for a year and a half, I have seen firsthand how poverty can influence people to take advantage of their neighbors. I have seen people struggle for basic necessities – water, sanitation, education. Children raise themselves as parents look for their daily bread. I have spoken with young mothers who sell themselves for sex in order to pay for their child’s medication. Poverty, like sin, pervades all areas of life.

Why is life this way when God’s chosen agent of transformation, the Church, is so visible in the community? Something is amiss. There appears to be a gaping hole in the process of discipleship, that if corrected, could make all the difference in people experiencing God’s salvation in Kibera.

Economic discipleship is of course about money, which intersects with every aspect of life, but it is also much more. It is about the beggar discovering his identity as a creative and productive child of God. It is about the wealthy businessperson finding unspeakable joy in a lifestyle of simplicity and social responsibility. It is about the flourishing of a community that was written off as “resource-poor.” It is about the mentality switch from consumer to conserver of the natural environment. *Economic discipleship is the personal and communal experience of Jubilee that Jesus proclaims.*

This research is ultimately about a communal journey towards realizing God’s kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). Walking alongside a group of pastors, this research seeks to discover to what extent economic discipleship is taking place in Kibera. In doing so, the perceptions, strengths, and needs in terms of economic discipleship will be examined and a Kibera-specific theology and praxis of economic discipleship will emerge. This will also feed into the global discussion of how economic discipleship can take place in urban poor areas. *Karibuni safari* (“welcome to the journey” in Kiswahili).

**II. Literature Review**



*Economic discipleship is about the holistic progress of the people.*

–Pastor Mark Alan Mgede, New Life Faith Church

This section seeks to explore the global literature concerning economic discipleship. Admittedly, the term “economic discipleship” is scarcely used; thus, the scope is widened to explore writings about biblical economic paradigms. The conversation will shift to review the relationship between Christianity and economic growth. Finally, the topic will narrow to the local context of Kibera slum.

**The Great Divorce**

“*Ignorance of economics has probably caused, as well, more harm to more people in more places than any other ignorance*.” (Ballor, 2014:122, quoting Michael Novak).

Before examining specifics of economic discipleship, it is perhaps most helpful to briefly examine the divergence between theology and economics in the twentieth century, perhaps best described by borrowing from the title the C.S. Lewis classic. Ballor (2014) traces the split back to 1972 when the University of Chicago’s economics department eliminated the requirement for Ph.D. candidates to study the history of economic theory. This led to the diminishing influence of theology on economics in modern teaching and thought. The sentiment of Chicago-school economist, Frank H. Knight, captures this point, “Christian theology can therefore make no contribution to normative social theory” (Ballor, 2014:116).

Ballor contends, however, that the two disciplines are incomplete apart from each other. The ethics of theology are important for economics but are no substitute for technique or theory. Economics alone is insufficient and, quoting Stephen J. Grabill, cannot “be detached from a historical background that was profound Christian in both theory and practice” (ibid, 127). There are, however, a number of responses to this “great divorce.” Theologians are thinking through the implications of economic exclusion and reacting accordingly.

**Biblical Economic Paradigms**

After examining the divorce between theology and economics and the need for economic discipleship, the conversation shifts to the different outlooks of biblical economic paradigms.

**Call for Engagement**

“*A new spirituality must be outworked in new economics*” (Grigg, 2004:163).

Grigg (2010) champions the term “economic discipleship” and sets forth ten foundational principles: love and human worth, creativity, productivity, cooperative economics, work and rest, simplicity, equitable redistribution, savings, celebration, and land ownership. It is necessary, he writes, to train poor pastors in these principles so that they may become servants to their people rather than oppressors (Grigg, 2014).

Grigg (2010) relates the ten principles to the New Zealand context. He affirms that economics must be practiced in light of biblical principles, noting that people can acquire wealth without God, which is expressed in economic theory. He concludes by positing the need for Christian communities to “live in the light of faith and values to free themselves from poverty” (Lewis, 2010:7). Additionally, Downer (2008) calls for Christians in New Zealand to advocate for equity and justice based on the implications of the jubilee.

In Hong Kong, Lee pushes for a “theological response to modern economics and…promotes the humanization of the market by the call for covenantal living (Farmer, 2012:242). This covenantal living is composed of “well-defined private property rights” and “implied relational bonds among human persons,” which, he argues, compose the two pillars of market economy (ibid, 241-242). Horsley follows this line of thinking in what he calls “covenant economics,” positing that the central theme of the Bible is “egalitarian economic justice” (Stark, 2011:113).

Haan chimes in and highlights the divide between modern economic thought and biblical precedents, namely the emphasis on “individual utility” at the expense of “obligations to others and obedience to religious laws and ethics” (Abraham, 2011:580). He calls for the Christian community to relay a different narrative, citing the example in 2 Samuel 23:13–17 of King David pouring out the water because his fellow comrades did not have any to drink (ibid).

Haan however rejects the notion the Bible offers specifically prescribed economic models for modern civilizations to follow. He argues, rather, that the ancient writings are meant to guide readers towards individual prosperity and communal concerns; any deviation from these principles are due to “human choices” and result in inequality (ibid, 581). Haan encourages readers, in agreement with liberation theology pratices, to “bring their own concrete reality to interact with the biblical texts” (ibid).

The previous review has looked at different theories of biblical economic paradigms and the necessity for application among Christian communities. The following section will look at the impact of Christianity on economic growth, citing global examples.

**Church and Economic Growth**

Likely the most cited research on this topic is Max Weber’s (1930) seminal work on the role of the Protestant ethic and the origins of capitalism. Nearly 100 years after his writings, many researchers have sought to verify his findings.

Barro and McCleary (2003) sought to understand the relationship between religion and economic growth via an international survey on religiosity. They concluded that religious belief, especially in heaven and hell, as opposed to church attendance, is a positive factor of economic growth.

Hirschle (2010) conducted a similar study, though from a different perspective, and focused on the case study of Ireland’s economic boom and decline in religious attendance. The findings showed that while religious attendance declined, religious values remained the same. Thus, Hirschle concluded, economic growth led to greater individual purchasing power and more consumption-related behavior, which redirected social behavior from regular religious attendance to other activities. The economic boom did not lead to a decline in religious values in Ireland.

Sherman (1997) researched how religious worldviews influence economic life in Guatemala. She concluded that “the change in attitude and behavior that accompanies conversion from animism to a Biblically orthodox worldview has improved the domestic welfare and economic status of many families.” In India, Morris (1967) gives a negative example and argues that the Indian value system and resulting social structure were “obstacles to economic growth” (588). From China, Wang and Lin (2014) report that Christianity had the “most significant effect on economic growth” when compared to other religions, while no “consistent” conclusions could be drawn about other religions (277).

