

Agricultural Ministry as Diakonia

Kiaira Ann Mukiri

VID vitenskapelige høgskole
Oslo

Master's Thesis

Master's Degree in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice

Number of words: [26,970]

June 1st 2016

Abstract

This study examines to what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowers farmers in Meru- Kenya. The study starts with laying the contextual background of the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) bio intensive training Centre. The Centre is operated in terms of units referred to as departments. These departments are ; fish and fish training, livestock ,biogas gas training and kitchen garden, nurseries and green houses, catering and accommodation, natural resources, flowers and fences .The units target to help farmers both in church and other interested groups in Meru County including researchers and students. On the same note Kenya and agriculture is presented since Kenya's main economic resource is agriculture. The Methodist Church in Kenya background and her structure is shown. Moreover the background of the MCK bio intensive training Centre, her history and her activities are well explained.

In this study I used qualitative research method. This is because my target was to get deep verbal and concentrated descriptions of individual farmer's views and experiences regarding the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre and her activities that farmers are involved in to empower them. I examined Diakonia as empowerment, specifically the five dimensions of empowering Diakonia: The visional, normative, need-oriented, contextual and transformative dimensions; as the theory of this study. I viewed these in relation to reality.

The farmers' responses revealed that the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre has empowered farmers by encouraging and training them to: care for the environment through planting of trees, use of organic repellants, predators and other organic farm inputs. Farmers are trained to enrich the soil by: Use of compost manure, slurry, cover crops and crop rotation. The Centre has helped farmers to create land for growing crops by introducing sack and polythene paper vegetables kitchen gardens and the use of small plots for growing vegetables. Moreover planting of fruits, fodders crops, organic and urban farming are also major empowering tools to farmers. Farmers have acquired skills in livestock, fish and poultry farming. Integrity and stewardship are the guiding principles.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the Methodist church in Kenya because her activities and projects are Diakonia based. To my family members particular my children: Loise, Munene and Abi. I charge you, the world need people who are diaconal oriented, to empower and stir God given ability in them and Kenya and the world will never be the same.

Acknowledgements

I thank God for He perfects all that concerns me. Every day I keenly listened and heard, “Fear not I am with you”. My immeasurable gratitude goes to my supervisor professor Roar G. Fotland. Words cannot describe him. Thanks for holding my hand encouragingly just as a father holds a daughters’ hand empowering her to walk despite the many falls.

I dearly appreciate every teacher I came into contact with at Diakonhjemmet University College. Thanks for revealing Diakonia as was coded in Diakonia and social Christian practices. The course has been a motivation. I could not be complete without Diakonia revealed to me. Diakonia which features as good works, justice, reconciliation, transformation, empowerment, prophesy, inclusion, care, bridge building and service. The list is endless. Special thanks to Kari Jordheim. Stephanie, I liked hearing you say, “Justification is by faith”. I liked that so much.

Thanks to my classmates mainly my friends Samson, Elena and Indira. I just love you people. You may not know it but it is in me. You reached my heart in Diakonhjemmet Oslo. Special regards to Benson Mwingirwa, Magdalene (Mado). Thanks to the entire Diakonhjemmet University College fraternity.

I wish to appreciate my beloved husband George Lingili Thaimuta. Thanks for bearing loneliness in my absence. My distance away has revealed to me who you are to me. Gratitude to my children, they can understand and just assure “I love you mum”. I apologize to my son Munene who missed me unusually but he has made it finally.

Thanks to my mother Elizabeth Murocia. She is a symbol of Diakonia, a motivation and simply a jewel. I cannot forget to honor my late dad John Kiaira, saying, “Dad thanks for educating me. You encouraged me to work hard. Appreciation to my brothers and sisters: Kim, Ken, Tito, Julius, Helen, Feli and Dama. To you all thanks so much.

Finally I remain thankful to my brethren in Christ Embassy Norway you are the best fellowship ever. To Pastor Oliseh Akpati and the family God bless you.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Chapter 1.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Motivation.....	1
1.3 Research Question	4
1.4 Terms and definitions	4
1.4.1 Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK)	5
CHAPTER 2	9
2.1 Contextual background	9
2.1.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Kenya and Agriculture.....	9
2.3 Meru.....	16
2.4 The Methodist church in Kenya.....	17
2.5 The MCK bio Intensive Agricultural Training Centre.....	21
Chapter 3.....	24
3.0 Methodology	24
3.1 Introduction.....	24
3.2 Case Study	25
3.3 Sampling	26
3.4 Observations	26
3.5 Recording.....	27
3.6 Coding.....	27
Chapter 4.....	31
4.1 Theoretical structure	31
4.2 Diakonia as empowerment.....	33
4.3 Empowerment	36
4.3.1 Visional Dimension.....	37
4.3.2 Normative Dimension	38
4.3.3 Need oriented Dimension.....	39

4.3.4 Contextual Dimension.....	39
4.3.5 Transformative Dimension	40
5.2 Empowerment of Farmers in Meru-Kenya	42
5.2.1 MCK bio intensive training Centre and core Christian values.....	44
5.2.2 The establishing of bio intensive training Centre	44
5.2.2.2 Urban Farming.	50
5.3 Farmers and adoption of bio intensive farming methods.....	52
5.4 Farmers’ perspective on the Centre	54
6.2 Normative dimension and reality	62
6.3 Need –oriented dimension and reality	64
6.4 Contextual dimension and reality	66
6.5 Transformative dimension and reality	67
Conclusion	73
7.1 Organization of the Thesis	73
7.2 Answer to the sub-research Questions	74
7.3 Answer to the research Question	81
7.4 Research Contribution	85
References.....	87
Appendix 1.....	89
Interview Guide Questions	89

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I have introduced the study on: To what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowers farmers in Meru –Kenya. In this chapter are the following sub headings of this thesis ; motivation towards the research topic which explains how and why I chose to research on the stated study topic; the research question of the study and the sub research questions that helped answered the main research question are stated here. The other major parts of this thesis that are covered in this chapter are: Methodology, ethical consideration, definition of terms and the organization and content of the entire thesis.

The Methodist Church in Kenya Bio Intensive Training Centre is the case study in this research. The Centre is among the many projects initiated by the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK). This project is particularly established to address issues in relation to agriculture. The activities performed in this Centre are managed as units. According to the Centre employees these units are referred to as departments. During the interviewing sessions the Centre employees introduced the activities carried there as follows:

The Centre is operated in form of units which we refer to as departments. These departments are ; fish and fish training, livestock ,biogas gas training and kitchen garden, nurseries and green houses, catering and accommodation, natural resources, flowers and fences Whereas the overall is the management department. All these units target to help farmers both in church and other interested groups in Meru County including researchers and students (Ephraim).

1.2 Motivation

My motivation towards researching on the topic: Agricultural Ministry as Diakonia is based on by my encounter with the course Diakonia and Social Christian Practices at Diakonhjemmet University College. The term Diakonia was new to me but in the process

of studying the term Diakonia, Diakonia itself became interesting. The most interesting part of Diakonia to me was that it could not be precisely defined though it carried several explanations. These explanations ranged from what is the identity and mission of the church to being a call to act. Diakonia also is explained as harkening to the cry of the needy, responding to injustices and care for creation (Stephanie et al, 2015, p.2).

Diakonia according to Nordstokke, (2009), is described as: service, transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. It is also expressed by Jordheim, (2015), as bridge building, hospitality and welfare (Jordheim, 2015).

This continually became fun hence I desired to examine Diakonia in details in my own world. Diakonia rendered itself to me as a “coat of many colours”. Inside Diakonia I discovered that there are skills which can and are used to help solve present day challenges. These challenges include helping to attain justice, care for all Creation, initiating inclusive fellowships as well as showing love for one’s neighbor. These constitute keys thing covered in Diakonia and Social Christian Practices course at Diakonhjemmet University College.¹

These aspects of Diakonia motivated me to research on it. As I kept reflecting on and on the areas addressed by Diakonia, my mind went straight to the MCK church. This is the church I was brought up in as a Christian. I thought of Diakonia and was wondering the social Christian services referred to as social Christian responsibilities in the MCK are Diakonia in other words. I learnt that the practices named as social Christian responsibilities in MCK are usually carried out in form of projects of different kinds². Moreover, I sought to know why the Methodist church in Kenya (MCK) was doing these projects. I found that all of them are done as a way of evangelization. Hence one time the

¹<http://www.diakonhjemmet.no/DUC/Studiehaandbok/Direkte-publisering/Studiekatalog/Informasjon/Master-s-Degree-in-Diakonia-and-Christian-Social-Practice> cited on 5/2/2016.

² <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited on 4/30/2016.

MCK presiding bishop said quoting MCK mission. “We preach the good news, set at liberty the afflicted and equip believers”³. This sounded as Diakonia to me.

Moreover, some of the projects the MCK is involved in include: construction of churches, provision of clean water in arid and semi-arid parts of Kenya where her members are found, planting trees to conserve environment, providing of emergency relief and post disaster recovery as well as sharing Christ love with the Muslim communities in Kenya. The latter is done by establishing schools which are operated by applying Christian values.⁴ The church has also established a Centre called Methodist Church in Kenya Bio Intensive Agricultural Training Centre. This Centre trains farmers. The Centre is my case study in this thesis.

I chose this project because of my personal concern on environmental issues and also my interest in agricultural activities. This is because agriculture is an activity which is paramount in Kenya as it is discussed in the contextual background chapter in this thesis. I took some initiative to study what the MCK bio intensive training Centre was doing and I was so curious to know more and more about the Centre. This is why I chose the Centre as my case study for this research.

I connected the activities performed by the MCK with Diakonia .I kept seeking to know if the works and practices could be referred to as diaconal services. Particularly, I concentrated on studying what the MCK bio intensive training Centre was all about. I was curious hence and the desire to know more and more about the Centre. On the other hand, I sought to know if the activities were empowering the community and particularly farmers.

These activities and my mother’s lifestyle of working hard as a steward of that she has God from motivated me. My mother says,

³ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/> cited on 3/31/16.

⁴ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited on 2/29/16.

The MCK teaches her members to put the word of God in practice. This is what we emphasize in our women fellowship. We put the chapter of proverbs which talks about a virtuous woman into work⁵. This chapter is applied in our daily life (My mother).

My mother's activities include owning a kitchen garden with vegetables planted together with tree seedlings, flowers together with tomatoes, pepper, spinach and onions. She keeps in the same yard local chickens which are called *kuku kienyeji*⁶, dairy goats, pigs and cattle on zero grazing units.

My mother's lifestyle explained above, together with the activities of MCK bio intensive training Centre and what I learnt in Diakonia classes, propelled interest to writing my master's thesis in Diakonia and Social Christian Practices, on Agricultural ministry as Diakonia. At this point I started connecting these activities with Diakonia as empowerment according to Nordstokke, (2009 p.45-47).

1.3 Research Question

This study is examining: To what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru-Kenya. The research question that guided the study is: To what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru? This question was answered as the respondents responded to the following sub research questions: How does the MCK bio intensive training Centre empowers farmers? Do the farmers adopt the methods used to empower them? What are the farmers' opinions and views towards the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre and the activities they are involved in?

1.4 Terms and definitions

In this section of the chapter I am going to define the terms that are featuring in this study time and again. These terms are Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK), Bio Intensive Farming, Bio Intensive Training Centre, Diakonia and Empowerment.

⁵ Proverbs 31:10-31

⁶ Local chicken fed using organic feeds.

1.4.1 Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK)

The Methodist church in Kenya is the church that umbrellas approximately ten projects wherever her branches are. One of these projects is Methodist church bio Intensive Training Centre which is the case study in this research.⁷

This is explained further in the background section of this thesis; under the following sub-headings: Methodist Church in Kenya and MCK bio intensive Training Centre.

1.4.2 Bio intensive farming

Bio intensive farming (BIF) is a concept as well as an approach. This approach Rajbhandari, (2011), says that it concentrates on the needs and views of farmers. The approach enhances boost crop diversity and yield ability of the farm. It helps in increasing food and also nutritional security .This leads to improved rural living (Rajbhandari, 2011).On the other hand Jeavons, (2001), asserts that Bio-intensive farming is a method of farming that emphasis on; soil quality, use of compost and planting of different plants grown differently. This results in efficient use of land and hence planting more in available space (Jeavons, 2001).

Moreover, according to Moore, (2010), the method helps in minimizing energy use by employing human labor. It involves deep soil tillage, planting crops closely together, using of compost crops to help in maintaining soil fertility. This helps in utilizing small farms to the full. Two, these farms produce their maximum using deep tillage which leads to high yields .Moreover it is one of the recommended farming methods in the world today. The method involves use of minimum energy inputs, enriches soils, and contributes to healthy soils. It also safeguards space, optimizing produce and increased sustainability (Moore, 2010).

In this study I will use these definitions at different times interchangeably in the process of writing. During interviewing sessions the farmers and trainers at the MCK bio intensive training Centre defined bio intensive farming as follows: The act of practicing farming without applying any inorganic inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides

⁷ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited on 2/13/2016.

and all things which are used in the soil to help it increase yields, texture or controlling pests and diseases⁸. The employees and farmers referred to this type of farming as *urimi butina dawa*⁹

1.4.3 Empowerment

Empowerment is the act of giving power or to enable¹⁰. It is also looked at as a multi-dimensional social process that is involved in enabling people to attain ability to have control over their own lives¹¹. On the other hand it is a process that stimulates power in people for use mainly in their very lives, community as well as in their society¹². Empowerment is achieved by working on issues that people describe as important (Page, et al, 1999).

Empowerment according to the World Bank is defined as the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes¹³. To Page, (1999), empowerment is a multi-dimensional. It is also a process as per Nelson, (2010), that enables people to attain dominance over their lives. It brings in power in people which helps them in dealing with their own live and that of the society around them. This is manifested by the way people address issues that concern them. Empowerment takes places at individual or at group levels. It is a process that grows as people keep on doing things that are important to them (Nelson, 2010, p 6).

⁸ <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/thematic-sitemap/theme/spi/soil-biodiversity/agriculture-and-soil-biodiversity/en/> cited on 3/2/16.

⁹ Urimi butina dawa means practicing farming which is free of any chemical applications to the soil or to the plants. This is done to help conserve soil and the environment in which man and other living thing inhabit.

¹⁰ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/empowerment> viewed on 2/15/16.

¹¹ http://www.joe.org/joe/1999october/comm1.php/site_urlfor-authors.php vied on 2/15/16.

¹² <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0149718998000159> cited on 3/2/16.

¹³ <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTEMPowerment/0,,contentMDK:20272299~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:486411~isCURL:Y,00.html> cited on 3/18/16.

Nelson further says that empowerment is evangelizing as far as the church is concerned. This is because when sharing God' love, hope and care, the entire people's needs are addressed. According to her the work of empowerment is all about building relationships and hence involves the people which at the end become the work of evangelism (Nelson 2010).

The above definitions of empowerment shall be revisited in this thesis later as they link and match with the research, the theory and also the practices.

The next term I am going to examine below is Diakonia.

1.4.4 Diakonia

Diakonia according to the ecumenical movements is defined as, responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people.¹⁴ This definition of Diakonia is basically the act of Christians doing something to help address people's needs. These people referred here include the sick, the poor, the marginalized, giving support to and defending the people who are excluded and discriminated upon¹⁵.

Diakonia manifest itself in the following forms as well: Diakonia as transformation, Diakonia as reconciliation and Diakonia as empowerment.¹⁶ These faces of Diakonia shall be explained in the theoretical chapter though the main focus of this thesis is Diakonia as empowerment. This means the term Diakonia and empowerment will be mentioned often and shall be discussed in a more detailed manner in the theory, the analysis and discussion as well as in the conclusion chapters.

1.5 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is entitled: Agricultural ministry as Diakonia. The title of the thesis is arrived at by looking through the following: To what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya

¹⁴ <http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/99119> cited on 3/2/16.

¹⁵ <http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/99119> cited 3/2/16.

¹⁶ <http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/handle/11250/99119> cited on 3/2/16.

bio intensive training Centre Empowered Farmers in Meru? To answer this question the following chapters, titles and sub-titles are addressed in this thesis.

Chapter one: The introduction of the thesis. In the introduction I have explained what the thesis topic is. To achieve this, in the chapter I have incorporated the following: topic of the thesis that is empowerment; a brief on the MCK bio intensive training Centre and the expression of Diakonia; Diakonia and the motivation towards writing about the stated topic; research questions; definition of key terms; the method used in the research ; ethical considerations and conclusions.

Chapter two is consisting contextual background which covers the following: An introduction; Kenya and Agriculture; Meru; MCK and MCK bio intensive agricultural training Centre are discussed. The next is chapter three which is about the method used in the study. Chapter four is the theoretical structure; chapter five, farmers' responses towards the Centre activities.

Chapter five is structured in the order in which the research questions were asked and answered during the data collection process. Hence the sub-titles in chapter five are as follows: Farmers' responses to the Centre activities; Empowerment of farmers in Meru-Kenya; MCK bio intensive training Centre and core values; The establishing of Bio intensive training Centre; Organic agriculture; Urban farming; Farmers ; adoption of bio intensive farming methods and Farmers' perspective on the Centre.

In Chapter six I examined the theory in conjunction with reality. Hence the subtitles in this chapter are: Visional Dimension and reality; Normative Dimension and reality; Need-oriented Dimension and reality; Contextual Dimension and reality and Transformative dimension and reality. Chapter seven has the conclusion of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Contextual background

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter is the background of this study. The study was carried out in Kenya at MCK bio intensive training Centre which is located in Meru County. The Bio Intensive Agricultural Training Centre is the case study of this research. The Centre has activities according to the center's employees, which are operated in form of units called departments. Hence Ephraim on my first visit as stated earlier introduced the Centre activities to me by explaining as following:

This Centre is operated in form of units which we refer to as departments. These departments ; fish and fish training, livestock ,biogas gas training and kitchen garden, nurseries and green houses, catering and accommodation, natural resources, flowers and fences . The overall is the management department. All these target towards empowering the farmers in the Methodist church in Meru and other interested groups in Meru County (Ephraim).

These are explained further in this chapter. The other aspect explained is about Kenya and agriculture. This is because Kenya's main economic resource is agriculture and a bigger population is involved in agricultural activities¹⁷. The chapter covers an explanation about Meru where the MCK bio intensive training Centre is situated, the Methodist church in Kenya (MCK) and the MCK bio intensive training Centre.

2.2 Kenya and Agriculture

Kenya is said to be an agricultural country. This is because agriculture contributes greatly to her economy. Hence in this chapter the following are explained: Kenya and agriculture which explain agriculture and its role to Kenyan economy and her people, land suitable for agriculture and the climatic zones in Kenya.

¹⁷ <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/country/kenya> cited 5/3/16.

Kenya's main economic activity is Agriculture¹⁸. It contributes substantially to Kenyan economy. It is the leading economic sector, which accounts to almost 25% of the gross domestic product (GDP)¹⁹. Kenya's export which is equated to approximately 65 % is from agriculture²⁰. This sector also provides up to 18 % of formal jobs in Kenya. This means that Kenya's economic growth is highly determined by growth and expansion of agriculture (Njeru, 2014).

The land suitable for agriculture is approximately 12%. This is the land that is conducive for cultivating. The soils are fertile and the land receives rainfall amounting to almost 3000mm per year²¹. At most the land used for crop and animal feed production is around 8% of Kenya's land .Land equivalent to around 20% is suitable for cultivation, whereby only about 8% is referred to as medium potential land. The remaining portion of Kenya's land is arid or semiarid (Shanguhya, 2008).

Agriculture and food processing industry in Kenya employs almost 80% of Kenyan's population²². Farming in Kenya is carried out by small scale producers who usually cultivate land which is between two acres and a maximum of five acres. Farmers use limited technology. Nevertheless there are European-owned coffee, tea, and sisal plantations but all in all many peasant farmers also grow cash crops²³.

Agriculture is indeed an important economy in Kenya .Therefore it drives almost all development conscious institutions to focus on agriculture to achieve development goals. The church is not an exception. As an institution it plans her activities towards improving agriculture. Hence the Methodist church in Kenya has her development strategies and projects which are concerned with boosting agriculture in different parts of Kenya. The

¹⁸ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Kenya-AGRICULTURE.html> cited on 3/8/16.

¹⁹ <http://extensionconference2011.cta.int/node/111> cited on 3/8/16.

²⁰ <http://www.investmentkenya.com/opportunities/agriculture> cited on 3/8/16.

²¹ <http://www.our-africa.org/kenya/climate-agriculture> cited on 3/8/16.

²² <http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/kenya/food-security-report-prepared-kenya-agricultural-research-institute> cited 3/8/16.

²³ <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Kenya-AGRICULTURE.html> cited on 3/8/16.

projects main aim is to promote agriculture. MCK has established Centers to benefit her members and the country at large.

One of these centers is MCK bio intensive training Centre²⁴. The Centre embraces organic farming, trains farmers and the entire community on how to produce more food and increase income by maximally using the land, while applying bio intensive farming methods. The Centre trains and encourages farmers to produce nutritious food for their families. Moreover the farmers are trained on how to rear livestock for both domestic and commercial use²⁵. This Centre is revisited again in this chapter since it is the case study as stated earlier.

Another project that is established by the MCK with a target of boosting Kenyan agriculture is Marimanti Rural training Centre in Tharaka district in Kenya. This Centre is meant to help the marginal farmers in the arid parts of the eastern Kenya. Farmers obtain training on appropriate farming which ensures sustainable agriculture. Quality seed and quality planting materials are provided at this Centre to farmers. This ensures increased food production and better standards of living to small scale farmers. At this Centre bee-keeping and honey processing is done. There is another agricultural Centre at Ribe near Mombasa and some other two proposed to be established at the mission areas. These are at Bunda in Tanzania and at Kamuli in Uganda²⁶.

.
Bigger portion of Kenya's land is arid and semi-arid areas. These areas receive little rainfall which ranges from 0-300 mm and 300-600 mm²⁷. Hence these Centres aims at encouraging organic farming to small scale and those living in arid places in Kenya , Tanzania and Uganda where the MCK has mission centres. The target is to practice arid land farming²⁸.

²⁴ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited on 3/9/16.

²⁵ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited 3/8/16.

²⁶ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/missions/rural-urban-development/> cited on 5/5/16.

²⁷ <https://www.ifad.org/topic/operations/tags/livestock/2123185> cited on 3/9/16.

²⁸ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited 3/9/16.

My main concern in this thesis is the MCK bio intensive training Centre situated in Meru. Here am going to I write a little bit on the areas it serves. The arid areas served by the MCK bio intensive training Centre include Buuri which borders Isiolo²⁹. The map on the next page shows different vegetation and agricultural cash crop grown in different parts of the country. Meru is in the eastern side of Mt. Kenya as explained in this thesis. This is because the country has varied climatic characteristics as explained below³⁰.

The central highlands and the rift valley of Kenya have high rainfall and fertile soils. Places like Nairobi which is partly in the central and partly in the rift valley region has temperatures which ranges between 21 to 26°C. The western Kenya is fairly hot and wet all year round. The rainfall is usually over 1000mm and temperature at Kisumu which is another city in Kenya is 27-29°C. The Northern and Eastern Kenya is highly hot and arid with extensive lakes, deserts of lava, sand, salt and soda ash. Rainfall is approximately 510mm per year with temperatures rising up to 30s°C-39°C in the arid part. The remaining parts of the country are the coastal zone. This is where the MCK has established Ribe agricultural Centre as said earlier. This area is hot and humid. It is rich in cool sea breezes. A small part along the coast land is suitable for agriculture. Hence Fruits, nuts and cotton are grown (Ochieng, 1992).

Agriculture as stated earlier is a major economic concern in Kenya. It contributes substantially to development and the entire human livelihood. Hence it is an important economic driver. The bigger populations of Kenya depend on agriculture for food, money and the entire human demands. This makes agriculture to be described as the backbone of the Kenyan economy. This is because of its significance and the part it plays to the economic growth³¹. The sector is consisting of crop production which provides for both industrial and food crops; it involves horticulture, livestock, bee-keeping and honey refinery, fishing and also forestry. Crop production and growing of horticultural products

²⁹ <http://www.asdsp.co.ke/index.php/meru-county> cited on 3/9/16.

³⁰ <http://www.our-africa.org/kenya/climate-agriculture> cited on 3/9/16.

³¹ <http://www.kenyabrussels.com/index.php?menu=6&leftmenu=88&page=89> cited on 3/10/16.

is equated to an average of 76.5% of agriculture GDP. Next is livestock production which contributes 4.9%. Fishing and forestry contributes to the same³².

Generally agriculture is a major contributing force to Kenya's economy. Nevertheless, regular droughts reduce both crop and animal production. This is because Kenyan agriculture is mainly rain fed³³. Since 2008 the country has been experience several droughts which results to a situation of food insecurity³⁴. This made attaining a situation, “where all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to enough, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life³⁵”.

The situation explained above is referred to as a state of food security this is a key objective to the Kenya's agricultural sector today. Many people did not have access to food in required portions and quality since the stated time. Almost 10million Kenyans suffered from food insecurity and many survived on relief food. Families incurred heavy bills on food due to high food prices. Maize which is a staple food was not enough³⁶.The situation defined above propelled many social institutions including the church to channel their resources towards attaining food security and this was to be done through care for the environment, diversification of food and maximum utilization available land³⁷.

This explains why the MCK church has an obligation to think and plan in terms of increased agricultural production, increase food diversification for example introduction of fish farming in Meru which is a practice common around the Lake Region and protection of the environment. Eliza at MCK bio intensive training centre said:

³² <http://www.investmentkenya.com/opportunities/agriculture> cited on 3/9/16.

³³ <http://www.investmentkenya.com/opportunities/agriculture> cited on 3/9/16.

³⁴ <http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/kenya/food-security-report-prepared-kenya-agricultural-research-institute> cited on 3/10/16.

³⁵ <http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/kenya/food-security-report-prepared-kenya-agricultural-research-institute> cited on 3/10/16.

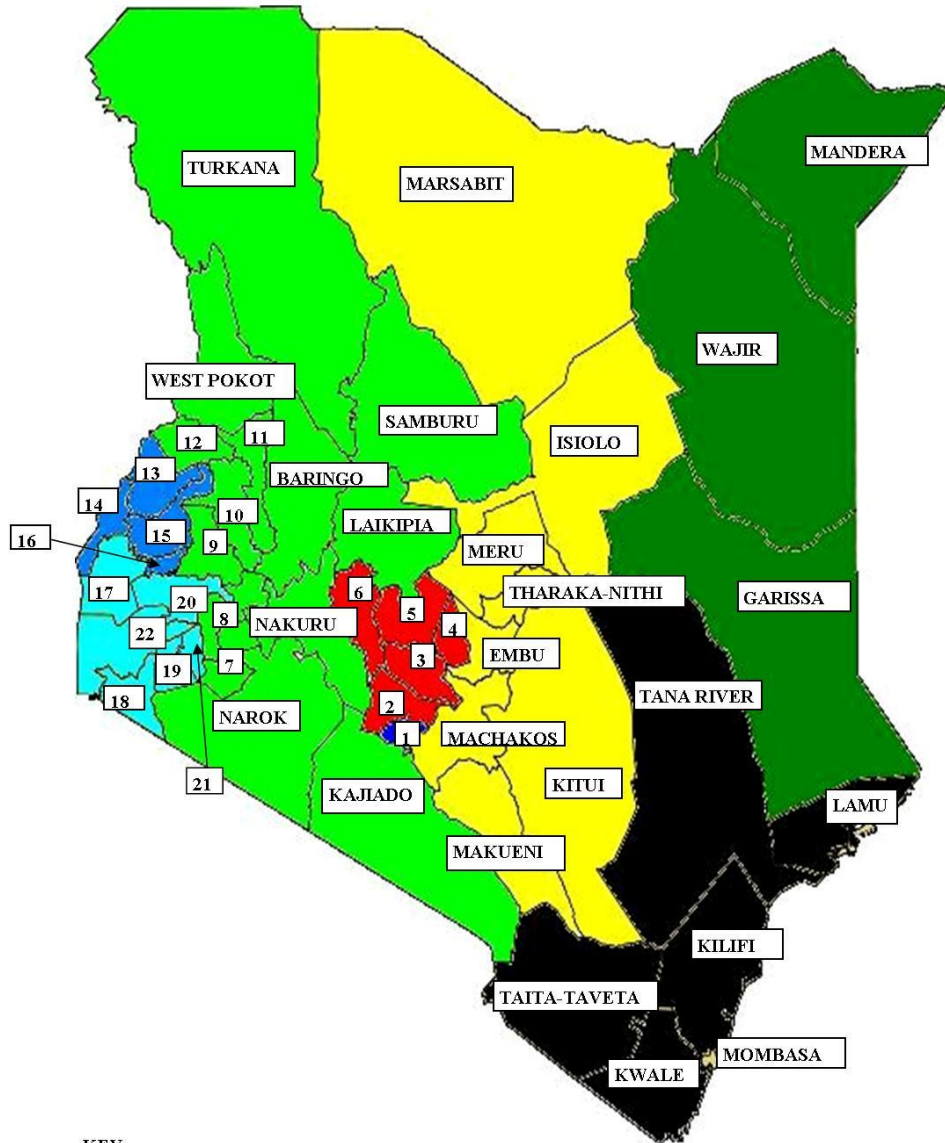
³⁶ <http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/kenya> cited on 3/10/16.

³⁷ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/003/w3613e/w3613e00.HTM> cited on 5/5/16.

We train small-holder farmers to produce more diverse nutritious food and increase family income by efficiently utilizing the small lands they own using appropriate simple farming methods. Hence we have introduced construction of raised fish ponds. Moreover for those living in towns and in rented house we have introduced creation of portable farms. They can use sacks; old basins fill them with imported soil and grow vegetables (Eliza).

This will be discussed further in Farmers responses towards MCK bio intensive training centre activities as well as in the discussion chapter later in the thesis.

COUNTIES OF KENYA



KEY

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. NAIROBI | 8. KERICHO | 15. KAKAMEGA | 22. HOMA BAY |
| 2. KIAMBU | 9. TRANS NZOIA | 16. VIHIGA | |
| 3. MURANG'A | 10. UASIN GISHU | 17. SIAYA | |
| 4. KIRINYAGA | 11. ELGEYO-MARAKWET | 18. MIGORI | |
| 5. NYERI | 12. NANDI | 19. KISII | |
| 6. NYANDARUA | 13. BUNGOMA | 20. KISUMU | |
| 7. BOMET | 14. BUSIA | 21. NYAMIRA | |

A map copied from google maps.³⁸

³⁸ https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Kenya_counties_map_Labelled.jpg cited on 5/18/16. A map copied from google maps.

2.3 Meru

Meru is a name of one of the counties in Kenya as shown in the map above. The county is located on the eastern side of the country³⁹. Meru is bordering Laikipia whose main town is Nanyuki in the west, in the south west is Nyeri, in the east is Tharaka Nithi with a main town called Chuka. In the north Meru is neighbored by Isiolo. The county measures around 6,936 km² and the forest occupies approximately 1, 776 kilometre squared⁴⁰. The county is made up of nine constituencies put together. These constituencies are ; Igembe south, Igembe central, Igembe North, Tigania west, Tigania East, North Imenti, Buuri, Central Imenti and South Imenti⁴¹

The inhabitants of Meru County are people who reside mainly in Meru. These are the sub tribes of the Ameru community who are named as follows: Imenti, Tigania and Igembe. The commonly spoken language in Meru County is kimeru together with Kiswahili which is the Kenyan national language and English which is referred to as the official language in Kenya. However, Ki-meru is the native language spoken by the Meru people⁴². This is the reason why I conducted my interviews in all these languages interchangeably. This means I collected my research data using all the mentioned languages since I can speak all of them fluently and effectively. During interviews the respondent expressed themselves using these Languages as they wished.

Meru County as far as religion is concerned, it dominated mainly by Christians. There are Catholics, Presbyterian and Anglican followers. The Methodist church has the highest following in the region. Muslims and Hindus are scarcely found but most of them live around Meru town .They are the smallest religious group in Meru⁴³.

The main economic activity of Meru County is agriculture. Most farmers are involved in small scale farming for subsistence use. The cash crop grown in the region is tea, coffee

³⁹ <https://www.google.no/maps/@0.1443445,37.1947874,9z?hl=en> cited on 3/10/16.

⁴⁰ <http://www.asdsp.co.ke/index.php/meru-county> cited on 3/9/16.

⁴¹ <http://www.asdsp.co.ke/index.php/meru-county> cited 3/9/16.

⁴² <http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/meru-county.html> cited on 2/16/16.

⁴³ <http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/meru-county.html> cited on 2/16/16.

and Miraa⁴⁴. Crops such as maize, beans, millet sorghum, finger millet and vegetables such as cabbages and Sukuma wiki are grown⁴⁵. Fruits are widely grown in the county. These fruits are mangoes, oranges papaws, avocados and passion. Growing fruits for selling is a popular activity in Meru. This consists of small scale growing of mangoes and passion fruits mainly in Imenti⁴⁶.

The MCK bio intensive Agricultural Training Centre is serving all the communities mentioned. The Centre grows both fruits and tree as well as vegetables seedlings as per farmers' request. Moreover the Centre rears pigs, dairy cows, rabbits, goats and poultry all as demonstration to farmers in the county. One of the Ephraims said, "we build the small holder farmers' capacity to obtain food, income while conserving the environment and maintaining biodiversity." Then one Futegi⁴⁷ added, "We not only do that but we also demonstrate that a small family can obtain own food and fodder for a cow and goats from a small piece of land equivalent to an acre".