From the West to Latin America to Southeast Asia, research has pointed toward the economic benefits accompanied with Christian belief and practice. However, there is more to be said. As Kaushik (2010) states, there is need to examine local cultures, customs, and traditions in the conversation about economic paradigms. Thus, after looking at global case studies, the focus will narrow to the local context of this study: Kibera, Kenya.

**Economic Paradigm of Kibera Churches**

Kibera slum is known worldwide for its sheer size and poor living conditions and much vast research has been done in the region; however, there is not much written about biblical economic paradigms from the perspective of the Church in Kibera.

Udahemuka (2008) writes from a Catholic perspective and argues that poverty in Kibera is a result of greed, corruption, and systematic exploitation, rather than a lack of resources or inability to take transformative action. She draws from Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and contends for an ethical paradigm that prioritizes social and economic justice for the poor.

One of the few other studies that closely pertains to this discussion in this local context is Deacon and Lynch’s (2013) study on the rapidly expanding influence of Neo-Pentecostalism in sub-Saharan Africa since the 1980s. They write of the “defence mechanisms or strategies that assist with survival” that these churches provide, which can explain its growth among those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, as well as the absence of addressing structural inequalities (Deacon & Lynch, 2013:108). Muvengi’s (2011) conclusion by noting that churches in Kibera are not significantly engaging in socio-economic issues supports this claim.

Deacon & Lynch (2013) contend that Neo-Pentecostal churches actually shift the attention away from social injustices by spiritualizing issues, thus allowing for its perpetuation. Their conclusion is that Pentecostal churches, which have experienced significant numerical growth in the sub-Saharan Africa region, have not yet successfully provided a theological framework for economic discipleship (ibid). Muvengi’s (2011) conclusion that churches in Kibera are not significantly engaging in socio-economic issues support Deacon and Lynch’s arguments.

This phenomenon is also true in other slums, where Pentecostal churches thrive due to the culture of poverty. Grigg (2014) also agrees with Deacon and Lynch (2013) in that Pentecostalism has yet to embrace the economic good news of the kingdom. He posits that Pentecostals can start with the Holy Spirit, already an emphasis in Pentecostal theology, and show how the Spirit’s coming brings about “economic repentance and new economic structures” (Grigg, 2004:163). Wesley was able to incorporate the formation of small savings cooperatives in the Bible studies formed during the revival of his day (Grigg, 2014:5).

The need to develop a holistic theology that interfaces with economics cannot be overstated, for, as noted by Schaeffer, “theology influences philosophy, which then influences the arts and music, and, from this, all areas of life” (Grigg, 2004:170).

**Literature Reflections**

The literature on biblical economic paradigms and the economic benefits of Christianity are ever-growing yet unbalanced. The economic growth experienced in Latin America, Asia, and the West are absent among the urban poor in sub-Saharan Africa and in Kibera. The literature reviewed cites the significance of Pentecostal theology in explaining this phenomenon.

There is a gap in indigenous economic discipleship and significant socio-economic engagement by churches in Kibera slum (Muvengi, 2011; Cramer, 2014; Grigg, 2014; Deacon & Lynch, 2013). This research seeks to fill that gap by first exploring the economic paradigms of Kibera pastors for the purpose of producing a Kibera theology of economic discipleship.

This research will build somewhat build on the studies of Muvengi (2011) and Cramer (2014), though it will focus more on the economic aspects of development. It will also serve to expand the general field of knowledge by comparing Grigg’s (2010) ten principles of economic discipleship applicability to Kibera’s context.

**III. Theological Reflections**



*Many people here are saved, they know the Lord, but they don’t know whether the Lord loves them. People don’t need to be rich, but they need to live, to survive.*

–Bishop Timothy Mulehi, Calvary Evangelistic Church

While this research is theological by nature, it would be helpful to reflect on several of the biblical themes related to economics. This section seeks to better understand the purview concerning biblical economic paradigms.

**Jubilee**

Luke 4:18-19 is perhaps the foundational Scriptural passage of this study. In it Jesus declares his intentions to “proclaim the favorable year of the Lord,” to inaugurate an eternal Jubilee. This passage provides the basis of Jesus’ ministry. Under the unction of the Holy Spirit, he preached good news to the poor, sight for the blind, and liberty for captives.The following sections of the need for holistic ministry and by extension economic discipleship are based on the propositional truths of this text.

**The Need for Holistic Ministry**

Theologians and religious scholars cannot function in a bubble without taking into consideration how economics affects society (Rieger, 2013). This is especially true when the market favors the elite at the expense of the poor. The church has a role in prophetically speaking into economies and contending for economic justice. Verhoef and Rathblone (2013) posit that a dialogical mode of discourse is the most effective way of engaging economic systems and theories, speaking life into what is good and calling for reform where necessary.

This is true at the macro level, as well as on the ground when dealing directly with poor people. Missionaries and church leaders have a responsibility to provide economic discipleship for their members, so that they may experience part of the liberty that the gospel brings. Anything less is an injustice. Grigg (2004) writes, “Is it too hard a thing to say that it is criminal to go on establishing organized churches—churches that are condemned in advance to be permanently dependent on foreign money and personnel because we neglect the economic factors that would make self-support possible?” (156). People need Jesus to alter the conditions of their souls *and* bodies.

For the missionary, economic discipleship must be included as part of the DNA of the church plant and the people being discipled. An incarnational apostolic role may be required, so that in his or her volitional vulnerability, the truly vulnerable may find economic liberation (Grigg, 2014).

God’s salvation extends to all spheres of life, in contrast to the dualistic worldview prevalent in modern societies that compartmentalizes the spiritual and the physical (Miller & Guthrie, 2001). God created humans to steward – to be productive and to manage – the earth and its resources for the benefit of mankind. Wesley’s exhortation to “work as hard as you can; save as much as you can; give as much as you can!” reflects the importance of economics to the Christian life (ibid, 244; Ballor, 2014; Grigg, 2014).

The discontinuity between theology and economics has led to a lack of economic discipleship. The negative effects of this omission have spread past the borders of regions where modernity has been most influential, which is perhaps the reasons why this research is being conducted in East Africa.

**Theologies of Economic Discipleship**

This section seeks to provide an overview of different theologies pertaining to economics within the Christian faith.

**Catholic Theology**

“*The task of the church in terms of proclamation of the gospel and diakonia comes together with the perception of economic justice*” (Chung, 2014:303).

Chung (2014) discusses the relation between *diakonia* and economic justice, showing how God is in solidarity with the poor and how the global economy is to be addressed by the Church. He advocates for an infusion of gospel proclamation and *diakonia* that is perceived as economic justice (ibid, 303).

The word ‘economy’ comes from the Greek word *oikonomia* which is “the law or management of the household” (ibid, 309; Dakin; Pickett, 2013; van Kessel, 2012). God’s household, according to Chung, “helps articulate how to uphold Christian praxis and discipleship following the economic work of God in the public realm” (310). Thus, a biblical framework for economic discipleship exists within the Catholic faith tradition.

**Orthodox Theology**

McMullen (2014) writes from the radical orthodoxy perspective, which seeks to critique the theological presuppositions behind economic systems rather than changing the system itself. According to this perspective, the Church is an “alternative to the market” and consists of “the way in which people can participate in the body of Christ, which directs desires toward their created purpose – the worship and glorification of God;” thus, it is not subject to the same critiques as capitalism or other economic systems because it directs people’s desires towards what is good (McMullen, 2014:353). Radical orthodoxy also interfaces with socialism and upholds cooperatives and social responsibility while denouncing state control of the economy (ibid, 354).

Russian theologian Sergej Bulgakov wrote of a theory of sophiology as an avenue for Orthodox economic theological engagement with the modern world (van Kessel, 2012). This came at a time when Max Weber was highlighting the Protestant work ethic and the economic blessing that it brings to society, showing a relationship between religion and economic engagement, but his research never extended to the Catholic and Orthodox traditions (ibid).

Sophiology has been defined as “‘the investigation of divine Wisdom’ and ‘the enterprise of gathering, sorting and synthesizing these intimations [of divine Wisdom] in an ever-expanding appreciation of the humanity of God’” (ibid, 254). Bulgakov was, in the eyes of Valliere, “already linking economic activity to an overarching vision of human creativity” (ibid).

According to Bulgakov sophiology, *oikonomia* is both the “intra-Trinitarian economies” as well as the economy or relation “between God and his created world” (ibid, 262). This economic theology (included in sophiology) provided an Orthodox framework for religious engagement in the public arena to create “unity and order” (ibid, 258, 265).

**Protestant Theology**

“*From a biblical perspective salvation is covenantal and communal, and it involves every dimension of life including the social, political, economic, and the spiritual*” (Pickett, 2013:40).

*Economic Relations & Human Flourishing in Luke*

Pickett’s (2014) analysis of economic relations and human flourishing in Luke’s gospel produced several significant findings. He writes that this gospel speaks on economic realities more so than any other book in the New Testament (37). From his perspective, salvation is shown as “covenantal and communal,” touching on every aspect of human life (ibid, 40). Though there are exhortations to renouncing possessions in the gospel, wealth, especially in the Old Testament, is generally seen as a sign of blessing. The prophets condemned the wealthy, however, when they took advantage of the poor (ibid, 42).

In Luke, and in harmony with Emile Durkheim’s sociological analysis, the sacred is related to the social (ibid, 39). Pickett writes, “the purpose of material resources is to cultivate relationships” (ibid, 43). He concludes that Jesus did not offer an alternative economic system, nor did he critique the prevalent one in his day, because the systems themselves are not inherently evil (ibid, 44).

*Reformed & Liberation Theologies*

Reformed theology offers an understanding of how Christians should interact with unjust economic systems and respond to the needs of the poor. A key tenet of Reformed theology is the idea that everyone belongs to God (Pieters, 2013). Because Christ has sacrificed himself to liberate mankind, “participation in the redistribution of that which everyone needs to live with dignity is not merely an economic matter - it is essentially and in a very profound way a matter of spirituality” (ibid, 30). Christ’s sacrifice provides meaning and incentive for his followers to sacrifice on behalf of the poor in solidarity, but not to “uphold an economic system” (ibid, 22-23).

Brazilian Liberation theologian, Sung, stresses the need for solidarity with the poor and acting on their behalf, following in the footsteps of the God who “does not side with the ‘winners’… and who chooses to act for the benefit of the poor” (Pieters, 2013:24). In this aspect, Liberation spirituality and Reformed theology agree; however, Sung argues for the active socio-political involvement of the Church that includes creating a more just economy, starting co-operatives, and creating decent work (ibid, 24, 27).

*Pentecostal Theology*

As mentioned in detail in the literature review, Pentecostal theology has great appeal among the urban poor because it appeals to their conditions. However, currently there is a need for Pentecostals to meaningfully engage socio-economic issues rather than hyper-spiritualizing them, perhaps by beginning with the new economic structures that result from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Grigg, 2004).

In response to this gap, Charlie Self (2015) recently wrote *Flourishing Churches and Communities: A Pentecostal Primer on Faith, Work, and Economics for Spirit-Empowered Discipleship* for the purpose of “[seeing] work and economic transformation as intentional and integral to Christian discipleship and the mission of the local church” (xviii). He asserts that redeeming economies is part of Christ’s work on the cross, and thus is part of the Church’s work.

**IV. Methodology**



*For the 10 years I’ve been here, I’ve seen for us to be effective we need to do something especially in the area of economic empowering. Even though we are trying, that is the area where we need the hand of God so that the church in Kibera can rise up. Pray for us.*

–Pastor Joseph Kyalo, Christian Harvest Center

**Research Question**

This research seeks to answer the question, “*What are Kibera pastors’ views and practices of economic discipleship*?” It seeks to uncover a theology of economic discipleship directly from the Kibera pastors as well as highlight gaps in economic discipleship practice in order to determine if training in such areas are necessary.

This research also contributes to the wider discussion of economic discipleship in the process of discovering a global standard of economic discipleship for people living in slums. The findings of this study are compared with Grigg’s (2010) ten principles of economic discipleship.

**Partner Organization**

Gaining contact with a partner organization came about in an unconventional yet organic manner. I collaborated with a local pastors’ network in Kibera. I connected with them through friend and former MATUL student, Adam Cramer, who helped to create the network along with Pastor Mike Aloo of My Father’s House Ministry. Rather than making cold calls to various organizations, I had built relations with Pastor Mike, who served as my local project advisor, for about six months prior to the start of the research and have gained the crucial trust factor needed to successfully conduct it. In addition to the personal aspect, I chose to work with the local Kibera pastors’ network based on the following six criteria:

1. Legitimacy
2. Problem-focused
3. Exemplary
4. Public
5. Participatory
6. Supervision

*Legitimacy*

The network consists of about 45 pastors in Kibera who have a credible reputation in the community. While many pastors in Kenya have sullied the profession through avarice and deceit, these pastors have a track record for doing good in the community. They have started schools, economic empowerment initiatives, and healthcare programs, in addition to addressing spiritual matters of evangelism and discipleship.

*Problem-focused*

The smaller pastors’ network of 45 is comprised of pastors from all over Kibera who are also in the larger network. It was formed after Cramer (2014) interviewed them along with Pastor Mike for a research project about church-based development initiatives in Kibera. The network was formed as a result of the research in order to collaborate to achieve greater grassroots-based development.