2.4 The Methodist church in Kenya

Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) is a faith based organization which was established in 1967. It split from the United Methodist Free Churches whose missionaries came to Mombasa in Kenya in 1862 as found in the church history and *the Deed of foundations*.⁴⁸ The United Methodist Free Churches merged with the United Methodist Church in around 1907 and in 1932 it joined the Methodist Church and the two became one⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ Miraa is a local name for Khat.

⁴⁵ Sukuma wiki is a Kiswahili word for kale which means pushing all along the week.

⁴⁶ <http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/meru-county.html> cited on 3/10/16.

⁴⁷ Futegi name given to farmers to maintain anonymity

⁴⁸ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/about-the-methodist-church/> cited on 2/15/16.

⁴⁹ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/about-the-methodist-church/>

In 1967 the church became independent from the British Methodist Church⁵⁰. The church has acquired growth in membership, acquiring of physical facilities such as educational institutions, hospital, dispensaries, guest houses, insurance firm, churches and members are almost four hundred and fifty thousand in number.⁵¹ This growth is obtained through establishment of development projects. These development projects are ;church constructing, clean water proving, tree planting, relief and post disaster recovery, establishing schools, marketing, youth empowerment and organic farming project such as the one in this thesis ;the MCK bio intensive agriculture training Centre.⁵²

This Centre is the case study that is going to be referred severally in this thesis. Hand in hand with development projects, the church carries out several welfare activities. These welfare activities are operated inform of ; sponsoring educational institutions for example the Kenya Methodist University, secondary and primary schools and Youth Polytechnics .The MCK owns a hospital called Maua Methodist and several dispensaries as a way offering health care to her members and the local people around the hospital⁵³.

MCK has sponsored theological institutions where ministers are trained and agricultural training centers to cater for the agricultural needs of the people⁵⁴. All these projects and welfare activities are propelled by the church's vision and mission.⁵⁵ The Methodist church in Kenya Vision is evangelizing and transforming people's lives. The mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ; freeing people from suffering and empowering them⁵⁶.

⁵⁰ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/about-the-methodist-church/> cited on 2/15//16.

⁵¹ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/church-achievement/>

⁵² <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/>

⁵³ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/institutions/maua-methodist-hospital/>

⁵⁴ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/methodist-church-in-kenya>

⁵⁵ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/mission-vision/> cited on 4/1/16.

⁵⁶ <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/14217A> cited on 5/5/16.

The above stated, are achieved by use of different methods to reach out. One is the use of development projects such as the establishment of Kaaga bio intensive Centre in Meru whose aim is to reach farmers and empower them. The Centre is a church project whose foundations are the word of God. This was said by the Ephraim when explaining the history of the Centre. She said that the Centre dates back to the start of MCK -Meru. To add on the same she said that according to MCK all other things shall pass away but the word of God will abide everlastingly. On the same note she added, “When God speaks His word it always comes to pass. It never return to him void.” This word of God is the founding principle of the Centre. “MCK has appointed a minister who is housed by MCK bio intensive training Centre”, Said Ephraim. She continued,

God speaks to his people through his word and the word of God is Jesus Christ. It is the means by which God uses to let people know what he expects of them, what he like and what he dislikes (Ephraim).

As I took note of the expressions used to define MCK and its activities, I noted a lot which I described as Diakonia. The main reference is the bible hence at one point Ephraim said,

According to the Methodist church in Kenya we believe that the bible is a record that is God breathed. It is given with an objective to instruct, teach, rebuke, correct and train us in righteousness (Ephraim).

The Methodist church in Kenya is operated on Christian ethics and principles. To maintain this, the church empowers its members to attain faith in God and freedom by using God’s word as stated earlier. Social holiness is encouraged through practice of Methodism. Members are inspired to be excellent church leaders and managers and hence enhancing increased membership and church sustainability⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/mission-vision/> cited on 2/15/16.

The Methodist church in Kenya is a self-sustaining church. It sustains itself by keeping a close contact with her members. This is achieved through evangelism hence leading more people to Christ Jesus. So the establishment of a project like Gospel chariot mentioned earlier, Seminars, workshops which educate and create awareness to the members is evangelism in different forms. Seminars such as the seven years environmental conservation strategic plan project whose aim is to care for the earth by planning a head and mainly educating members on emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, maternal health, environmental conservation all aim at of caring for the earth (Kagama, 2015).

The Methodist Church in Kenya is structured as follows:

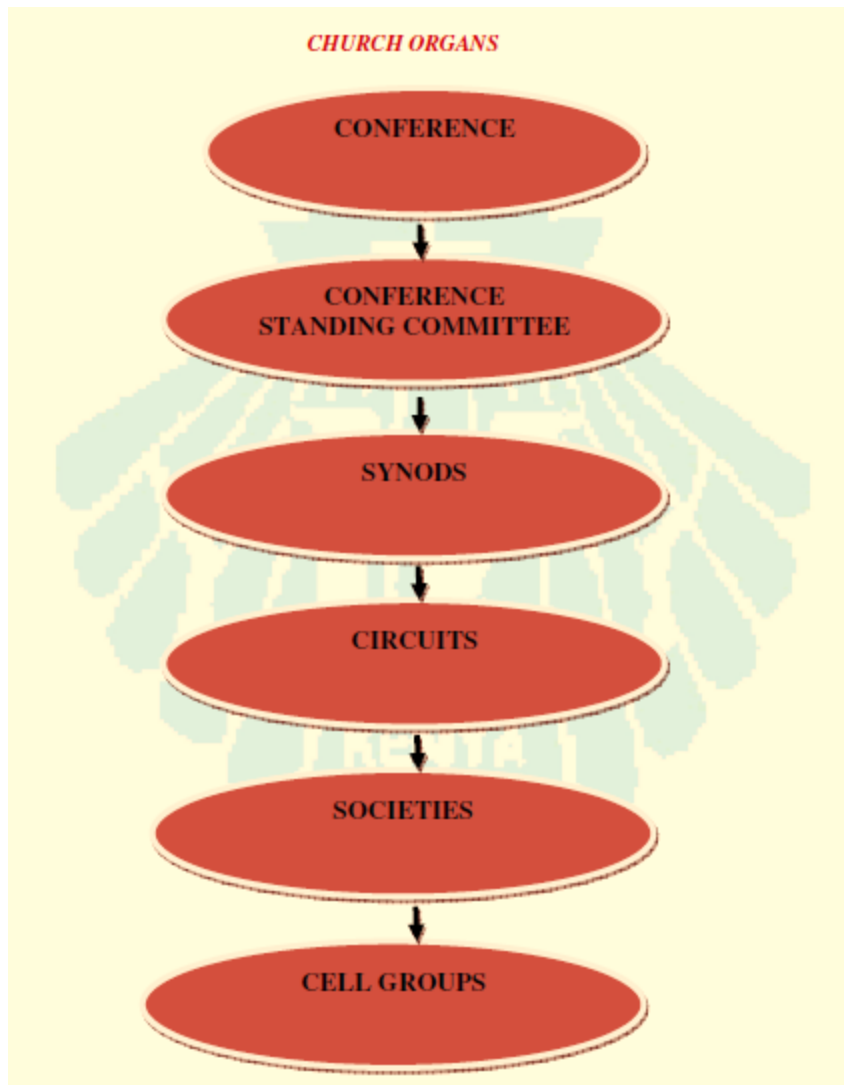


Fig 1: Structure of the Methodist church in Kenya⁵⁸.

2.5 The MCK bio Intensive Agricultural Training Centre

MCK Bio Intensive Training Centre is a Centre initiated by the Methodist church in Kenya. It was established in 1992. The Centre offers basic courses to small scale farmers. This is training on ecological issues. Small scale farmers are to encourage applying ecological friendly agricultural practices and livestock keeping mainly under zero grazing.⁵⁹ The Centre is found in the eastern side of Mt. Kenya, in Meru central in the

⁵⁸ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/who-we-are/church-organs/> cited on 2/16/16. Diagram copied from the Methodist church in Kenya website.

⁵⁹ <http://kenyadoit2012.blogspot.no/2012/09/bio-intensive-farm-meru-kenya.html> cited on 2/16/16.

outskirts of Meru town⁶⁰. It was started by the Methodist church in Kenya to support organic farming training. Hence its main objective is to offer training to people who are practicing small scale and arid land farming. At the Centre people are trained how produce more nutritious food; generate income by use of land intensively.

Bio intensive skills help farmers to produce required nutritious food for the families and for sale in the nearby market, kiosks and as well at their farms. On the other hand the Centre trains farmers to keep livestock, fish, poultry and rabbits. These are for both domestic use and for sales. Moreover farmers are trained on feed production and also waste recycling.⁶¹

Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive Centre was established to address to the need of rising population, unemployment of the youth and help control land degradation in 1959s⁶². The MCK church leaders according to the Centre's history came up with the thought of empowering the young people with agricultural skills among others to attain self-reliance. The training Centre was built with funds solicited from Christian Aid in Britain and using NCKK to raise training Centre.⁶³

Ephraim said that the reasons that led to the establishment of the MCK bio intensive training Centre was,

This Centre is established originally to practice dairy farming, carry out other activities such as generating biogas for domestic use in the rural areas. This gas is to be used mainly for; cooking, lighting to reduce cost of using electricity, gas, paraffin and moreover to avoid use of firewood. On the other hand the farm aims at using slurry to manure kitchen gardens .To provide organic farming training at the Centre and in the field stations and offer Technical support to Methodist training Centers and develop modern accommodation facilities as a way of attracting more farmers mission teams and individuals for training at the Centre (Ephraim).

⁶⁰ <http://kenyadoit2012.blogspot.no/2012/09/bio-intensive-farm-meru-kenya.html> cited on 2/16/16.

⁶¹ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/viewed> on 2/13/16.

⁶² <http://www.kemu.ac.ke/index.php/about-kemu/74-information/88-history-of-kemu> 2/16/16.

⁶³ <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/14217A> cited 2/16/16.

The Methodist church in Kenya (MCK) is the umbrella to the Centre and all its activities. Later in the thesis I will write farmers responses in relation to the Centre activities. This will help me determine if the wish of the Centre is achieved and that of farmers. The next chapter is about the method I used to acquire data for my study.

Chapter 3

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

There are usually different types of research methods that are used by many researchers Babbie, (1998).Some of these are the qualitative and quantitative research approaches⁶⁴. This study is going to use qualitative research method. Qualitative research method is basically an explorative research which helps a researcher to understand and explain a phenomenon with minimal difficulties as possible (Merriam, 1998).

The method is used when researchers seeks to find out the reasons, opinions as well as motivations behind the area of research or in other words to attain detailed understanding of a situation⁶⁵.Hence Beazley et al(2013),says it provides insight into a problem. Qualitative research enables the researcher to uncover data in thoughts and opinions from the respondents or interviewees. According to Bryman (2012), the method uses unstructured or semi-structured questions, group discussions, individual interviews, participation and observations. The sample size is usually small and interviewees are selected as required (Bryman , 2012 p. 417).

Moreover in qualitative research method the sample has a prescribed boundary. It is well stated where and from what it is driven . This helps to sample with ease.On the other hand this becomes an advantage in analysis, interpretation and hence enables generalisation(Mason, 2010).

In this thesis I will employ a qualitative research approach with a target of acquiring detailed verbal and concrete explanations from respondents' personal perspectives and experiences concerning the Methodist church Kenya bio intensive training Centre in Meru-Kenya and determine To what extent the Centre has empowered farmers.

⁶⁴ <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/> cited on 3/2/16.

⁶⁵ <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/what-is-the-difference-between-qualitative-research-and-quantitative-research/> cited 3/2/16.

Sometimes I will be using the named Centre as I have done in the previous page to refer to the case study.

3.2 Case Study

In this research I incorporated a case study which I examined (Bryman2012). The case study too in my research is as defined by Silverman (2013). This case study is the MCK bio intensive training Centre in Meru-Kenya (Centre)⁶⁶. The Centre according to the employees is a project initiated by the Methodist church in Kenya to help farmers gain skills in organic farming. In addition it trains communities involved in small scale and arid land farming on how to grow more nutritious food for families, increase and create income through maximum use of land and applying bio intensive farming methods in their daily agricultural practices. In addition the Centre trains farmers in livestock rearing both for subsistence and for commercial use⁶⁷.

During my visits to the Centre for data collection, I noticed that the Centre has established demonstration plots and sack kitchen garden for vegetables. There are also established fruits and trees nurseries. There are livestock demonstrations sheds for example zero grazing stall, goat, rabbit, poultry, pig and biogas generation stand. The gas produced here is used for cooking activities in the Centre's kitchen. There is also fish rearing whereby the fish produced is consumed in the Centre. It is also sold to interested farmers and visitors. The Centre offers clean water and accommodation facilities for farmers and all touring visitors at affordable cost.

Farmers visit the Centre either to buy seedlings gets information or place orders for different products and services offered at the Centre. I am going to use this case study for this research. This will be use as the tools for data collection. There will be formal and informal semi structured interviews together with observations as well as participation to obtain data for the study (Bryman 2012 p. 493).

⁶⁶ <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/14217A> cited on 4/17/16.

⁶⁷ <http://methodistchurchkenya.org/projects/> cited on 4/5/16.

The Centre details are clearly explained earlier in this thesis. The next thing I will examine in this chapter is sampling.

3.3 Sampling

The sample in this study consists of seven respondents who were interviewed. The respondents included three MCK Bio intensive training Centre employees. Every employee's name was coded to start with an E and those of the farmers to start with an F. The employees were: Ephraim, Ezano and Eliza. In addition are four farmers. These were Futegi, Fatima, Fado and Feiza). These farmers have direct bio-intensive farming experience. The respondents were sampled randomly. By this I mean all farmers and respondents generally had equal chances of selection. In addition the sample was considered in relation to the research questions and its expected use. I paid special attention to time and the resources available (Robinson, 2014).

I am also going to mention something small about the observations I made as seen below.

3.4 Observations

I made several observations for this research since I was interested to obtain adequate data for my thesis. This enabled me to determine what MCK bio intensive training Centre was all about and what role it was playing as a means to assist farmers in Meru- Kenya. This helped me to accumulating information on the animals kept, how they are kept, what they are feed on, how feeds are generated, I observed demonstrations plots, sacks and their plant content. I also participated in watering, picking the weeds. I also attended sessions for guidance with farmers. I heard the questions they ask and the response they receive from the Centers' employees. This shall be presented mainly in my discussion and conclusion chapter. The concepts used in this thesis are all from the collected data (Bryman, 2015 p.275).

The other aspect is that of recording.

3.5 Recording

I recorded the findings in my research note book and took photos of different crops grown in the demonstration plots and the sack kitchen gardens, animals kept both by farmers and in the bio intensive training Centre. I also did voice-recording of the willing respondents. These helped in preservation of data collected for use when required at different stages of writing (Bryman, 2015 p.219).

The farmers' views were a priority to me for this study. Hence i recorded the farmers, views, opinions, practices and ideas .All these were from farmers who practice bio-intensive farming in their farms and also in their dwelling places such as kiosks too. I also recorded what the employees said in relation to the procedure of seedbed preparation, crops grown and animals kept, inputs applied and the yields achieved. To obtain this information I conducted interviews. I had an interview guide which consists of the research questions mentioned earlier in this thesis. The responses were recorded as data as recorded by Silverman, (2013 p.65).

Basically recording of findings was in form of notes, photos, video, observations and participation observations. The responses were made in three languages mentioned earlier, depending on the language the respondent opted to use. Hence responses were given in Kiswahili or Kimeru and English but I translated all to English to have the required data in a formal language. I recorded important issues concerning the research as data in my field note book.

3.6 Coding

The data was coded immediately representing the different themes addressed during the interviewing. The responses given were recoded as per their appropriate code. Features noted were things like what is the item, what topic, the answer, happenings and what people were doing at different time and where and why? Both the primary and secondary data will be analyzed. The primary data is the data i collected during interviews and the secondary data is what books, journals and reports contain in relation to the MCK bio

intensive training Centre activities, bio intensive farming and Diakonia and empowerment (Bryman, 2015 p.586).

The research lays emphasis on the primary data because of its advantages⁶⁸. This is enhanced by coding the data according to the respondents' views. Then I will listen and read the recorded data. This data will be interpreted according to the research questions. The existing literature about the theory and topic in question will also be considered. These are essential parts in research (Bazeley, 2013)

The seven interviewees as said earlier were the employees of the bio intensive training Centre and the farmers with direct bio intensive experiences. The employees' names starts with an E and all the farmers' names start with F. This means farmers names are: Fatugi, Fatima, Feiza and Fado and the Centre employees names are Ephraim, Ezano and Eliza.