*Exemplary*

While the network is still in the nascent stage of development and self-discovery, individually and in other networks the pastors have a proven track record. This group has significant potential because it is not limited to merely one sector of development. The unique advantage of the church is its ability to engage and transform all levels of society. This is the potential that must be harnessed from the group, by its own initiative and at its own pace.

*Public*

The pastors’ network represents places of worship throughout the community and the interests of their respective church members. These pastors are considered leaders in the community and servants for the greater good of their people. By and large, their actions impact the greater community, even beyond the boundaries of the church parish.

Additionally, this network is unofficially part of a larger pastors’ network, the *Kibera Community Development Network*, which contains the majority of pastors in Kibera with over 1,000 members. This network divides Kibera into sixteen villages, or sections, which include two sections from other slums (Dagoreti and Kawangware).

*Participatory*

While the group is composed of mostly male pastors, its influence reaches to a critical mass of the community. It primarily focuses on Christians, but development efforts (i.e. schools, clinics, etc.) benefit people from all tribal, religious, vocational, and socioeconomic boundaries.

Being comprised of leaders, local residents do not have direct input to the decision-making process. However, akin to politicians who are voted to represent the masses, these leaders are coming to the table with the concerns of their members in mind. Hence, indirectly local residents have a role in shaping the process and implementation of community improvement. These pastors also train their members in implementing development efforts.

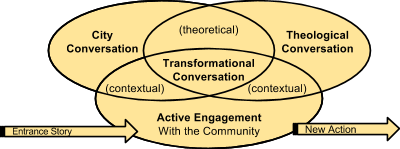
*Supervision*

My local project advisor, Pastor Mike, is bilingual as are many of the pastors. Pastor Mike has an exceptional understanding of Western culture and acts as a great bridge between the two worlds, a perfect middleman who can maximize community impact and facilitate growth and understanding on both ends.

**Exploratory Approach**

This qualitative study was conducted using an inductive approach that seeks to discover experiential meaning reality, rather than approach the research with a prescribed hypothesis. This study is first and foremost an exploratory study. It seeks to understand economic discipleship theology and praxis through the lens of Kibera pastors.

This is also participatory-action research. The stories and feedback of the interviewees are directly feeding into resulting theory. Furthermore, the findings are reported back to them in order for them to confirm, correct, or reject, and so that the participants can own the results for themselves and collectively respond in new action. This can be summed up in the *Transformational Conversations* approach (Grigg, 2005), which integrates the city conversation with the biblical conversation and results in new action that produces a new narrative (see Fig. 3.1).



**Fig. 3.1:** *Transformational Conversations Approach, from Grigg (2005)*

**Community Context**

This research takes place in the informal settlement of Kibera located in the capital city of Nairobi, Kenya. The population of Kibera is controversial. Estimates range from less than 200,000, according to the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census to over one million according to some NGOs (Jadivera, 2015). Depending on the actual population, it is likely the largest or second largest slum in Africa, competing with Soweto in South Africa.

Kibera is home to a plethora of challenges. It is an urban poor community where many residents earn around 2 USD/day. Proper sanitation is lacking, which, coupled with mass population density, is a breeding ground for diseases. The land is government-owned; thus, most people rent and are at the mercy of landlords who sporadically increase the monthly amount. Access to education is a challenge for many children as well. These factors along with high unemployment rates contribute to many youth joining gangs or engage in criminal activity.

Kibera is also a very spiritual place. Everyday experiences the sounds of calls to prayer by local mosques or worship songs from churches. The population is majority Christian and there are literally hundreds of churches in the community. Pastors are seen as leaders in the community. This is the target population of this research.



**Fig. 3.2:** *Aerial view of Kibera*

**Population**

The population targeted is a local pastors’ network in Kibera. These pastors spread across all thirteen villages of Kibera. They are also a subset of a larger pastors’ network called Kibera Community Development Network that has roughly 1,000 members. My local project advisor, Mike Aloo, pastor of My Father’s House Ministry in Kibera, along with colleague, Adam Cramer, coalesced this smaller group as a result of his master research project.

**Sample Selection**

I have interviewed 28 out of the 45 members (68%) of the local pastors’ network in Kibera. These members represent the majority opinion of the network that is engaged in community development efforts. All but one of the interviewees were male, and while it can be said that male pastors do not adequately represent Kibera’s large and diverse population, these men have access to nearly every demographic in Kibera through their congregations.

Furthermore, any increase in economic discipleship among the participants can create a ripple effect throughout the pastors’ network and their churches, as well as the 1,000 member Kibera Community Development Network, of which every participant is a member. This could be significant for catalyzing a movement in the community.

**Presuppositions**

It is of the primary investigator’s opinion that economic discipleship is a necessity that provides benefits of the gospel that are not felt in churches that hyper-spiritualize socio-economic matters. The researcher believes that the application, or lack thereof, of such principles will affect the economic life of a church. The researcher also holds the opinion that the church is to be the primary transformative agent in the community, and the way to direct the church is through the pastors. This is the reason behind choosing to work with this particular population. Such presuppositions can affect the way the research findings are interpreted.

**Data Collection**

The data for this interview was collected through one-on-one and group semi-structured interviews with 28 pastors. My local project advisor, Pastor Mike Aloo, arranged for each of the interviews. Each participant was asked eight questions (see Appendix I) pertaining to their thoughts about economic discipleship, areas where churches in Kibera are doing economic discipleship well, and areas where they can improve. Interviews took place in various parts of Kibera slum over a span of eleven days from June 9-19, 2015. The interviews were recorded, then later transcribed for data analysis.

**Ethical Considerations**

The participants were informed that this research was solely for educational purposes. All parties were made aware that there were no financial benefits or considerations to participating in this study. All participants were taken through the informed consent form and willingly consented to being part of this study. Participants were made aware of their rights and had the option to be audio recorded during the interview, as well as to remain anonymous in this report. My local project advisor was trained in issues of confidentiality and ethics in research prior to the start of data collection and facilitated when there were language barriers.

**Outcomes**

This first outcome of this study is this research report for the completion of the Master of Arts in Transformational Urban Leadership through Azusa Pacific University. This project seeks to demonstrate the ability of the primary investigator to conduct qualitative research in an international setting in an urban poor environment in a way that is beneficial to the host community as well as respectful and affirming to the dignity of the local culture.

This research also led to a presentation back to the participants of this study, members of the local Kibera pastors’ network. It was an opportunity for the stakeholders to critique, affirm, and ultimately own the research findings about their community.

Thirdly, the research highlighted the need and desire of the pastors interviewed to have a training on economic discipleship. An interactive training was held on July 21, 2015 at My Father’s House Ministry Centre, the church of my local project advisor. Training materials were distributed to attending members.

Lastly, it is the hope of the primary investigator that this research has clearly represented and responded to the needs and realities of the participants. If the pastors implement the economic discipleship training, which they mentioned was applicable to their context, then the pastors, their churches, and the wider community should experience the economic uplift associated with the gospel that can transform the slum.

**V. Research Findings**



*I have experienced the challenge of a pastor as we serve the Lord. It is difficult for them to get daily bread for their family.*

–Rev. Alois Were Anyango, Kibera Baptist Church

This section consists of the raw data from the 28 pastors interviewed. Emerging themes from the research findings will be reviewed. This data seeks to answer the question: “*What are Kibera pastors’ views and practices of economic discipleship*?”

**Key Findings**

Each pastor was asked what the term “economic discipleship” meant to them. The following chart represents their responses:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Economic Discipleship Meaning** | **% of Responses** |
| People’s sustainability | 39% |
| Experienced difficulty with term | 29% |
| Income-generating activities (IGAs)/Economic empowerment | 25% |
| Holistic ministry | 21% |
| Unity/solidarity | 11% |
| Pastors’ sustainability | 11% |
| Financial management | 7% |
| Evangelizing | 7% |
| Teaching | 4% |
| Pastoring poor people | 4% |

**Table 4.1:** *Economic Discipleship Meaning*

Pastors were asked in what areas they felt their church members needed economic discipleship. The following table represents the most common responses.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Most Common Areas Where People Need Economic Discipleship** | **% of Responses** |
| Starting/doing business | 57% |
| Financial management | 54% |
| People’s sustainability | 25% |
| Lack of knowledge | 14% |
| Low church giving | 11% |

**Table 4.2:** *Areas Where People Need Economic Discipleship*

Each pastor was asked how his or her church does economic discipleship. The ten most common responses are shown in the chart below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Most Common Economic Discipleship Practices** | **% of Responses** |
| 1. Education | 64% |
| 1. Savings groups | 64% |
| 3. Bible study/teaching | 43% |
| 4. Charitable giving/fundraisers | 29% |
| 4. Partnership with other churches | 29% |
| 6. Business training | 25% |
| 6. Forming groups/departments | 25% |
| 8. Partnership with NGOs or other groups | 21% |
| 8. Income-generating activities (IGAs) | 21% |
| 10. Microloans/startup funding for small businesses | 18% |

**Table 4.3:** *Economic Discipleship Practices of Surveyed Churches*

Each pastor was asked what s/he would like to do in the future as far as economic discipleship. The responses with the most occurrences are represented in the following table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Most Common Future Plans** | **% of Responses** |
| 1. Income-generating activities (IGAs) | 25% |
| 1. Land ownership | 25% |
| 3. Education | 21% |
| 3. Microfinance | 21% |
| 5. Improve members’ well-being | 18% |
| 6. Buy church vehicle | 14% |
| 6. Partnership | 14% |
| 6. Trainings | 14% |
| 6. Savings & Credit Cooperative (SACCO) | 14% |
| 10. Delegate work to church members | 11% |

**Table 4.4:** *Future Plans for Economic Discipleship*

After focusing on the participants’ individual churches, they were asked about how churches in Kibera as a whole are doing economic discipleship well. The most common responses are shown in the chart below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Most Common Positive Examples of Economic Discipleship among Kibera Churches** | **% of Responses** |
| 1. Education | 64% |
| 2. Income-generating activities (IGAs) | 25% |
| 3. Starting small businesses for members | 21% |
| 3. Savings groups | 21% |
| 5. Business & finance trainings | 18% |
| 6. Job creation | 14% |
| 6. Partnership with other churches | 14% |
| 6. Owning property | 14% |
| 6. Having sufficient resources | 14% |
| 10. Clinic | 7% |
| 10. Savings & Credit Cooperative (SACCO) | 7% |

**Table 4.5:** *Positive Examples of Economic Discipleship among Kibera Churches*

Lastly, the participants were asked a follow-up question about how they believed that churches in Kibera can improve on how they do economic discipleship. The table below reflects the most common responses:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Most Common Ways for Kibera Churches to Improve** | **% of Responses** |
| 1. Unity/partnership | 46% |
| 2. Training for pastors | 32% |
| 3. Finding people of integrity | 25% |
| 4. Sustainability of pastors | 18% |
| 5. Teaching church members | 14% |
| 5. Delegating work | 14% |
| 7. Forming savings groups | 11% |
| 7. Starting small businesses | 11% |
| 7. Business training | 11% |

**Table 4.6:** *Areas of Improvement for Kibera Churches*

Not all participants were aware of economic discipleship happening among Kibera churches. The following graph shows the relationship between pastors who are currently engaged in economic discipleship and those who are aware of it occurring in the community.

**Table 4.7:** *Correlation Between Activity & Awareness of Economic Discipleship*

The pastors’ responses were compared with Grigg’s (2010) ten principles of economic discipleship. The following chart represents this data:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Principle of Economic Discipleship** | **Kibera Equivalence** | **% of Pastors** |
| 1. Love & Human Worth | – Christians need to love one another  – Need to address the heart first | 11% |
| 2. Creativity | – Need for innovation  – Benefits of creativity in other churches are seen | 7% |
| 3. Productivity | – Need for producers, not consumers  – Test people based on productivity & faithfulness | 4% |
| 4. Cooperation | – Churches engaged in cooperative economics  – Responses show need/desire for partnership | – Group Savings: 89%  – Unity/Partnership: 61% |
| 5. Work & Rest | – Need to teach people to work hard  **– Rest not mentioned** | 7% |
| 6. Redistribution for Equality | – Churches holding *harambees* for members | 29% |
| 7. Simplicity | – Need for contentment  – Need for people to support mission work | 7% |
| 8. Management: Savings & Debt | – Need for financial management training | 61% |
| 9. Ownership | – Most churches do not own land  – Need to own church property | 50% |
| 10. Celebration | **– Not mentioned** | **n/a** |

**Table 4.8:** *Ten Principles of Economic Discipleship & Their Relation to Kibera*

**Emerging Themes**

After collecting and organizing the data, ten themes emerged. This section briefly describes each theme, which appear in order of number of occurrences throughout the interviews.

**Unity &** **Partnership**

61% of pastors mentioned unity and partnership in some manner. Some mentioned the need for it and lack of partnership happening on the ground. Others gave examples of partnering with other churches or organizations, whether it was their own church or other churches they deemed successful

**Training for Pastors**

More than half of the pastors interviewed (57%) reported the need for Kibera pastors to be trained. Others mentioned experiencing or seeing the benefits of some sort of training or exposure to new ideas.

**Holistic Ministry**

Just over half of the participants (54%) talked of the necessity for ministry to be holistic. Many reported the phenomena of Kibera churches focusing mostly on spiritual matters, to the detriment of meeting members’ physical needs.