3.7 Citation

Citations for this thesis are translated and edited version of what the respondents said. Their statements are based on the notes I made during the interviews and conversations. Hence I have not stated word for word of their responses though the main information as memories and as I noted are written in this thesis. My main concern is not to fully draft what they said but what responses they gave in relation to the questionnaire. The interview questions were followed as they were listed hence they lead to each other and forms the structure of chapter five of this thesis farmers responses to MCK bio intensive training Centre and her activities.

3.8 Ethical consideration

According to Bryman, (2012, P. 135), ethics is a paramount issue to consider in research. Every discipline has its rules and regulations. These enable the concerned to achieve the intended purpose. On the other hand the concerned coordinate their activities and ensure

⁶⁸ <http://www.iwh.on.ca/wrmb/primary-data-and-secondary-data-cited-on-3/2/16>.

public trust⁶⁹. During research the researcher does not have to harm participants nor invade their privacy or deceive them. The integrity of the participants should be observed. To observe all these in this research, I first started by doing self- introduction to the security who was at the doorway to the Centre. I explained who I was and what I intended to do. I signed the visitor's book stating well my personal details.

Further I explained officially to the administration of the MCK bio intensive training Centre that the study was for scholarly purposes. I asked for all necessary assistant and permission to carry out research at the Centre. Moreover, I asked the administration of the Centre to assist me in organizing and booking respondents. These were agreed on verbally in the center's office. I booked a convenient day to visit the farm both for the Centre employees, the administration and the farmers. The most encouraging thing is respondents were not booked for interviews. The farmers who had own appointments with the Centre employees became my respondents. These farmers were explained the reasons I visited the Centre and the willing and interested were interviewed.

I visited the farm severally after Christmas holiday that is on the 28th, 29th and 30th December 2015. This gave me an opportunity to see tourists and visitors of different kinds who spent their holiday at the Centre. The administration of the Centre went for New Year holidays. I went back to continue with my research on January 4th, 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th 2016. I started preparing to travel back after the research work was over.

The farmers' interviewed were those who came to the Centre to order or buy seedlings and to receive instruction from the Centre trainers. The other is one who runs a vegetable booth in the center's neighborhood. This is why I can say the method of sampling is random and it became appropriate for this research. I continually assured both the Employees and the Farmers that the information given to me was to be treated with all due respect and confidentiality and at most the data was all for academic use only. Their names are preserved by maintaining anonymity (Bryman ,2012 p.135).

⁶⁹ <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/> cited on 5/5/16.

The sample as mentioned earlier consists of seven respondents. These respondents were three employees and four farmers with direct bio-intensive farming experience. The employees will be referred to as Ephraim, Ezano and Eliza where the farmers will be Fatugi, Fatima, Feiza and Fado. The respondents are anonymously named to protect them from any form of harm as stated by Bryman (2012p135).

According to Robinson, harm which can lead to loss of self-esteem or stress of any kind. Hence as much as possible I have tried to hide their respondents' identity. I also ensured the sampling was random (Robinson, 2014).

The next chapter of this thesis is the theoretical chapter which I am going to examine below.

Chapter 4

4.1 Theoretical structure

Diakonia according to Nordstokke, K. (2009 p.8), is a theological concept which seeks to point to the core identity and mission of the Church which is also God's mission. It is the umbrella that covers all churches' activities⁷⁰. On the other hand it is a call to action, as a way of acting upon the challenges of human suffering, injustice and in addition cares for creation. Diakonia is a vital part of the church mission work as said above and a means of action to attend to the sources of human suffering and injustice. Hence as far as the church is concerned Diakonia is a way which helps the church carry out her mission in a holistic manner. That is in cooperating mission which is proclamation with service which is diaconal work and advocacy (Nordstokke, 2009p .40 -47).

It is an affirmation that Diakonia work should be holistic. It should address the physical, mental, social and spiritual nature of human beings and discouraging anything that sectionalize parts of human life. This means it is no longer a humble service it is conclusive. Both the givers and the receivers of diaconal works all are involved as partners. This is probably why I was told as carried research that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), sponsored fish rearing project with farmers in Meru and interested farmers were asked to play some specified part. That is the farmers had to provide timber for construction and the donor was to provide the other requirements such as fish pond liners, fingerling and other requirements. This too shall be examined in details in the upcoming discussion chapters.

Diakonia is an expression which according to Dietrich, (2015), is used mostly to refer to church's social work and involvements locally, in the society and globally. The term is described as service rendered to each other in mutuality, which incorporates empowerment and advocacy. It is all about humble service for the needy. It concerns acts of mercy and charity works by Christians (Dietrich, 2015 p.13).

⁷⁰ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/theologian-explores-emerging-model-of-empowerment-and-diakonia> cited on 3/12/16.

Moreover, in her reflection on the core aspects of diaconal approach Dietrich categorizes Diakonia as a practice which includes works of mercy and mutual services. In the midst of diaconal works is accountability and cooperation which she refers to as reciprocity. At this point she asserts that today's understanding of Diakonia can put into consideration many theories based on human interaction designed by individual involvement to express works of mercy for sake of others and propelled by basic acts of cooperation and joint empowerment, communal sharing and respect for each other's autonomy (Dietrich, 2015 p.13).

This means all people should be accorded the required dignity. They are made in the image and likeness of God. All are unique and are valuable. Hence those who receive help and care should be viewed as not just receivers but also as people responsible for their own lives. Therefore when service is offered it should be put into consideration that the receivers have a right of autonomy (Dietrich, 2015 p.14).

This is likely the reason why Eliza at MCK bio intensive training Centre responded during the interview saying.

We go out to the churches and to other social meeting to inquire from farmers what they want. We collect their ideas; hear their interest, opinions because we have to offer what they want. When we come to the Centre we implement. See that type of pumpkin and sweet potatoes some farmers have asked us to grow. Hence our demonstration farms are a product of farmer's views (Eliza).

Eliza's explanation will be examined further in the next chapter on farmer's responses, in the discussion and conclusion. In this thesis I will lay vested interest in Diakonia as examined in the definition above and then the aspect of empowerment since the theoretical framework rotates around empowering Diakonia.

4.2 Diakonia as empowerment.

According to *Diakonia in context* document by Nordstokke (2009), Diakonia can be expressed as transformation, reconciliation as well as empowerment. The latter as stated earlier is the theoretical base of this thesis. I am going to slightly touch on the other two aspects that are reconciliation and transformation. This is because as much as they are different from each other they are intertwined in their process of operation. They interact directly or indirectly when put in action. Significantly they clarify the tendency of diaconal activities. Diaconal activities source is in God's grace and care for creation as well as the saving work which is attained in Jesus Christ (Nordstokke, 2009p.45).

These concepts are in relation to important aspects of human life for example healing, guiding and sustaining. On the other hand it is also hoped that they are a means of strengthening those carrying out Diakonia and enhancing commitment to one another. This results in helping to network in a more appropriate manner as partners in God's great mission. Moreover they are a way of addressing challenges that lead to human oppression at the right time. According to Nordstokke (2009), this calls for inclusion of the excluded by both the society and the church. Their voices are given special consideration as they tell the causes of their challenges. Hence listening to their stories which tell why they are marginalized and excluded is important. Their views in relation to why things are the way they are, and how they can be helped to see hope and experience relief are considered (Nordstokke, 2009).

This is something that was touched on by Fatugi during the interviewing sessions. She talked about the benefits of bio intensive technologies and said,

I am a single mother. I live in a rented flat in meru town. I used to buy food stuff for my children until when I discovered bio intensive technologies in 1992. My kitchen garden is a complete meal farm. In one sack I grow maize, beans, vegetables and spices. All I buy is salt and

maize flour if I have to make *Ugali*⁷¹. I have kept six eggs laying chicken. I collect eggs to be eaten by my children and sell. One egg is twelve to fifteen Kenyan shillings (Fatugi).

This will be discussed further later in the farmers responses chapter as well as when I will be doing discussion in the coming chapters.

Nordstokke, (2009), asserts that in the process of attaining awareness, analyzing and classifying different backgrounds, it is important to spare room for the views and opinions of women as well as the youth who in most cases are rendered voiceless. According to Dietrich, (2015 p 14), Diakonia is inseparable with autonomy. This is because autonomy is a factor to consider when Diakonia is being expressed both in deeds and in words. The recipient of diaconal services should be considered. Not to be seen as an object. One should be given room to make informed decisions. This is all based on human dignity Dietrich, (2015 p. 15).

The stated views above are important observations in this thesis. Diakonia has a purpose; that is to respond to people needs as individuals or when they are in groups. Diaconal work mainly increases and is strengthened as the needs of the people increase. Usually this is a result of economic challenges in different parts of the world.⁷²

This means Diakonia is a matter of serving; Service to God and to fellow human beings as the needs increase and accountably⁷³.

Nordstokke, (2009), says that this service involves Spreading the Gospel both in deeds and in words everything done as Christian's way of attending to people needs. This implies that Diakonia is an action and cannot be limited to words and compassion. It

⁷¹ Ugali is a name for maize flour meal where water is put to boil and maize flour is added to make a carbohydrate rich meal. This commonly eaten with vegetable or any meat or fish soup depending people's tastes and preferences.

⁷² <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/theologian-explores-emerging-model-of-empowerment-and-diakonia> cited on 3/12/16.

⁷³ <https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/transformation-the-church-in-response-to-human-need> cited on 3/12/16.

involves deed as well as words, all offered responsibly. This is expressing Diakonia by use of deed and words of which one can be accountable for before people and before God. On the other hand it shows that Diakonia is Christian's responsibility. Finally, diaconal work usually target people's needs. All through the church history, the Church and Diakonia has meant helping the sick, the poor and excluded people. These are people who are marginalized those who live in situations of poverty, powerlessness, and oppression.⁷⁴ Hence Nordstokke explained that Diakonia has always been carried out hand in hand with, support and protection of the vulnerable people as said earlier (Nordstokke, 2009 p 40-41).

Diaconal main responsibility is to address individual needs .This is because it focuses on the important Christians' roles which defend the dignity of all human being as individuals with own abilities .Hence can assume responsibility for own life as a whole. Moreover each person is an individual with different experiences of either suffering or hope, and also has capacities that are to be recognized and empowered in the process of transformation (Nordstokke, 2009 p 40-41).

Despite the above observation In relation to Diakonia and its address to individuals as unique persons some human predicaments are socially oriented. They affect persons harshly though their root cause might be originating from a system not a person's choice. For example the aspect of landlessness which is being addressed in this study. People are said to be landlessness whereas it is not their choice to be. They only find themselves in a system that renders them landlessness.

A girl born in the Meru community for example where this study was conducted cannot be given father's land. This is because according to Fatugi, someone may live amidst brothers who obtained land from their father yet a girl child has no share. This is simply because she is a girl. This was noted also when another Fatugi shared her opinion about bio intensive training Centre earlier in this thesis.

⁷⁴ <https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/transformation-the-church-in-response-to-human-need-cited-on-3/12/16>.

The above described situation is likely what Nordstokke probably refers to as “something produced by unjust historical processes of oppression⁷⁵”. Some of these injustices have existed for long in the name of culture, believe, politics and even religion. This statement will be discussed more in the discussion chapter. Hence Diakonia has to visit the issues putting into consideration all possible cause behind the trend political, religious or social (Nordstokke, 2009 p 40-41).

The purpose of Diakonia is mainly responding to individual and groups in need. The act of responding may involve long term or short term action plans. Hence Diakonia leads to transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. However, Diakonia as transformation as well as reconciliation are not going to be given emphasis in this thesis. The thesis shall be examined in the basis of Diakonia as empowerment. Hence I will concentrate on empowering Diakonia. I am to going to talk on empowerment.

4.3 Empowerment

Empowerment as far as theology is concerned refers to the fact that all human beings are like God. They have capacities and abilities despite their prevalent social situations. God is the author of empowerment. He empowered the disciple and leader in the bible times hence they were changed. This make Christians believe in divine empowerment to face all life situations. Hence Christian believes that God mission of empowerment continues even today. This means God’s empowerment did not end with the apostles and others who were leading, in the bible days but also it is still working especially for those who are oppressed by different life situations and the voiceless (Nordstokke, 2009 p.45).

Empowerment according to Nordstokke dignifies people. Those without a voice are graced and empowered. Diaconal practices boost the dignity of people and enable them to obtain their ability to be responsible for their life situations not only as individuals but also for others including their neighbors and society (Nordstokke, 2009 p.45).

⁷⁵ Nordstokke, K. (2009 p 40-41).

Empowerment calls for bridge making. It plays the role of a go between. This is manifested in form of projects; something which is very common with the church that umbrellas the MCK bio intensive training Centre. These are some of the things I am going to look through during discussion.

Regarding empowerment Ham, (2015 p.107), exclaims that empowerment is a process which encourages connection with others through God's love, God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's responsibility is to empower. Jesus empowered his disciples and those who believed in him. He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cure all infirmities. When the disciples received power they were filled with miracle working ability. They set free those who were incapacitated with diseases the lame, the blind and demon possessed. Empowerment proclaims power services as Jesus did in order to bring restorative change in human life which is God's number one mission to man-kind (Ham, 2015 p.110).

This shows empowerment is the mainstream of Diakonia. It targets caring for human dignity and help people discover their abilities and gifts to be able to work towards change. Diakonia hence empowers the recipients and Diakonia can be empowered. Therefore there is no empowerment without Diakonia (Ham, 2015 p.111).

Hence, Ham, (2015 p.111), comes up with the empowering Diakonia model which fragments into five dimensions. These dimensions are: visional, normative, need-oriented, contextual and transformative. I will briefly define these dimensions according to Ham, (2015 p.112), and then these dimensions shall be examined in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

4.3.1 Visional Dimension

The visional dimension of empowering Diakonia refers to the ability to foresee the future. It involves ability to prophesy with imagination and wisdom. The vision in this case is the motivation. Vision is important in human life. Hence for Christians it is mandatory to

have a vision. Ham, (2015 p.112), refers to the words recorded in proverbs 29:18⁷⁶, in relation to visional dimension of empowering Diakonia. He says that Diakonia visions are inspired and energized by God in his triune manifestation. The vision hence seeks empowerment and on the other hand it is empowering Diakonia works. This is something I linked with a song that was sung by Fado a respondent to support her reasons for embracing bio intensive farming methods. Instead of explaining she sang a verse of hymn number 55 in the MCK hymn book. Both versions are stated below. That is the Kimeru⁷⁷ and the English version as follows,

Nini Jesu agwiita
Kenda, andiitana. Nturage mwoyo jumwega
Guku, Na iguru (Fado).
Tis Jesus call me on
To perfect faith and love,
To perfect hope and peace and trust
For earth and heaven above⁷⁸.

This will further be examined in farmers' responses chapter and then shall be examined in the upcoming discussion and conclusion chapters.

4.3.2 Normative Dimension

The normative dimension of the empowering Diakonia model concerns norms which are based mainly of behavior. It is point of reference which answers questions in relation to a particular group of people. It is expressed in relation to the core values of that people. Moreover it specifies what values are important in life of the people involved in receiving diaconal service. For this case it is based on the bible, the word of God. Hence, when it comes to Diakonia work, it is

⁷⁶ Proverbs 29:18: where there is no vision people perish.

⁷⁷ Kimeru- mother tongue of the Meru people of Kenya.

⁷⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fp5A2_DLjI Cited on 3/14/16.

sorely normative. Which is important for faith based organization such as the church (Ham, 2015 p.113).

4.3.3 Need oriented Dimension

This need oriented dimension is need focused. Therefore it seeks to find out what is required materially and spiritually. It is concerned about what is needed to be acted on to help human beings. In this dimensions emphasis is laid on determining the cause and the effect of the stated need. The scope leads to aid providers either the church or other charity organs to comfort the deprived. On the other hand to holistically and prophetically confront the life chain of the predicament. Jesus was moved by the challenges people faced. Hence when people see the needs of others, their cause are determined to stop the continuity. Hence, a diaconal action should be taken to help the situation (Ham, 2015, p.113).

I am going to revisit this dimension in details when relating theory to the research in the discussion chapter.

4.3.4 Contextual Dimension

The contextual dimension of empowering Diakonia considers a doctrine and a practice that is environmentally controlled, guided and yet being informed by the vision behind. Moreover it is guided by the social, political, economic and ecological context in which the church operates. Hence Diakonia work is all community and environmental based. Service and any form of empowerment all targets the background reality and the peoples need. The situation at hand is the motivation behind every diaconal activity ensuring regular evaluation to cover a wide scope of the need as possible. Hence, the use of this dimension ends up involving as many disciplines as possible. This dimension opens up room for empowering acts that rejuvenates the lives of the people in need (Ham, 2015 p.113).

I shall look at this dimension further as I discuss the reasons behind MCK bio intensive training Centre's departmental setting later in the thesis as was explained by Ephraim.