**Land Ownership**

Fifty percent of the pastors interviewed broached the subject of land ownership. Several mentioned lack of land ownership being an impediment to economic success. Others highlighted land ownership as a key factor of successful churches in Kibera.

**Pastors’ Sustainability**

While asking the participants about economic discipleship, the theme of pastors’ sustainability emerged during half of the interviews. Many talked of pastors’ struggles to follow the call of ministry and faithfully attend to the needs of their flock while simultaneously catering for their families’ needs.

**Delegating Work**

Delegation is a theme that was mentioned a number of times as a model of success for churches in Kibera. 46% of pastors said that forming groups within the local congregation and training leaders for each group made ministry work easier.

**Self-led development vs. International Donors**

The interviews revealed a bifurcation of opinion concerning the debate of self-led development versus international funding. 13 of the 28 pastors (46%) relayed their views. 38% of these pastors mentioned the need for self-led development among Kibera churches while 62% mentioned international donors as a reason for success among churches.

**Bi-vocational Pastors vs. Full-time Pastors**

Another divergence of thought arose concerning the pastor’s work status. Though it was not part of the interview questions, 36% of the pastors mentioned the topic. 6 of the 10 participants said pastors should be bi-vocational, while the remaining 40% of pastors who responded said ministers should be full-time so that they can fully focus on their members.

**Example of Women in the Church**

Another motif in this study was the activity of women in the church. Just under 30% of the participants reported on the economic initiatives spearheaded by women in the congregation. A number reported women’s groups being the most successful in the church, and members of the men’s groups seeking to join the women’s groups.

**Genuine People**

Finally, 25% of participants in this study mentioned the need for what they called “genuine people,” meaning trustworthy people, people of integrity. This was also highlighted through the several examples of corruption among Kibera pastors that were cited.

**Summary**

The 28 Kibera pastors interviewed shared their views concerning economic discipleship and personal practices as well as examples from other churches in the community. The majority response about the meaning of economic discipleship was concerning the sustainability of their members (39%). Accordingly, most pastors believe that people need to be discipled economically in the areas of starting and operating businesses (57%) and financial management (54%).

Most of the participants in the study are engaging in some form of economic discipleship. The majority of churches are focusing on education, which is seen as a primary method for discipling the future generation economically, and forming savings groups within the church (64% each). All of the pastors have future plans for their parishes, the majority involve beginning some form of income-generating activity (IGA) and working towards land ownership (25% each).

Providing education in some way (starting schools, child sponsorship, vocational training, etc.) was by far the most mentioned example (64%) of economic discipleship happening in Kibera, while the need for greater unity and partnership was seen as the biggest way (46%) for Kibera churches to improve on how they do economic discipleship. Awareness and activity varied among the respondents, with the majority (68%) being both involved in and aware of economic discipleship happening in the community.

Finally, the findings suggest a strong correlation between the Kibera pastors’ theology of economic discipleship and the ten principles of economic discipleship produced by Grigg (2010).

**VI. Research Analysis**



*I cannot empower my people if I myself am not empowered. The flock should always be getting examples from me; I should be a role model to my flock…And we can even change the whole of Kibera, because they really listen to us. The only thing we lack is what to offer to them but they listen to us.*

–Samuel Maroche Ogola, The Power of Resurrection Ministry

In light of the findings from the previous section, this chapter seeks to analyze the meaning and implications of the findings. There have been a variety of responses to interview questions, but themes have emerged that highlight realities at the grassroots level and call for reflection and reaction.

**Implication of the Research Findings**

**Developing a Kibera Theology of Economic Discipleship**

*Education*

In a study about economic discipleship, it is perhaps surprising that the biggest initiative of Kibera churches is providing education. However, pastors see it as a way of discipling and investing in future generations so they can break free from the cycle of poverty that is prevalent in Kibera. They say that many people who are poor in the community have not finished school. In their view, education directly relates to economic sustainability.

Many churches start schools not only to educate children but also as a form of income. The revenue is not great, but educating children in the informal settlement seems to be a proven way to make ends meet.

*Savings Groups*

Just as pertinent as providing education, the findings reveal that group savings is among the most significant factors of economically discipling people. 61% of pastors interviewed have savings groups in their churches. The research shows that savings groups work. It is a biblical model with minimal risk that provides incremental economic growth communally.

*Business Training, Microfinance & Financial Management*

Pastors in Kibera believe that people need training on how to start and operate small businesses. Living in an informal settlement, the majority of residents earn their living in the informal economy. Due to high unemployment rates, members are taught not to wait to be hired but to take initiative. Thus, business training is a logical conclusion to achieve this end.

Pastors are concerned with providing their members with the knowledge and startup capital, either in the form of grants or microloans, in order to minister to their physical needs. There are both positive and negative examples of microfinance, and participants gave mixed responses to its use within the church. It seems best to proceed with caution, as success is not as likely compared to group savings and loans schemes.

Similarly, financial management training is seen as a necessity because starting and running a business is a priority. Many pastors spoke of members who earn decent wages but, due to improper management of funds, find themselves facing hardship.

*Harambee*

An encouraging find is that even churches without proper economic discipleship programs in place are contributing to meet their members’ needs. The Kenyan concept of *harambee*, or coming together to support one another, expresses itself in the local church through fundraisers and charitable giving.This is the current practice of 29% of pastors interviewed.

*Economic Discipleship vs. Economic Empowerment*

29% of pastors interviewed visibly struggled with the term “economic discipleship.” The majority opted for the more well-known phrase “economic empowerment.” It begs the question, “Which is the more appropriate term to use?” While economic empowerment is more common in Kibera, most people immediately think of economic schemes just as group savings and loans, starting businesses, microfinance, and other forms of IGAs. However, most economic empowerment trainings do not discuss issues of identity or realizing that everyone is made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). It seems economic discipleship draws one’s attention to spiritual matters as well as economic, which is why I would recommend using it in favor of economic empowerment.

*Awareness & Action*

The majority of pastors interviewed (68%) are engaged in economic discipleship and are aware of such efforts in the community. 18% are engaged but are not aware, and 14% are aware but not engaged. It is possible that there may be a correlation between doing and seeing. Nevertheless, the study shows that 86% of pastors are intentionally doing some form of economic discipleship. Furthermore, everyone involved is at least doing something or seeing a positive example, which suggests there is a favorable environment for engaging in economic discipleship endeavors for churches.

**Pastors in Kibera**

*Pastors as Leaders*

A recurring theme in this study was the exemplary nature of pastors. In Kibera and Kenya as a whole, pastors are seen as leaders in the community. What they say and do affects church members and nonmembers alike.