4.3.5 Transformative Dimension

The transformative dimension of empowering Diakonia focuses on embracing diaconal vision. Whereby diaconal work targets empower the aid givers to observe the needs of the set people and those of the entire creation from the grass roots to the global level. This is accomplished by having concrete prophetic move towards restoration. Where there is injustice efforts are necessary always with a mind-set of causing a difference. Hence every step taken while expressing this dimension of empowering Diakonia is concerned with change as it is change based. It is not just offering charity works like, feeding people but enabling, empowering within diaconal givers and others to cause transformation (Ham, 2015 p. 114).

Fatima who was buying different types of seedling from MCK bio intensive training Centre had this to say in relation to the bio intensive technologies. He said,

At the farm we are trained on technologies that are environmental friendly, with a target of reducing poverty levels. This is done by providing facilities where farmers and every interested group share experience and gain knowledge. This leads to holistic human development based on the biblical approach; for God created man and gave him power to be a steward (Fatima).

He quoted the bible verse and then said,

So that he care for all God's creation⁷⁹. Human needs are attended to with an environmental friendly consciousness. Since environment is the man's home. The air, water trees we need all these (Fatima).

I will come back to these views later in the thesis.

⁷⁹ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" Genesis 2:26

Chapter 5

5.1 Farmers' Responses to the Centre's activities

5.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to write farmers' responses to MCK bio intensive training Centre. These responses are the answers provide to the research question of this thesis. This implies that here the views of the respondents who are named as Ephraim, Ezano and Eliza for employees and Fatugi, Fatima, Feiza and Fado for farmers as stated earlier and their practices are recorded. The research questions for this study were responded to in this order: To what extent has the Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru? Have the farmers adopted the methods used to empower them? How have the farmers adopted the methods of farming? What are the farmers' opinion, and views towards the activities they are involved in? These questions forms the sub-topics addressed in this chapter as said by Silverman, (2013).

The main sub –topics in the chapter are: Farmers' responses to the Centre activities, Empowerment of farmers in Meru- Kenya; Farmers adoption of bio intensive farming methods and farmers perspectives on the Centre.

In this research I incorporate a case study which I explained in the methodology part earlier. The case study is the MCK bio intensive training Centre in Meru-Kenya (Centre)⁸⁰. Observations made and the data obtained through discussions with interviewees all are found in this chapter.

The first aspect to examine here is Empowerment of farmers in Meru.

5.2 Empowerment of Farmers in Meru-Kenya

This section addresses what the Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre is doing with and for farmers in Meru. A respondent by name Fatugi gave her views in form of a narrative and said:

I have known MCK since 1992. This is when I was schooling in high school. The church has always involved her members in encouraging farmers to care for the environment.

⁸⁰ <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/14217A> cited on 4/17/16.

They motivate them on tree planting days, agriculture days and they call health Sunday. We have planted trees along the main road. We also have learnt how to plant vegetables in small plots as small as flower beds. In addition we plant different vegetables in sacks and polythene bags. We rear chicken in towns. Just outside our vegetable and fruit booths. See that kiosk opposite the Centre gate. The owner is a member of our church. Those are chicken in those small nest boxes. You can see them on your way out. He feeds the chicken with waste left-overs such as carrot peels green leafy vegetables, maize and the home made feed (Fatugi).

She continued saying:

The Centre's staff come to church and educate on bio intensive farming methods during days such as labour day, healthy Sunday and agriculture days . On these days information on good animal feed, healthy food for families and human body and preservation of environment are explained in details. Other information is given on request. Today I have come to get information on organic chicken I ordered (Fatugi).

Another Feiza said the MCK Centre has enabled him not only to grow but also to keep poultry and run his own a grocery booth. This is because he said,

Since I started practicing what I was trained at a workshop at bio intensive Centre opposite her (...) Well picking was challenging and I almost gave up. The first sack garden I established grew so poorly. I felt it is loss. The workers at the Centre encouraged me by helping me establish the sack garden the right way. With their help I started all over again with two sack gardens. When the vegetables started to flourish I established another and another. I saw the first three were doing so well. I build a stand to sell vegetables. A spinach leaf I sell one Kenyan shilling. Tomatoes are three for five Kenyan shillings. Customers like my vegetables since they are organic. Today I have reared chicken in nest boxes as you can see. I have tens sack gardens. I intend to add more to grow on large scale after renting a bigger piece of land I am targeting. I feed my chicken with locally available feed such as Maize, soya beans, sunflower and vegetable remains. On the sides of the sacks, I grow some maize and sun flower plants together. When the sun flower flowers (...) (Feiza).

These responses stated above will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.2.1 MCK bio intensive training Centre and core Christian values

Ephraim right at the Centre informed me that the Centre is a Methodist church in Kenya project. She said that the Centre targets to help farmers uphold core Christian values. Amongst these values are integrity and stewardship. While looking at me she added “because we are stewards of God’s creation”. She further went on to defined integrity as follows:

Integrity is a value we emphasis among ourselves and to the farmers. This is because it is all about learning how to do the right thing in the right way all the time. We train farmers how to produce more food, generate income by using the technologies demonstrated in this Centre. These methods help them achieve several benefits. For example obtaining heathy nutritious food for their families and for the community, increase income, care for our neighbor, reduce poverty among farmers, improve Kenyan economy through agriculture and care for the environment by applying organic farming methods (Ephraim).

Fado also had this to say, “We are stewards of God’s creation, we care as part of maendeleo⁸¹”.

5.2.2 The establishing of bio intensive training Centre

Methodist church in Kenya has established MCK bio intensive training Centre. The Centre helps farmers and interested community members to obtain training and information on various issues concerning Organic agriculture and urban farming. I will start by writing about what is said about organic agriculture by both the employees and farmers.

5.2.2.1 Organic Agriculture

According to the employees at the Centre, farmers are trained to practice organic agriculture. According to him organic agriculture helps them to obtain increased yields

⁸¹ Development

without compromising the quality of the soil, air and water. The practices secure all other resources that crops and animals' production rely on to thrive. Farmers in Meru are trained at the Centre to be able to carry out farming practices with natural processes in mind not ignoring them or straining them. Farmers use the knowledge and technology attained at the Centre to avoid contaminating the natural systems and processes, by use of chemical substances produced in industries.

Fado said through training at the Centre farmers have learnt the need to care for the environment. She said, "Farmers obtain training to produce without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. This is a twofold benefit to them. It helps them protect their environment by minimizing use of chemical products, get nutritious healthy food and save our money which we do not have!" She added while laughing. "We consciously protect and ensure future productivity for us and our children. Remember the song" she said. She added, "We care for and protect *Mazingira yetu*"⁸².

When she finished saying this, the other Fatima who was silent all along said in support of the other Fado, "All we do is *urimi buti na dawa*". By this he meant they practice farming without using any chemical substances. I inquired more on the alternative for *dawa*⁸³. He responded and said, "I am not going to tell you much I am in hurry." He started picking the seedlings which he had bought from the Centre to his car. To encourage him to tell me more I offered to help him carry the seedlings to his car. Ezano and I helped him carry the seedlings. As we walked to the car he turned to me and said calling my name, "I add composted plant material or animal manure in liquid form or solid. Sometimes I use ashes and a little fertilizer too". Pointing at Ezano he said, "She can tell you more". Then Ezano started by saying,

Farmers train on using composted plant material or animal manure to enrich the soil for their vegetables and other crops in their kitchen gardens, farms, trees of all kinds and fodder crops such as Napier grass for their animals. The fluid from the cow shed, for

⁸² Mazingira yetu means our environment.

⁸³ Dawa is a Kiswahili and kimeru term that refers to anything chemically produced.

example “*Maumago*⁸⁴ *na Ruuji*⁸⁵” draining from the cow shed .we advises them to collect it and use it as liquid fertilizer for the crops. This is applied early in the morning or in the evening since it is so concentrated and can burn the crops (Ezano).

She continued, “The other thing we encourage farmers to use is natural repellants such as spicy vegetables for example dania.” When she stated the term dania she clarified, “It is called coriander in English”. Ezano continued emphasizing,

The smell of coriander repels some pest that attack crops. Another repellant we advise farmers to plant in between rows is onion. This is a vegetable and a pesticide. This means they function as vegetables, spices and pesticides. This is because of their smell. Their smells repel different pests. Other repellants are rosemary plants and marigolds (*Mabangi*)⁸⁶. Come and see (she said while directing me to the demonstration plots). Look this is coriander is grown next to cabbages, after cabbages is spinach then onions at the edges is the marigold flowers (Ezano).

I took a photo of coriander planted together with other vegetables in the plot. “Some pests attack cabbage and not spinach. So sometimes the spinach is a protection to cabbage when grown close together”. This arrangement is illustrated in fig 2 and 3 below.

⁸⁴ *Maumago* means urine

⁸⁵ *Ruuji* means water

⁸⁶ *Mabangi* a kimeru name which means marigold.



Figure 2: A demonstration of vegetable of multiple uses grown in a sack. This Photo is from my data collection album.



Figure3: Demonstration plot, vegetables of multiple purpose grown in a plot. A photo from my data collection album

Ezano continued explaining what they do at the Centre as follows,

We train farmers to do the following as well as a way of protecting and caring for the environment. . . .you know some farmers have big tracts of land. For such we encourage crop rotations, use of cover crops, enriching the soil and use of natural pest predators (Ezano).

Ezano explained what she meant by crop rotation, cover cropping, soil enrichment and natural pest predictors as follows;

Crop rotation is planting different crops in a cycle in the same piece of land. It is one of the best ways used to protect the soil from losing nutrients, controlling pests and disease. Most pests attack specific crops. She continued, so when farmers practice crop rotation the cycle of a particular pest is broken. Crop rotation therefore becomes a sure way of controlling pests, protecting the soil and hence assuring steady crop supply (Ezano).

Maize is highly attacked by maize stalk borers so much. The borers are a common pest around. Farmers grow maize with beans. Approximately three to five-year rotations can destroy maize stalk borers from the farm and other maize pests too. Rotation generally helps reduce pest pressure on almost all the crops in the rotation by breaking the pest generative cycles. In rotations, farmers can also plant crops, like soybeans and mainly legumes, which enrich the plants with nutrients after decomposition hence reducing the desire for using “dawa”.Legumes contains nutrients in their roots (Ezano).

Concerning cover crops, soil enrichment and natural pest predators she said,

Cover crops are crops such as pumpkins, sweet potato, spreading beans, water melons and those crops that spread on the ground. All of them help farmers to preventing soil erosion discontinue weeds growth, and enhancing soil fertility. The practice helps reduce the need for using herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers (Ezano).

Ezano went on “When we talk about soil enrichment we refer to *kuongeza rotuba* (unoru)⁸⁷.” Looking towards the seed beds she said,

Good soils are one of the contributors to good yields and robust crops which are resistant to pests and diseases. Destroyed soils always require heavy enrichment to produce good quality yields. Hence improving Soil quality is what I am referring as soil enrichment. This is maintained by not taking away crop residue after harvesting. Leave them there to decompose and go back to the soil as manure. Moreover, weeding under cover crops and increasingly using composted plant remains or adding all kinds of animal manure for example droppings from poultry, rabbits, goats and sheep and manure from cows and other farm animals (Ezano).

5.2.2.2 Urban Farming.

Urban farming in this research is a statement that was used by one employee and a farmer. These are Eliza and Fatugi respectively. The two defines urban farming as keeping animals and growing food crops and fodders around their homes in towns and cities. Fatugi said,

I lived in Meru town in a rented flat. I used to buy food for my children until when I discovered bio intensive animal and crop production methods through this MCK church project (Fatugi).

She narrated the story about herself and urban encounters.

I moved from my father’s home to live in town going to search for a job. This is because I was landless. I rented a small room and I started selling vegetables. One Sunday visitor came to our church with what I called good news of bio intensive farming. This is a cheap method of farming, without dawa. The method looked simple and motivating. Growing vegetables in old tins, polythene bags, sacks, using a little water for the crops and no use of industrially made fertilizers (Fatugi).

⁸⁷ Kuongeza rotuba (unoru) means adding nutrients to the soil.

This was so interesting. She continued:

After the information my two friends and I went home discussing. We agreed the following day we go to the forest to collect soil. We started polythene bags gardens. This is because they required little water. I established three polythene gardens. It was great fun. Today I grow sacks and sacks of gardens. I have reared chicken. Hence here I have food; I have income from both vegetables and eggs. Every farmer who adapted these techniques produces enough food, nutritious food and in addition we have income through selling vegetables, eggs, milk and fish (Fatugi).

Fatugi added,

Mukami is rearing fish because she has her own compound. Kangara my neighbor has kept many chickens and a dairy cow because she has a bigger compound than mine. (*She tells about them more*). He sells many litres of milk. My kitchen garden is a complete meal farm. In one sack I grow maize, beans, vegetables and spices mixed together kiutalamu⁸⁸. All I buy is salt, cooking oil and sometimes maize flour if I have to make *Ugali*⁸⁹. I have kept eggs laying chicken. I collect eggs which consumed at home by my children and for selling. I take my eggs to one kiosk. One egg is twelve to fifteen Kenyan shillings (Fatugi).

Urban farming according to Eliza has become a means of ensuring food security, a provision of necessary nutrition, a means to cheap production due to reduced transport cost to the market, cheap labour and managed time. This has helped in providing affordable food to the less fortunate in town. The families economic status have raised due to availability of home produced cheap, healthy food stuff such as milk, eggs, vegetables and cereals. Ephraim explained the composition of town inhabitants as street

⁸⁸ Kiutalamu means in a trained manner

⁸⁹ Ugali is a name for maize flour meal where water is put to boil and maize flour is added to make a carbohydrate rich meal. This is commonly eaten with vegetable or any meat or fish soup depending people's tastes and preferences.

families, orphans, landless, women and immigrants. She exclaimed, “These people have benefitted from urban farming!” To clarify urban farming she said:

Urban farming has resulted in having clean green town.

The treated sewage water is used to irrigate vegetables and the waste organic compost in towns is the source of manure for the vegetables, the peels and vegetable remains are feed for rabbits, cow, goats and poultry. The waste polythene bags are soil holders. This reduces pollution in a big way. A lot has been done. This is evidenced with a video named Vertical Bag Farming in you tube. Go to the website and watch a demonstration farm I am running at Thika (Eliza)⁹⁰.

The next issue that concerned this thesis is the aspect of adoption of bio intensive training Centre technologies.

5.3 Farmers and adoption of bio intensive farming methods

This is another issue that motivated me to carry out this research. I wanted to know how farmers have adopted bio intensive methods offered at MCK bio intensive training Centre. When I posed the question to the workers, they almost gave similar answers though stated differently. Eliza at the Centre reported that she owns a bio intensive demonstration farm in one of the major towns in Kenya as stated previously. She told me that farmers have adopted the bio intensive farming methods. She proved this by showing me the record of farmers who bought gardening sacks from the Centre and all who had established sacked kitchen gardens. She said while holding the record book,

We make follow up to see what is happening at the farmers’ gardens. So we have field days occasionally which we use for monitoring and evaluation. We have found out that women farmers start their gardens immediately after training. On the contrary men may take longer or does not start all together. However on general terms.....i can just say all have adopted (Eliza).

She went on to explain what she thought would be the cause of variation during implementing stage saying,

⁹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4A9VgMB1HXg> cited on 3/27/16.

According to the traditions of this society women are mothers and family caretakers. So for a woman establishing a sack gardens means saving time to go to the garden far away or to the market to buy vegetables, saving time to weed since weed is hand-picked and on the other hand the method is an easy source of income for them. They establish sack gardens which provide food for home use and for sale. The money they get is used to care for other financial needs in the family (Eliza).

The following day I met Ephraim who gave me more information about adoption of skills offered at MCK bio intensive training Centre. She said that farmers adopt the methods but she exclaimed! “There are notable disparities depending on the type of project to be established or skill to be offered. Some skill attracts men’s interest as compared to women.” She mentioned one project she referred to as Low Cost greenhouse tunnel and said

Let us see this project (*showing me the record*) more men responded and implemented the project than women. Only three out of thirteen farmers were women practicing it at their farms. The financial ability among some men and women was the main cause of this difference. Men sometimes have more money than women and the cost of the raw material was high despite the subsidy offered for this particular project (Ephraim).

She continued,

Women are willing but money aspect and other things such as children, and other domestic chores discourage them from being involved in many developmental programs despite their interest and motivation. However, most women have kitchen gardens, poultry hatches, pigs, goats and zero grazing units depending on the piece of land available. Men are showing lots of interest on raised fish pond inside the green house (Ephraim).

The other part of this chapter concerns determining farmers’ views in regard to bio intensive farming technologies offered at the Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre. The employees’ and farmers’ views are here below.

5.4 Farmers' perspective on the Centre

Different respondents had different views in relation to bio intensive farming technologies offered at MCK bio intensive training Centre. According to Fatugi, the MCK bio intensive training Centre offers farmers training on how to make compost manure, Sack garden, Kitchen garden, generation of bio gas, fish rearing and use of bio slurry and all forms of organic manure in the farm. Hence she said explaining how bio intensive training Centre employees reach the farmers and the rest of the community;

Occasionally we are visited by the Centre's workers. We call these extension days. During this time we invite and tell our neighbors about the day. On a day like this most of the bio intensive methods of farming are explained and demonstrated where possible. Mainly we establish a sack kitchen garden since it is potable requires little water... and can be established wherever the farmer lives including at rented homes. The trainers inform us on available opportunities and their benefits. On a day like this we say what we need and why. We also report our challenges and encourage what is good for us more. This we call sharing our experiences and learning from one another. We receive advice and instruction from the trainers as well. I appreciate the bio intensive farming methods. I always try my best to improve my kitchen garden and intensify use of compost manure, animal manure and ashes. I have encouraged my neighbors to try the same (Fatugi).

Fatima had added information concerning the Centre activities. He explained to me how the Centre is a source of good quality seedlings. This is because according to him farmers prepare seedbed according to the instruction obtained during training. Then they place orders for seedlings of their own choice out of the many varieties. He said, "Every time (we), I make informed choices". Fatima as he tried to talk about his experiences he reported that he places orders through a phone call, emails or physical visit to the Centre. He said that the latter is appropriate because it gives him and the rest of the farmers an opportunity to see and get the latest news from the Centre and other farmers. Concerning his orders he explained as follows, "This is the third order. I have vegetables two weeks old, four weeks old in that manner, I have to plant more. See all this is mine". (*Pointing at the seedlings he had bought*). To tell why he had to plant so much he said,

This guarantees that I have enough vegetables all year round. When they are so much I sell to my neighbors. I will continue planting at the same interval. The Centre has helped us obtain nutritious food all year long (Fatima).

On another occasion Fado appreciated the Centre saying, “The Centre has helped farmers through continued advice and instruction on how to plant, weed, and spray without damaging the environment.” Fado continued to define the environment “it is all our surrounding and everything around us.” This according to her includes the soil, air, water, plants and animals and human beings. The other farmer who was listening to us talk but was not part of the interview added as he demonstrated using his hands “Environment is Mazingira, everything around us”. Turning to Fado, she reported that the Centre and the church train them on stewardship. So she said, “We are stewards to ourselves, our neighbor and to the environment. She explained,

Stewards of ourselves, by producing good food for our families and for our neighbors, we obtain income from our produce, we care for our surrounding, by not killing important insects and plants as we spray. No damaging our water or air so to human beings we guarantee fresh air. Turi akiiki (we are stewards) (Fado).

The next section of this thesis discusses the employees and farmers’ views as well as their practices. I will discuss these views and practices in relation to the theory applied to this thesis: Diakonia and empowerment. I will examine these in the relation to empowering Diakonia model by Ham, (2015).

Chapter 6

In this chapter, I will discuss Farmers and employees' responses, opinions, explanations and practices towards MCK bio intensive train Centre and the activities used to empower farmers. These responses were all aiming at answering the research question for this thesis that is: To what extent has the Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru Kenya. These response forms the basis of this chapter in that: The five dimensions of the empowering Diakonia according to Ham (, 2015) are observed in relation to these activities at the MCK bio intensive training Centre and real farmers agricultural practices. The dimensions referred to are: the visional, normative, need-oriented, contextual and the transformative (Ham, 2015 p.112).

These dimensions practicability in relation to the activities carried at the MCK bio intensive training Centre and the farmers' views and practices are discussed. Farmers in this study as stated in the methodology chapter are named as Fatugi and employees as Ephraim. The content in chapter four of this thesis is the theory and the responses in chapter five are the reality. Hence these two chapters content forms the bases of this chapter. The sub headings in this chapter are as follows: The visional dimension and reality, normative dimension and reality, need-oriented dimension and reality, contextual dimension and reality and finally the transformative dimension and reality. These dimensions of empowering Diakonia are examined at Ham's view point and observed in farmers 'practices and activities at MCK bio intensive training Centre .

First I start with the visional dimension of the empowering Diakonia model.

6.1 Visional dimension and reality

The visional dimension of empowering Diakonia according to Ham, (2015), refers to the ability of foreseeing the future as indicated earlier in the theoretical chapter. This is useful in that it helps review prophetic actions creatively and wisely. The vision is the

motivation which is important in human life. Ham says that Christians must have a vision. Since people without a vision are doomed. In Diakonia visions originate from God. God empowers and motivates diaconal visions in his manifestation of his trinity nature. The vision hence seeks empowerment and on the other hand it is empowering Diakonia works (Ham, 2015 p.113).

Ham asserts that an empowering vision proclaims that it is possible to have a changed world. Ephraim as she talked about the MCK bio intensive training Centre's said,

The main target here is to develop small scale farmers through training, informing and offering inputs necessary to boost their organic agriculture skills. This is a sure way to development (Ephraim).

The MCK bio intensive training Centre target according to Ephraim is to empower farmers through training, information and offering inputs to enable them boost organic agriculture skills. The result is care for the environment. This is a statement which was aired by Fatugi .Environment for this matter refers to the natural world.⁹¹

Environment is the dwelling place of mankind and all other creations. Fatugi's view reflects God's original purpose of creating mankind was to care for creation. Hence Dietrich, (2015 p.31), calls it diaconal responsibility which she explains saying that God requires mankind to be a steward of the entire world. The farmers in this study know they are stewards. Fado affirms it in this thesis. To care for each other and all creation. To Ham, (2015), people without a vision are subject to perish. Caring for the environment is a visional act. So is stewardship. Vision will benefit mankind and the rest of God's creation through assurance of clean air, water and obtaining of healthy food. Environment is an issue of concern today. It will only take a people with ability to see beyond fifty years from now to see the harm that will be done if care for the environment is not considered. See the danger of failed stewards. The visional people will not keep quiet but will take a visional step to correct, educate, and train while their motivation is the

⁹¹ <https://www.google.no/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=what%20is%20environment> cited on 5/10/16.

expected results. In this case clean air, healthy soils for crop production, clean waters for the entire both the existing and that to come. This contributes to the justice required to live so that the entire creation can enjoy life in its completeness as God planned for all (Ham, 2015).

This also calls for stewardship as Fatugi says in this thesis in her responses. Hence when I examined her responses I assert that stewardship involves care for God's creation. It a necessary tool required in thinking about environmental matters. "Farmers are encouraged to care for the environment", said Fatugi. She stated that training is offered during normal training sessions at the MCK bio intensive training Centre and also during specified days. These days as mentioned earlier are: Labour Day, on an agricultural Sunday and on a health Sunday. One of these occasions according to Fatugi is when she met the employees of MCK bio intensive training Centre. The meeting helped her obtain information on organic agricultural practices, center's core values and practices which she quickly implemented. This confirms Hams view that an empowering vision calls for trying to create a picture of what is possible. The end result is empowerment (Ham, 2015 p113).

Empowerment is observed in the farmers' practices and attitude since farmers have learnt to use the knowledge and technology attained at the Centre to avoid contaminating the natural systems and processes, by not using chemical substances produced in industries. This is what Fatugi expressed saying, "..... farmers have learnt the need to care for the environment (...) by producing without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers." According to Ham, Diakonia empowers as it is empowered as well though it is the outstanding phenomena (Ham, 2015).

Care for the environment when examined in relation to empowering Diakonia is a move that makes people selfless, creative and are able to think about that which is collective.

The environment is a collectively owned resource. It belongs to everybody and this calls for everybody's concern. Farmers in this study have come to a point of realizing the importance of caring for the environment as though it was one man's responsibility. These farmers' attitude towards environment and its concerns can be interpreted as that which leads to the possibility of having a different world as Ham says prophetically that, "A different world is possible" (Ham, 2015 p.113).

A different world can be obtained through vision. This can be said to be the expectation of the MCK bio intensive training Centre and the entire MCK fraternity. Ephraim said that small scale farmers are trained, informed and offered inputs with an aim of enabling them boost their organic agriculture skills. This is how she put it,

The MCK bio intensive training Centre's main target is to develop small scale farmers through training, informing and offering inputs necessary to boost their organic agriculture skills (Fatugi).

Organic agriculture is a chemical free type of agriculture. This means it does not harm the natural systems such as: the plants, animals and human being through dirtying of water, air, soil and everything that surrounds human life. Hence as Ham says, a different world is possible (Ham, 2015).

A different world is being made here, a world free of dirt air, water and soil all safe for the entire creation. A world enriched with health all round. Eliza in another occasion talked about urban farming. Eliza's views concerning urban farming have resulted to green beautiful and clean towns. In Meru chicken are reared in small nest boxes outside vegetable booths and kiosks. This is not found outside one vegetable booth or two but several. Trees are planted along main roads as farmers said. Amidst flowers are vegetables, pest repellants and spices. The kitchen gardens and farmers compounds are

decorated with bio intensively grown vegetation consisting of flowers of multiple use, vegetables, repellants and livestock to crown it all.

The world hence becomes different. This also fits in Ham's thought of empowering Diakonia being an inclusive way of thinking. He further asserts that with a vision people see the future realistically. This helps them to consider prophetic actions in wisdom. A tree takes so long to grow. Imaginatively farmers can see green forests for them and their children as Fado mentioned when she said "future productivity for us and our children". This is visional.

When I carried my research, Fado sang a verse of the song in MCK hymn book number fifty five as stated earlier in this thesis. The song was sung in Kimeru (her mother tongue) and I joined since I could sing the song in the same language too. When she sang it was as though she was providing an explanation as to why she is practicing organic farming. She sang, "*Nini Jesu agwiita, Kenda andiitana, Nturage mwoyo jumwega Guku Na iguru*". This means she is called to live a good life here (on earth) and in heaven. She is convinced that she is called to live a good life both on earth and in heaven. When she grows healthy nutritious foods, care for the environment and generate income it is her good life on earth.

This is a vision at work. God has called mankind individually to live a good life here on earth and in heaven as she says. Therefore according to this respondent, everyone has a responsibility to care for the environment with a hope of living better here and now and later in glory. The life in glory is visional. Fado can foresee beyond the present day (Ham, 2015).

Care for the environment is falling in Ham's views in relation to visional dimension of empowering Diakonia. Since environment is today's global concern. A prophetic eye is required to address this challenge concerning environmental destruction. The Methodist church in Kenya is involved in environmental concerns. The reason is matters related to the environment affect all people and

the entire creation with no exception. Beginning from what concerns us individually to what does not⁹². Foreseeing is important so as to be able to prophesy with a creative mind and wisdom (Ham, 2015).

When I listened and examined the content of the song the singer was celebrating living well on earth and in heaven. She appreciated the present and was hopeful for a good future. This is demonstrated by what she was doing as far as organic farming and care for the environment is concerned. According to Ham (2015), the vision is the motivation. So, the images people form in their mind imaginatively influence their way of action. Fado said that she embraced bio intensive farming methods with a target of living well on earth and in heaven. When she grows healthy nutritious food, care for the environment and generate income it is her good life on earth. She expects to leave the good life to others later and live a good life in heaven some other time.

I agree with these views, Care for the environment is every man's responsibility. It is a visionary move by the MCK bio intensive training Centre which is a MCK project. Nordstokke, (2009), says a church cannot be said to be church unless it is diaconal. The MCK bio intensive Centre is diaconal work despite the fact that Diakonia is not a term used in the MCK. The Centre is meant to manage that which is common. The environment for this matter is a resource which has been and will be for generations and generations to come it is owned by all. When the environment is dirt there are consequences.

In line with the views above, Eliza at one time was lamenting how there are diseases such as cancers, diabetes, obesity and blood pressure whose causes are aligned with food people eat and environment. According to her she felt that the diseases are a result of food people eat and the damage in the air, water and soil (the environment). She said that looking at the suffering caused by these diseases and others not mentioned motivates her colleagues and her to go out to educate the general masses, in church and other public

⁹² <http://www.globalissues.org/issue/168/environmental-issues> cited 5/10/16.

places in particular occasion as mentioned earlier on how to eat well, care for the environment and how to do it. This is a visional move with the hope of stopping the suffering of the people in need. The need is propelling action to be taken. This shall be explained further in the need-oriented dimension soon.

Farmers are motivated to plant trees at their homes; they plant along the roads as said earlier, practice mixed farming and are discouraged to apply chemical fertilizers and other chemical inputs. Fado embraced all these but in some situations he said that farmers face the challenge when beginning. He said, “to start is challenging....I almost gave up”. Farmers when starting expressed initial challenges such as: finances, manures, seedlings hence they said they start on a very small scale for example using a polythene bag as Fatugi did. Others need push them to sometimes to not applying all the do(s) and do not(s). Fatugi at one time narrated her own story and encounter with MCK bio intensive activities and said, “I live in a rented flat” This shows some farmers are landless, so they hire houses to live in hence can grow very little vegetables, cannot keep animals for manure and may rely on food waste. All these are barriers which are not loudly stated despite the vision.

I will reflect on these issues in my conclusion in the next chapter. Next I am going to examine the normative dimension and reality.

6.2 Normative dimension and reality

The normative dimension of the empowering Diakonia according to Ham, (2015), concerns norms, behavior and values. These norms behaviors and values serve as the bases of bringing meaning to peoples’ life. Hence the core values are very important in choosing what is right in a particular people’s life. The MCK bio intensive training Centre which is the case study for this thesis is founded on Christian core values. That is the word of God. The Centre serves Christians and considers Christians and Christian values when carrying their activities. The farmers in this study are empowered to observe the Christian core values. The core values observed according to the respondents as stated

in the previous chapter are integrity and stewardship. Farmers are trained to do things the right way all the time and care for God's creation. This is integrity and stewardship. These are norms and values altogether. Hence they are the point of reference which answers questions in relation to this group in this research. The normative dimension specifies what values are important in life (Ham 2015).

The Methodist Church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre is helping farmers to uphold Christian core values. This was stated by Ephraim, when she said that farmers are encouraged to observe integrity and stewardship. According to her human beings are stewards of God's creation. Fatugi referring to the same value said, "We are stewards of God's creation." She added to the same by saying that the reason farmers care for the creation is because it is a part of development which she called in Kiswahili Maendeleo.⁹³ When these respondents mentioned issues in relation to Christian core values, I linked this with the normative dimension of Ham's empowering Diakonia model described above (Ham 2015).

According to Ephraim farmers are encouraged to examine integrity which she defined as learning to do the right thing in the right way at all times. This means, as farmers produce more food, generate income by using methods of farming demonstrated at the MCK bio intensive training Centre, they observe integrity. Hence they obtain healthy nutritious food for their families and for the community, increase income, care for their neighbor, reduce poverty among farmers, improve Kenyan economy through agriculture and care for the environment.

Ham, (2015), describes empowerment as a process which encourages connection with others. In this case the farmers are caring for their own needs and that of the neighbor and are connected to the environment too. This shows an interplay of stewardship and integrity which are the Christian values expressed in this study.

⁹³ Development

Moreover, Fatugi informed me that farmers have learnt the need to care for the environment as a result of continued training at the Centre .She said, “Farmers obtain training to produce without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers”.

As far as this respondent is concerned, this is beneficial in that it helps protect the environment, get nutritious healthy food and save money. She added to the same explanation saying, “We consciously protect and ensure future productivity for us and our children.” This testifies of the Meru people culture where children inherit from their parents as was mentioned again by Fado. This is another aspect in relation to norms. They hope their children inherit something worthwhile. This reviews a normative aspect. This makes the activities by the Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre interestingly visional, need - oriented, normative as well as visional. I shall examine this interrelation of dimensions a little bit in the conclusion chapter.

Next I discuss the need –oriented dimension.

6.3 Need –oriented dimension and reality

Need- oriented dimension according to Ham, (2015) is need focused. It seeks to find out what is required materially and spiritually and need to be acted on to help human beings. This dimension concentrates on determining the cause and the effect of a need. This leads to aid providers such as the church or other charity organs to comfort the deprived and holistically and prophetically confront the life chain of the predicament (Ham, 2015).

Ephraim during one of the interview sections informed me that they educate the community concerning bio intensive farming method during specified public and church days in Kenya. The days she named are: Labour Day, healthy and agricultural Sunday. Considering all the above, the training offered to farmers at the Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre aims at meeting the needs of MCK church members and the local people in Meru .

Looking at the employees responses they said, “Farmers are trained to practice organic farming to obtain increased yields without compromising the quality of the soil, air and water. In addition farmers in Meru are offered training at the Centre to be able to carry out farming practices with natural processes in mind not ignoring them or straining them. These are the needs of the people in Meru. They need good quality food, enough for subsistence and for income. Fatugi said at one time that farmers have learnt the need to care for the environment as a result of continued training at the Centre .She added to the same saying, “Farmers obtain training to produce without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers which is a twofold benefit”. This according to her helps farmers to protect their environment, get nutritious healthy food and save money which lacks among some farmers. Farmers according to this respondent consciously protect the environment and ensure future productivity for themselves and their children.