This leads to the strategical benefits of working with pastors for slum transformation. This research suggests that if pastors are trained in economic discipleship, then people in the community, whether members or not, will by extension receive such training and benefit.

The pastors expressed need for training and exposure to new ideas and teachings. They also highlighted seeing benefits of other churches and pastors in the community who have been exposed to different teachings.

*Pastors as Suffering Servants*

Additionally, this research has highlighted the fact that Kibera pastors in general are struggling. A common motif throughout the 28 interviews was pastors’ sustainability which sparked the discussion of bi-vocational pastors versus pastors in fulltime ministry (discussed in Chapter 4).

Pastors are struggling because the members of their church do not give enough to financially support them. They also mentioned the need for biblical teaching about giving and tithing, for there are members that are not in abject poverty yet do not give according to biblical standards.

The majority of pastors are barely getting by but are sacrificially giving in order to meet members’ needs. Many pastors recounted instances of members coming to them at the end of a church service asking for money so they can buy food to eat. These pastors take the little bit from the change in the offering and give it to their members. Most Kibera pastors are not financially benefiting from their churches.

*Briefcase Pastors*

There is also a mindset, according to the interviewees, of some pastors to travel from conference to conference in search of food; many pastors in Kibera attend trainings in order to eat. Unaffectionately called “briefcase pastors,” there are men who are guilty of being known for preaching and eating, visiting members and offering prayers in return for a good meal. One pastor commented about them during an interview, “Instead of teaching and empowering, they are taking from people.”

The reality on the ground, according to the pastors interviewed, is that these people are in a difficult financial situation and only know how to preach. Many pastors in Kibera are unable to provide sufficient food for their families or pay school fees for their children.

Examining the factors of pastors’ influence and their struggles bring about another issue: the perception of the gospel. People seeing pastors in poor living conditions are unlikely to believe in the love and power of the God about whom they are preaching. The significant exposure of pastors as examples in the community can negatively affect how the gospel is perceived if they are suffering in poor conditions. This proposition is addressed by pastors in the following section.

*Holistic Ministry*

A number of the pastors interviewed spoke of the need for holistic ministry. Many of them said that churches in Kibera are too spiritual and have thus far been unsuccessful in meeting their members’ needs. Pastor Zakayo Kwendo of Spiritual Recovery Church gives an example of a women telling her pastor that her husband beats her, and the pastor replies, “Come, receive the Holy Spirit.” There is a need for Kibera churches to minister to the whole person.

*Equipping the Saints for Ministry*

As the subtitle from Ephesians 4 implies, more than one-third of the pastors interviewed (36%) are already delegating or have plans to delegate the work of the ministry. Forming groups in the church is seen as a best practice among Kibera pastors, as it lightens the pastor’s workload and provides opportunity for members to grow and serve in the local church and in the community. Several pastors mentioned the need to identify members’ skills, passions, and gifts in order to know how best to serve and train them as well as to help determine members’ leadership potential.

*Women in the Church*

An inescapable theme is the role that women are playing in economic discipleship in the church. Women are among the leaders of successful economic activities in the church. Many times, the women comprise the only active group in economic ventures. Based on their abilities and successes, it seems they should be more incorporated into planning and implementation processes so that the entire church congregation may participate in income-generating activities.

*Partnership*

This research strongly highlights the need for partnership on a greater scale among Kibera churches. These findings are similar to Cramer’s (2014) research, which resulted in the formation of the local pastors’ network that was interviewed. 61% of pastors interviewed mentioned the benefits and necessity of partnership.

Related to the practicality of partnerships is the presence or absence of trustworthy people. One of the reasons for a lack of partnerships is an acute sense of caution by Kibera pastors; many have been burned. A great deal of attention should be given to this subject, as it emerges significantly in this research as well as Cramer’s initial study.

**Ten Principles of Economic Discipleship & Their Relation to Kibera**

The final point of analysis is the relation of the ten principles of economic discipleship developed by Grigg (2010) to Kibera’s context. One of the purposes of this research is to contribute to the global discussion by comparing the theology and praxis of economic discipleship as found in Kibera.

All of Grigg’s ten principles were mentioned save for half of principle #5: Work and Rest. Work was mentioned and rest was not; however, it may be argued that the principle of rest applies to Kibera’s context as many people – pastors and parishioners alike – work seven days in a week.

The only principle not mentioned or referenced at all was the final principle of Celebration. However, Grigg (2010) argues that this principle is the culmination and natural response of communal joy that results from application of the previous nine principles.

Hence, this research suggests that the ten principles of economic discipleship are relelvant in Kibera slum. This feeds into the global discussion about the applicability of the ten principles and suggests they may be appropriate for urban poor contexts in general.

**VII. Recommendations**



*Most of the people are individuals in their lives. They are divided. It is very difficult to collect people like we do, to run and move as a team.*

–Pastor Julius Nyelele, Redeemed Christian Church

As mentioned earlier, this research is following the transformational conversations process. This study has tried to present the conversation at the city level and integrate it with the theological conversation concerning the issues surrounding economic discipleship. The final step to this research process was to report the findings back to participants, which would hopefully lead to new action.

18 of the 28 pastors who were interviewed attended this meeting, where I presented the research findings to them. I also gave an overview of the emerging themes and divided the audience into four groups to discuss them. Group 1 discussed the implications of the need for unity and partnership among local and mainstream churches as well as with NGOs. Group 2 tackled the topics of training for pastors and the need for holistic ministry. Group 3 addressed how churches can acquire property and engaged in the debate between self-led development and looking for outside funding. The final group discussed whether a pastor should be full-time or bi-vocational and how women can be incorporated more into the ministry.

Each group had around 15 minutes to discuss. Afterwards, each group chose a representative to present the group’s conclusion. After each 5 minute presentation, the larger audience had the opportunity to comment, discuss, and debate conclusions. These conclusions are the basis of the following recommendations.

**Short-Term Recommendations**

**Unity and Partnership**

Several recommendations were made in order to increase unity and partnership among Kibera churches on several levels. First, there is a need to be aware about what is happening in the community. Second, one of the pastors suggested the need for forums whereby pastors, church leaders and members can discuss community issues and solutions. Third, there was consensus over the need to partner with mainline denominations and the Catholic Church, both of which have demonstrated ability to provide economic uplift to their members. Kibera churches should also partner with local experts outside the church. Finally, churches in Kibera should look for finances within Kenya before looking for international funding.

**Land Ownership**

One of the ways in which churches in Kibera can partner is for the purpose of acquiring property. The recommendation was made during the report back meeting that churches should pool resources and save together in order purchase land in Kibera.

**Self-Led Development vs. International Donors**

The group that discussed this topic formulated an integrated solution. The presenter highlighted the fact that Kibera churches have already begun development projects in the form of schools, savings groups, IGAs, etc. The inability to depend on outside funding necessitates starting at home. There is room, however, for international partnership in terms of resources as well as training.

**Bi-Vocational Pastors vs. Full-time Pastors**

The current economic realities on the ground require pastors to be bi-vocational. It is first and foremost a matter of survival. Additionally, it is a form of leadership; pastors model how to be good businesspeople for their congregations and community members. They demonstrate the principles of hard work, saving, investing, and business management in order to have the moral authority to speak about these issues in others’ lives. The day may come when more Kibera pastors are able to be supported full-time in the ministry, but for the time being tentmaking seems to be the most effective way to move forward.

**Women in ministry**

A lively debate did more perhaps to raise questions than solutions. While there was not consensus as to the particulars, it was made clear during the meeting that women are vital to the health of the church and are needed in the ministry.

**Economic Discipleship Training**

Due to the many responses of the need for holistic ministry and for pastors to be trained, I inquired if there was interest in attending a training on economic discipleship. There was unanimous affirmation to the proposition.

This short-term action step has already taken place. On July 21, 2015, I held a training where 16 pastors attended. It was an interactive time of teaching and discussion.

**Long-Term Recommendations**

In addition to long-term partnership among the various stakeholders already mentioned, perhaps the most significant recommendation is application of the economic discipleship training. The research findings suggest that the ten principles are relevant to their needs, which the pastors affirmed during the report back meeting.

Specifically, the pastors who attended the training can implement the ten principles in their lives, teach them to their congregations, and intentionally train others to apply these principles. The job description of trainer was reiterated many times, according to Ephesians 4:11-12, as was the importance of identifying and empowering the office of deacons within the local church.

To the best of my ability, I have tried to fulfill my role as a researcher, that is, to intently listen to the voices of Kibera pastors and tell their stories. I have tried to understand their concerns and ideas as well as walk alongside them in search for possible solutions. The economic discipleship training was a result of this. The meeting closed with an affirmation that the pastors in the room have the ability to transform Kibera by applying these principles. They have the power to enact the change they want to see in their community.

**VIII. Research Significance**



*The people who enter this church must be changed financially and spiritually. This is the thing I am fighting for. I don’t want to leave here when the people of this church are still poor.*

–Pastor Silvanos Odindo, Hope Gospel Church

This section discusses the significance of this research project and its contribution to the global body of research and the participants of the study. It examines the limitations of this research as well as areas where additional research is needed.

**Contribution to the Field of Research**

Being exploratory in nature, this study is perhaps the first of its kind that seeks to uncover a Kibera theology of economic discipleship. Being heavily-focused on the views and practices of the local community, it is meant to be a research project that is owned and embraced by Kibera pastors.

This research builds on other studies, most notably Cramer’s research in 2014 where he focused on church-based community development efforts. His research led to the coalescence of this pastors’ network. This study honed in on the economic aspect of church-based community development efforts and highlighted much of the thought processes behind it. It affirmed several of Cramer’s findings, most significantly the need for partnership in Kibera.

This study also contributes to the global discussion of economic discipleship in urban poor areas. Grigg’s seminal work on the ten principles of economic discipleship influenced this study – indeed, the term is still nascent – and the findings were evaluated against the ten principles. This study has made the argument that the ten principles find application in yet another informal settlement in the context of Kibera, Kenya, and builds the case that they may be applicable to urban poor areas in general.

**Contribution to the Kibera Pastors’ Network**

This research has contributed, hopefully, to a sense of renewed vigor for the Kibera pastors’ network. Little activity has been done together since its formation in July 2014, but the general response was the need for further engagement and deeper partnership.

Additionally, the network has produced, in collaboration with this research project, a local theology of economic discipleship that was previously nonexistent in academia. For pastors in an informal settlement who are at times looked down upon because of their educational level and social status, this is a particularly impressive and gratifying achievement.

Finally, the training on the ten principles of economic discipleship hopefully added value to the pastors’ repertoires and can be used as a tool for the community to experience the economic uplift inherent in Jesus’ good news.

**Limitations**

This research has several limitations. First, it is specific to one group, which has a number of distinct characteristics. Every participant is a colleague my local project advisor, Mike Aloo, and already active in some form of community development. All but one of the pastors were male. Furthermore, the majority of interviewees were from the Luo tribe, which is the majority tribe in Kibera.

The findings could be different if the participants were not from a different tribal background, were a higher percentage female, and not part of a network where all of the members are active in some kind of church-based community development efforts.

**Additional Research**

A follow up study to see how the pastors have implemented the economic discipleship training and how partnership efforts are developing would be quite helpful. Such research could seek to answer the questions “*What are the barriers and facilitators of implementing the ten principles of economic discipleship in Kibera*?” and “*What are the barriers and facilitators of forming partnerships among churches in Kibera*?”

**IX. Conclusion**



*A long journey begins with one step.*

–Mike Ochieng Aloo, My Father’s House Ministry, Lead Pastor

This research has sought to discover Kibera pastors’ views and practices of economic discipleship. Through 28 semi-structured interviews with Kibera pastors, this study has culminated in the development of a Kibera-specific theology of economic discipleship, which coincide with Grigg’s ten principles of economic discipleship.

Significant findings include the need for further partnership among churches in Kibera as well as with mainline and Catholic churches. The priority of education as a way of discipling people economically, as well as the importance and effectiveness of savings groups also emerged as significant themes.

It is encouraging to see that economic discipleship is already happening on a small level, yet there is potential for even greater community impact. The pastors expressed need for training on the ten principles of economic discipleship and have been trained.

It is humbling to have the opportunity to participate with them in working towards achieving Jesus’ desire for Jubilee in Kibera. Ultimately, however, the future of their community is in their hands. If the pastors of Kibera train others to implement the principles of economic discipleship then the community will experience the economic uplift inherent in Jesus’ good news for the poor.

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**Appendix I: Interview Questions**



Name (Code): Date: .

Church/Ministry Affiliation:

1. What does “economic discipleship” mean to you?
2. In what areas, if any, do your church members need economic discipleship?
3. How does your church do economic discipleship?
4. What would you like to do in the future (if anything)?
5. In what ways are churches in Kibera doing economic discipleship well?
6. In what areas can they improve?
7. Do you know of success stories of economic discipleship in other churches in the community? Elaborate.
8. Further comments, concerns, or recommendations…

**Appendix II: Project Budget**



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Item** | **cost in usd** |
| Equipment: e.g. digital recorder, batteries | $104.00 |
| Airtime for Pastor Mike | $9.00 |
| Housing | $390.00 |
| Printing presentations | $10.00 |
| Food for Report back | $80.00 |
| Food for training | $48.00 |
| Pastor Mike appreciation | $50.00 |
| **TOTAL** | **$691.00** |