Moreover the MCK bio intensive training Centre according to the Ephraim, was established with a purpose. The purpose was to attend to the need of the rising population, unemployment of the youth and help control land degradation in the 1959s⁹⁴. This means the needs stated here were a challenge. So the MCK thought of what to do as Ham says. That is determining the cause of the need and the effects provide help holistically and prophetically. The target at this step is to break the continuity of the challenge. Ham says that people’s need cannot be ignored. A step to help should always be taken. This is why also Jesus was moved by people’s needs. He ensured he reached them for help (Ham 2015).

The church is the body of Jesus Christ. It has to take action when people are suffering or are deprived. Ham says needs leads to action. The needs of the Meru people led to the Methodist church establishing MCK bio intensive training Centre. The Centre’s target was to empower farmers by offering organic farming training and encourage care for the environment. This is a means to stop the

⁹⁴ <http://www.kemu.ac.ke/index.php/about-kemu/74-information/88-history-of-kemu> 2/16/16.

spread of the environmental challenge, encourage production of cheap healthy food for families, generate income and protect the environment for future generation⁹⁵.

6.4 Contextual dimension and reality

The contextual dimension is environmental based. The dimension considers a doctrine and a practice that is environmentally controlled, guided and yet being informed by the vision behind. Moreover it is guided by the social, political, economic and ecological context in which the church operates (Ham 2015).

According to the Ephraim farmers are trained to practice organic agriculture. This practice helps them to obtain increased yields without compromising the quality of the soil, air and water. That is protecting the environment. The practices further help them to secure all other resources that crop and animal production rely on to flourish. This is because the farming practice does not involve applying any chemical substances. According to Fatima composted plant material or animal manure in liquid form or solid is use as well as ashes. These act as organic inputs.

Eliza confirmed that farmers are trained to use composted plant material or animal manure to enrich the soil. This nourishes their vegetables and other crops in their kitchen gardens, farms, trees of all kinds and fodder crops such as Napier grass for their animals. The farmers end up having healthy plants, food and secure the environment from contamination. The practice requirement is environmentally based. Hence it links with what Ham says concerning the contextual dimension. That the dimension considers a doctrine and a practice that is environmentally controlled, guided and yet being informed by the vision behind. Moreover it is guided by the social, political, economic and ecological context in which the church operates (Ham 2015).

⁹⁵ <http://www.umcor.org/Search-for-Projects/Projects/14217A> cited 5/10/16.

The Methodist church in Kenya bio intensive training Centre is a church project. Her aims are environmentally concerned as much as the Centre is run by the church. Ephraim told me that the Centre committee members are: the area chief to present the government, an agricultural office representative who is a government of Kenya employee, a church minister and local people representatives. This shows that MCK bio intensive Centre considers the social, political, ecological, economical background from which the church exists. According to my observations the activities are environmentally friendly based. On the other hand all aspects about the Centre and farmers practices are guided by the context in which Methodist church in Kenya functions.

Looking at aspects such as: use of natural repellants like: spicy vegetables which include onions and coriander. These vegetable are serving different purposes in the garden. They are repellants, spices and in other words herbal pesticides. All these are ecological considerations. This results in protecting both mankind and animals together with plants from harm which originate from chemical products. Care for the environment in general is considered. The rosemary plant for example and marigold are both flowers and repellants altogether they are multi-functional. The vegetable gardens are colored with flowers whose use is dual. This practice is empowering Diakonia, it is transforming and is economic, social and ecological friendly (Ham 2015).

The other dimension to be considered in relation to reality is the transformative dimension.

6.5 Transformative dimension and reality

The transformative dimension of empowering Diakonia according to Ham, (2015), focuses on embracing diaconal vision .It asserts that diaconal work always targets to empower the aid givers, to observe the needs of the set people and those of the entire creation from the grass roots to the global level. This is accomplished by having concrete prophetic move towards restoration. Where there is injustice effort is made with a motive of causing a difference. Hence every step taken is

that which leads to change since the dimension is change based. It is not only charity based; for example feeding people but also enabling them, empowering them within diaconal services and others for transformation purposes (Ham, 2015 p 114).

Fatima who was buying different types of seedling from MCK bio intensive training Centre said this in relation to the bio intensive technologies. He said,

At the farm we are trained on technologies that are environmental friendly, with a target of reducing poverty levels. This is done by providing facilities where farmers and every interested group share experience and gain knowledge. Subsidies are also given to help farmers establish projects which are seemingly expensive. This leads to holistic human development. Mmmmm, God created man and gave him power to be a steward. So that he care for all God's creation (*Quoting the bible verse*)⁹⁶. Environment is where we live (Fatima).

Environment as Fatima says above is the home of human beings and every creation. He talks of poverty reduction. He talks of subsidy to empower farmers towards change. This reminds me of Ephraim explaining why and how the Centre came about. She said

Many people and their families vacated this place. They thought the lands were small and with infertile. They lost hope in the pieces of land being of any economic good. People were poor and made a living by seeking casual jobs in other people land and in towns. So this Centre was established to prove to them that small pieces of land can be a source of food and of economic gain (Ephraim).

The MCK bio intensive training Centre is transforming wasted and degraded land to usefulness. Farmers are empowered to be creative hence changing desperate

⁹⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" Genesis 2:26

situations to hope. The empowering activities at this Centre are encouraging transformation of the environment and acquiring human dignity by reducing poverty. This is transformative (Ham, 2015).

This connects to Nordstokke, (2009), definition of transformation. He says it a continuous process of rearranging the entire human life that involves refusing every dehumanizing act or thing and promote peace and justice. It is a change based process (Nordstokke, 2009).

Transformation is a means of recognizing human dignity. Human dignity motivates people to have a sense of self -esteem and self-respect as well as self-worth. This results out of holistic intervention to the needs of the deprived. The reason is as far as I am concerned needs such as poverty , hunger, jobless landlessness, abuse , discrimination and other challenges undermine human dignity. Hence every diaconal activity is channeled towards affirming and ensuring the dignity of a people (Nordstokke 2009).

Observing integrity as is defined in his study by Ephraim blend together with empowerment leads transformation. This is because transformation is the process of discouraging every situation that underscore and abuses human dignity. Poverty for example as was mentioned by Fatima in this study. This results to transformation (Ham, 2015).

The farmers involved in this study have experienced transformation. Their activities bear witness. Ham, (2015), says that empowering activities by the church or any diaconal practitioners enables the involved people discover their gifts and abilities .When I link the farmers' views, their activities and practices they witness that the farmers have been empowered. Fatugi gave her own experience and testified, "I was landless". Moreover she said that she started little by little growing vegetables using used polythene bags but today she grows on a bigger scale, sells vegetables, keeps chicken, collects eggs and has income.

According to her views she is transformed. She is not the same again. This is what she said,

I established three polythene gardens. It was great fun. Today I grow sacks and sacks of vegetables. I have reared chicken. Finally, I have food; I have income from both vegetables and eggs (Fatugi).

This is something to other farmers too according to Fatugi. She mentioned another farmer who practices urban farming and operates a kiosk and keeps chicken side by side. This farmer is Feiza. He was happy because he said that he can foresee that he will practice organic agriculture on a large scale. This is a farmer who was losing hope as said earlier in the previous chapter. He is restored through empowerment. So empowering Diakonia causes change in the life of deprived and the hopeless. This is what urban farming has done as described by Ephraim and Fatugi.

Urban farming according to Eliza and Fatugi is a practice that involves keeping animals and growing food crops and fodders around homes and shops in towns and cities. The practice has resulted in having clean green town, a means of ensuring food security, provision of required nutrients, and source of cheap affordable food. Families' economic status is improved and they not only produce for themselves but also they benefit their neighbors. The practices can be described as transformative. Change is taking and has taken place mainly in reduction of poverty as was said by Fatima when he was describing the benefits of MCK bio intensive training Centre to the farmers. This is transformation which has resulted out of affirm move directed to restoration and a need to cause a difference Ham (2015).

The target for Centre which is the case study in this research is to reduce poverty levels among farmers and the community. This is propelled by providing

facilities, training; sharing experiences hence farmers acquire knowledge. Fatugi said,

This leads to holistic human development based on what we learn from the bible; that God created man and mandated, empowered him to be a steward. So that he care for all God's creation⁹⁷. Human needs are attended to with an environmental friendly consciousness. Since environment is the man's home (Fatugi).

Transformative dimension of empowering Diakonia model focuses on embracing diaconal vision .Diaconal vision aims at empowering the aid givers to observe the needs of the set people and those of the entire creation from the grass roots to the global level whereby change is propelled (Ham 2015).

The five dimensions of empowering Diakonia: visional, normative, need-oriented, contextual and transformative in this thesis can be illustrated as shown in figure 4. Examined in relation to reality as per this study these dimensions combine effort. Hence they have resulted in organic agriculture, urban farming and care for the environment.

⁹⁷ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" Genesis 2:26

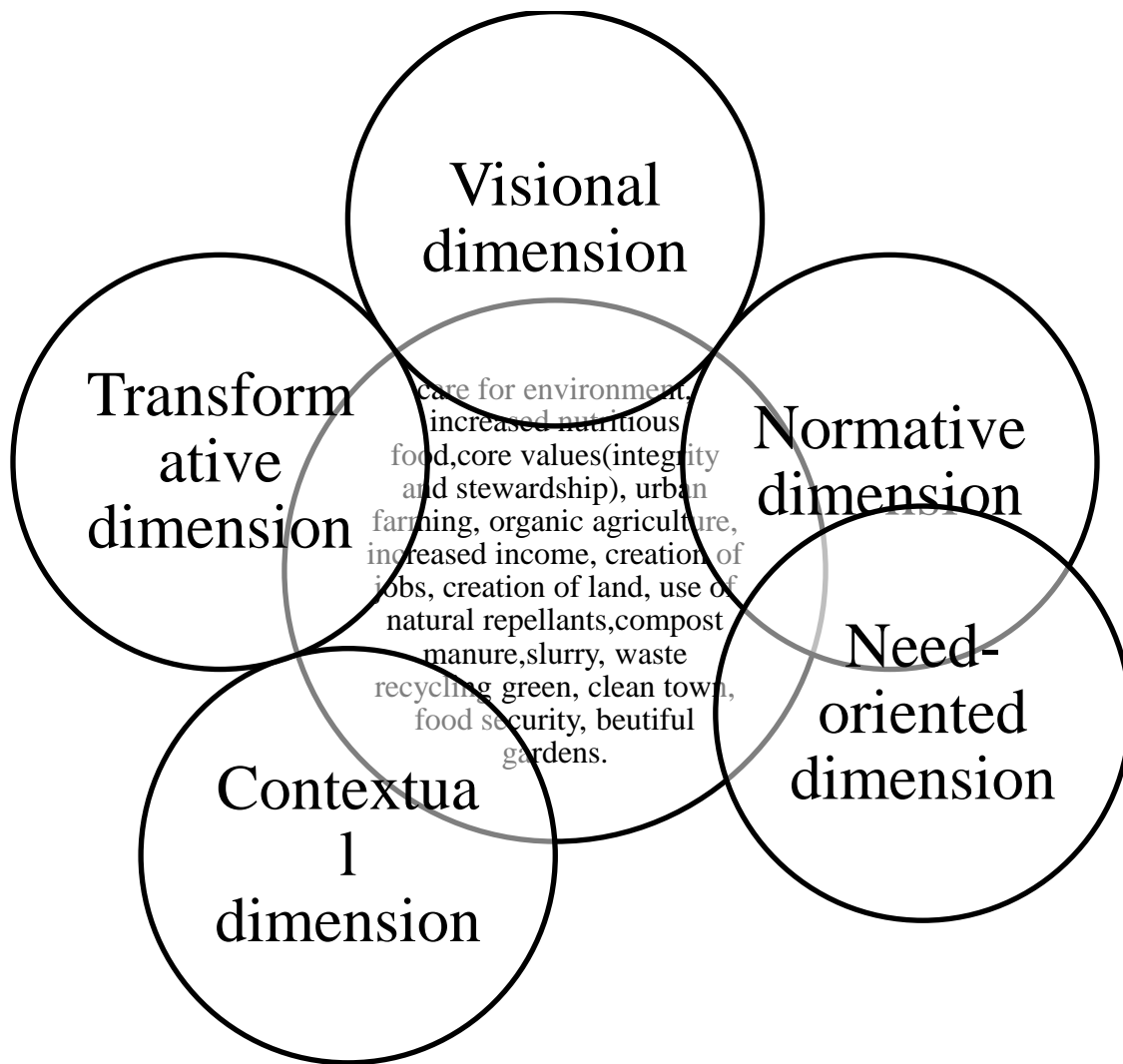


Figure 4: The five dimensions of empowering Diakonia in relation to reality at MCK bio intensive training Centre.

These practices resulted in increased healthy food production, increased income, creation of land for growing, animal keeping and job opportunities. On the other hand there are skills and knowledge acquired in crop rotation, cover cropping, generally soil enrichment and use of natural repellants. Farmers have increased knowledge and transformed their attitudes through training to observe integrity and stewardship. The practices are cheap, in that they require reduced labour, less capital and water. Waste recycling for example used sacks, polythene bags, vegetable wastes, peels, ashes and slurry are key practices. These lead to clean environment.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In this chapter I am going to conclude this study which I examined: To what extent has the MCK bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru? .To answer this research question the following sub-research questions were asked: Have farmers adopted the methods of farming used to empower them? How have the farmers adopted the methods of farming? What are farmers' opinions and views towards the activities they are involved in? I will now explain how I organized my thesis.

7.1 Organization of the Thesis

To answer these questions I organized my thesis in seven chapters. In chapter one I introduced the thesis. In the introduction I explained the thesis topic which concerns Diakonia as empowerment; the research question that guided this study together with the sub-research questions that helped answer the main question; terms that are used in the thesis and their definitions as well as the arrangement of the entire thesis. This covers chapter one.

In Chapter two I have written concerning the contextual background of this study. Hence I structured the chapter as follows: Introduction of the chapter; Kenya and Agriculture; Meru; MCK and MCK bio intensive agricultural training Centre which is the case study in this research. These subtopics are well defined. In chapter three I have explained the method used for this research. This is the qualitative research approach. In this chapter I have explained qualitative research method and the reason why I preferred the method and not the other methods used in research. Moreover, I discussed other elements of research and data collection such as: a case study, sampling, observations, recording, coding, citations and ethical considerations .Concerning the later, earnestly considered and observed ethics in the process of my data collection .This I have explained earlier in details saying what I did and why? In Chapter four of this study I have covered the

theoretical structure. This is Diakonia as empowerment. In addition I have explained the aspects of empowering Diakonia by Ham, (2015). Finally I examined the five dimensions of empowering Diakonia model. These dimensions are: visional, normative, need-oriented, contextual and transformative dimensions. The stated aspects form the theoretical chapter of this thesis. The same are revisited in the discussion as well as in conclusion of the study. The stated dimensions are explained according to the empowering Diakonia model (Ham, 2015).

In chapter five I wrote farmers' responses to the MCK bio intensive training Centre and the activities they are involved in. In the chapter have discussed the following sub-headings : Empowerment of farmers, MCK bio intensive training Centre and core Christian values, establishing of the MCK bio intensive training Centre; farmers' and adoption of bio intensive farming methods and finally the farmers' perspective on the Centre. Chapter six is discussion. Here I discussed the five dimensions of the empowering Diakonia model in relation to reality. Hence the chapter is a product of the theory that is the five dimensions of empowering Diakonia model according to Ham, (2015), examined in relations to farmers' responses, their perspectives and activities, all which I have referred to in this thesis as reality. I have the following sub-heading discussed in chapter six: Visional dimension and reality, normative dimension and reality, need –oriented dimension and reality, contextual dimension and reality and transformative dimension and reality.

7.2 Answer to the sub-research Questions

In this part of this thesis I am going to answer the sub-research questions as they were answered by the respondents in this study. These sub- research question as stated earlier are: Have farmers adopted the methods of farming used to empower them? How have the farmers adopted the methods of farming? What are farmers' opinions and views towards the activities they are involved in? I am going to answer these sub research –questions consecutively as follows: One: Have farmers adopted the methods used to empower them

and how have farmers adopted the methods used to empower them at MCK bio intensive training Centre? Two: What are the famers' opinions and views towards the activities they are involved in? Then I will answer the main research question of the thesis. That is: To what extent has the MCK bio intensive training Centre empowered farmers in Meru-Kenya. From here I will highlight my contribution to the world of research and lay my comments as well as my recommendations.

According to this research I have found out that Farmers have adopted the methods of farming offered at MCK bio intensive training Centre to empower them. First they have adopted Care for the environment. Farmers have adopted care for the environment by: Use of organic inputs such as: pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. According to Fado, farmers care for the environment by producing without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. She said that this helps to protect the environment by minimizing use of chemical products. This is what she said to add on what she had said earlier. "We consciously protect the environment and ensure future productivity for us and our children". She reminded me the song she had sang to imply she has to live well on earth and in heaven because that is God's will for her and mankind. To clarify how farmers care for the environment she stated as follows, "We care for and protect *Mazingira yetu*"⁹⁸. This is stated earlier in this study.

Farmers have also adopted the practice of planting trees. Both famers and employees respondents talked about tree planting as one of the practices farmers have embraced. Fatugi telling about care for the environment she said, "We have planted trees along the main road". In addition to this respondents views I saw trees along the road that leads to the Centre and several tree seedlings bends at the Centre. According to Eliza the tree seedlings are grown according to farmers' request. Mangoes, jacaranda, pawpaw....." Farmers have adopted the practice of waste recycling too. They use vegetables and food left-over as feeds to livestock of different kind. For example chicken as was stated by

⁹⁸ Mazingira yetu means our environment.

Fatugi are fed using, vegetable remains, such as carrot peels, green leafy vegetables, maize, Flour and soya. Animal waste is recycled to produce manure both in solid and liquid form as well as bio gas. Plant waste material is used as compost manure together with ashes. These have been mentioned in chapter five of this thesis.

Farmers have adopted growing crops and keeping animals without using chemical substances as was said by Fatima, “All we do is *urimi buti na dawa*”. To clarify what he meant he said, “I add composted plant material or animal manure in liquid form or solid. Sometimes I use ashes and a little fertilizer too”. Farmers have adopted use of natural repellants as a way of caring for the environment. This is practiced by planting repellants such as coriander, onion, smelly flowers and herbs such marigold. These are planted in between rows to serve as pesticide, vegetables and spices. All in one sack or plot as shown in figure two and three of this thesis. According to Ezano their smells repel different pests. Other repellants include the rosemary plants. According to Eliza vegetables are grown together to serve different purposes because pests sometime attach a specific vegetable. This means pests for spinach are not compulsorily pests for cabbage. Hence at the Centre vegetables are grown with multi-use as Spices, repellants or food stuff.

Farmers have adopted the practice of: crop rotation; cover cropping, soil enriching, use of natural pest predictors as a way of caring for the environment. Crop rotation is used to protect the soil from losing nutrients, control pests and disease. This was so interesting because I found out that activities carried out in the Centre never function in isolation According to Ephraim the mentioned practices assures steady increased crop production and supply. She said because in rotations, farmers plant legumes, such as soya which enrich the soil .She explained that legumes contain nutrients which are released to the soil after decomposition. Ephraim said, “This finally reduces the desire to use chemical soil enrichments which we refer to as “*dawa*”. This I said it some other time in this thesis. Cover crops according to Ephraim help farmers to preventing soil erosion discourage

growing of weeds and increase soil fertility. This also helps in reducing the need of using herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers. According to Fatugi, weeding under cover crops, using composted plant materials and adding different animal manure such as livestock and poultry droppings enrich the soil. This is also I found is falling in the category waste recycling.

Amid all these other farming methods, farmers have adopted observing Christian core values. Eliza as I said again in this thesis explained to me that the MCK bio intensive training Centre targets to help farmers uphold core Christian values. Amongst these values are integrity and stewardship. According to her people who include farmers are stewards of God's creation. Hence observing integrity goes hand in hand. She said integrity concerns learning to do the right thing in the right way at all times. "This helps farmers to produce more food and generate income by use of the technologies demonstrated in this Centre." She said. This means adopting these values help farmers to achieve several benefits which include obtaining healthy nutritious food for their families and for the community at large. Moreover farmers increase income; care for their neighbors, reduce poverty among farmers and finally improve Kenyan economy through agriculture. On the same note, farmers care for the environment. This was echoed by Fado who said, "We are stewards of God's creation, and we care as part of development". This means caring for the environment is a part of development. This is stated earlier in this thesis.

Farmers are trained at the Centre to practice organic agriculture. According to Eliza organic agriculture helps farmers to obtain increased yields without degrading the soil quality, air and water. This practice protects all other resources required for appropriate crops and animals' production. Farmers in Meru according to this research are trained at the MCK bio intensive training Centre to carry out farming practices considering natural processes not to straining them. Hence farmers have to grow without using chemical substances produced in industries as was said by Eliza. Fado said "Farmers are trained to

produce free from inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers.” Fatima said referring to what farmers do. “All we do is *urimi buti na dawa*”. This confirms that farmers have adopted the methods of farming by practicing organic agriculture. Farmers add composted plant material or animal manure in liquid form or solid, ashes and a little fertilizer too”. This was Fatima’s views whereas Ezano said,

Farmers add composted plant material or animal manure to enrich the soil for their vegetables and other crops in their kitchen gardens, in their farms, trees of all kinds and fodder crops such as Napier grass for their animals. The fluid draining from the cow shed .we advises them to collect it and use it as liquid fertilizer for the crops. Farmers use natural repellants crop rotations, cover crops and natural pest predators’ (Ezano).

The above views from Ezano, Fatima and Fado prove that farmers have adopted Organic agriculture. They practice crop rotations; use of cover crops, enriching the soil and use of natural pest predators despite the fact that some might be using chemical substance but on a small scale. This deduced from Fatima’s views. Summarily organic agriculture is a practice that is consists of several practices put together. These practices are establishing of organic sack kitchen garden, small plot kitchen gardens as shown in figure one and two respectively. It involves rearing of local chicken as was said by Fatugi; who was at the Centre seeking information about organic chicken. Feiza according to this study has kept local chicken in nest boxes together with operating a vegetable kiosk. This is urban farming. I will soon talk about farmers and adoption of urban farming. Farmers rear cattle on zero grazing units, goats, pigs and rabbits. These animals are fed on organically produced feeds.

Another method of faming farmers have adopted is urban farming. Urban farming in this research is the keeping of animals, growing of food crops and fodders around homes in towns and cities. This was confirmed by Eliza and Fatugi during the interviewing sessions. Fatugi referred to bio intensive methods of farming particularly urban farming as good news. This is because she lives in town and the way the information about urban farming was timely. She narrated this as follows,

One Sunday visitor came to our church with what I called good news of bio intensive farming. This is a cheap method of farming, without dawa. The method looked simple and motivating. Growing vegetables in old tins, polythene bags, sacks, using a little water for the crops and no use of industrially made fertilizers (Fatugi).

Fatugi further talked of her experience and that of her friend saying

We started polythene bags gardens. This is because they required little water. I established three polythene gardens. This is because they required little water. I established three polythene gardens. It was great fun. Today I grow sacks and sacks of gardens. I have reared chicken. I have food; income from both vegetables and eggs. Every farmer who adapted these techniques produces enough nutritious food and in addition we have income through selling vegetables, eggs, milk and fish (Fatugi).

In addition she explained more about how other farmers such as Mukami and Kangara are practicing urban farming. "Mukami is rearing fish and Kangara has kept many chickens and a dairy cow. These farmers sell eggs and many litres of milk." According to Fatugi her kitchen garden is a complete meal farm. She has planted in sacks maize, beans, vegetables and spices mixed together kiutalamu (according to the training).

Urban farming according to Eliza is a way of ensuring food security, a provision of required nutrition, a means to produce cheaply because of reduced transport cost to the market, cheap labour and time used. Eliza said the method of farming has helped in providing affordable food to the less fortunate in town. These include street families, orphans, landless, women and immigrants. The urban families' economic statuses have improved because of cheap home produced, healthy food stuff which includes milk, eggs, vegetables and cereals. To Eliza, urban farming has contributed to obtaining green clean cities and towns. This is due to treated sewage water which is used to irrigate vegetables whereas the solid part of the waste is used as slurry. The waste organic compost in towns is the source of manure for the vegetables. The peels from different food stuffs and

vegetable remains are feed for rabbits, cow, goats and poultry meanwhile the waste polythene bags are soil holders. This reduces pollution in a big way.

Farmers have adopted the bio intensive farming methods. The methods adopted are establishing the sack kitchen garden. According to Eliza the Centre's records shows lists of farmers who bought gardening sacks from the Centre and have established sack kitchen gardens as required. In addition to the same she said that women farmers establish gardens either; the sack or plot or all at the same time immediately after training. However men take longer to establish or does not start at all. Eliza attributed this disparity to different roles men and women play in a family in meru set up. This she explained is said earlier in this study. Ephraim confirmed that farmers have adopted the methods of farming encouraged at MCK bio intensive Centre. Despite this, she exclaimed that there are notable disparities depending on the type of project to be established or skill to be offered. She explained that some skill and methods attracts men's interest as compared to women. "Financial ability among some men and women is the main cause of the difference in adoption." She continued saying,

On other occasions women are willing but domestic chores such as care for their children, and other chores discourage them from being involved in many developmental programs despite their interest and motivation. Nevertheless most women have established functional kitchen gardens, poultry hatches, pigs, goats and zero grazing units depending on the piece of land available. Men are showing lots of interest on raised fish pond inside the green house (Ephraim)

The other sub-research question which was addressed in this research concerned farmers' opinions and views towards the activities they are involved in at the MCK bio intensive training Centre. Different respondents and what I observed at the bio intensive training Centre contributes different viewpoints though the bigger part contributes to appreciating the Centre and her activities. Fatugi ascertained that the Centre has offered farmers training on the following: making compost manure, establishing Sack and Kitchen garden, generating home –made gas (bio gas), fish, pig, poultry, rabbit, dairy cattle and goat rearing and feeding, use of bio slurry in the farm. She appreciated extension days;

these are the Centre employees' visits to farmer. She expressed this saying, "We call such days; extension days." According to Fatugi various activities offered to the farmers are demonstrated on an extension day. Farmers are informed on available opportunities and their benefits. On such days farmers express their views concerning different activities. Fatugi expressed this as follows,

We say what we need and why. We also report our challenges and encourage what is good for us more. This we call sharing our experiences and learning from one another. We receive advice and instruction too. I appreciate the bio intensive farming methods. I always try my best to improve my kitchen garden and intensify use of compost manure. I have encouraged my neighbors to try the same (Fatugi).

According to Fatima the Centre is a source of good quality seedlings. This is well stated earlier in this thesis. On the other hand farmers expressed satisfaction with the practices they are involved in. Fatima said,

I have vegetables two weeks old, four weeks old in that manner, I have to plant more. See all this is mine. I am sure I will have enough vegetables both for sale and home use all year round (Fatima)

According to Fado, the Centre has helped farmers through continued advice and instruction on planting, weeding, and spraying appropriately without dirtying the environment. This she referred to as stewardship as she said, "We are stewards to ourselves, to our neighbor and to the environment."

The answers to the sub-research question of this study forms the base to the main research question of this study. Hence in this other part of this thesis I am going to answer the research question for this study.

7.3 Answer to the research Question

The research question for this study is: To what extent has MCK bio intensive training Centre empowered Farmers in Meru- Kenya. According the responses from interviewees concerning the sub- research questions of this study; together with my observations; this research has found out that M CK bio intensive training Centre has empowered farmers in Meru –Kenya. The Centre has empowered farmers by training them on how to care for the environment. As discussed earlier in this research. Care for the environment refers to care for the soil, air and water. This has been a priority at MCK bio intensive training Centre as well as a role for the entire Methodist church in Kenya fraternity. According to Fatugi the church has always involved and encouraged her members to care for the environment. She said this is done mainly on specified days such as: tree planting days, agriculture days and on a health Sunday. Fatugi explained this saying, “We have planted trees along the main roads”. This empowerment because the church is church is able to prophesy a future without trees and the challenges therein. Hence steps up to correct the situation by advocating on tree planting in order to have a different world. Ham says that an empowering vision leads to having a different world (Ham, 2015).

Moreover farmers are using organic farming methods to enrich the soil. Hence Fatima said that he and other farmers use composted manure either from plants remains or animal waste as well as ashes. Farmers use: poultry, goat and rabbits droppings, liquid waste from zero grazing stalls and also ashes to enrich the soil. On the other hand farmers use cover crops as means of reducing weeds and protecting the soil from erosion which leads to loss of fertility. Practices such crop rotation, use of natural repellants and predators are skills which are used to control pests and diseases as explained in the thesis. This is empowerment in that a farmer attains improved skills and knowledge. This according to Ham brings restorative change in human life (Ham, 2015)

Fado explained that farmers have learnt to grow without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. They are doing waste recycling. Fatugi talked about farmers feeding their animals such as poultry using waste left over such as carrots’ peels, green leafy vegetables, maize and home- made feeds. All practices targets care for the environment and increased production. This is Diakonia; it is involving actions both by

the Centre and the farmers. Hence empowerment; in that Farmer are doing activities practically. This transforms both the Centre, church and the farmers. Meaning Diakonia is empowered and it empowers as well. The Centre is empowered by getting new ideas about what farmers want, what to improved and how? This is said by Eliza when she said, "We go out to farmers to inquire what they want." This affirms that Diakonia empowers and is empowered Ham, (2015 p.111). Furthermore as examined in the contextual dimension of the empowering Diakonia model. The dimension examines doctrines and practices that are environmentally controlled. Farmers in this study are caring for the environment. Hence concurring with Ham's views that Diakonia work is all community and is environmentally based (Ham, 2015 p.113).

The MCK bio intensive training Centre has empowered farmers to observe Christian core values. These values as stated earlier are integrity and stewardship. Farmers have affirmed that they are stewards of God's creation. This is a statement which was said by Fado. Hence they have learnt to do thing the right thing the right way at all times. This was referred as integrity by Ephraim. Examined in empowering Diakonia lens this is empowerment. An aspect that concerns norms mainly of behavior .This is expressed in terms of core values of a people Ham, (2015 p.113).. As far as this study is concerned the core values are the word of God, integrity and stewardship hence a means of empowerment. Establishment of the MCK bio intensive training Centre has empowered farmers in this study. This is because the Centre is a source of training, education, instruction and information. Farmers have talked about how they are trained, informed and instructed concerning organic agriculture and urban farming. Organic farming has been a means to empower farmers according to this study. Fado said that organic agriculture practices have helped her produce without using inorganic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. She described this practice to contain double benefit to her and other farmers. That is obtaining healthy nutritious food and save money which she exclaimed is a rare commodity. Moreover she expressed her satisfaction with the practices as they secure future productivity for farmers and their children.

The same mind-set towards the Centre was expressed by Fatima when he said that he uses composted manure, liquid and solid animal waste as well as ashes to enrich the soil. Moreover, he gets quality seedling and information from the Centre. Use of natural repellants which function as spices, pesticides and also as flowers is empowerment. This is well explained earlier in this thesis. Farmers have hope for future production. They can see their future as well as consider the future of their children. Farmers are linking it even with the songs they sing in church as was stated earlier. This makes the practice meaningful and hence can be referred to as empowerment. In the visional dimension of empowering Diakonia model future is an important consideration, effects and causes of a need as well. Hence Farmers in this study are looking at the future with hope and care. Because according to Ham, a people without a vision are subject to destruction (Ham, 2015, p.112).

The Centre has empowered farmers through urban farming practices. Urban farming in this study has benefited urban dwellers such as street children, orphans, women and immigrants as was said by Eliza. Women also have benefitted since they are sometimes victims of culture hence marginalized. Most women in meru do not get a share of their father's land as inheritance. This can be seen in Fado's contributions in this thesis. So they are categorized as landless. Fado, narrated her situations and how she ended in town as she said, "I moved from my father's home to live in search of a job. This is because I was landless. I rented a small room and I started selling vegetables". She explained how one Sunday visitors came to church with good news of bio intensive farming. She narrates how she and other established kitchen gardens using polythene bags. She says she started small but finally she produces sacks and sack of kitchen garden. She has enough vegetables for home use and for sale. She has reared local chicken for egg production.

Other farmers such as Mukami and Kangara have dairy cows for milk and chicken for egg production on large scale basis. This is because they have enough space. Feiza says he started with challenges but picked up. He is operating a vegetable booth, growing vegetables in sacks and has nest boxes for his chicken. Urban farming is a means of

empowering farmers in Meru-Kenya. The needs of the people have been met. Ham, (2015), says that the need-oriented dimension of empowering Diakonia model is usually need focused. It seeks to know what is required both materially and spiritually. The need is addressed, the causes and effects of the need are determined .Hence it is holistically dealt with and the life chain of the needs are broken (Ham, 2015).

The MCK bio intensive training Centre has empowered farmers in this study. My observations, respondents' responses and perspectives show that: Farmers have been empowered to care for the environment and observe the core Christian values. Farmers can do things the right way at all times. They have become stewards of God creation. Hence they produce more nutritious food, generate income and care for their neighbors. Farmers have been trained to create land for growing crops through sacks and polythene bags kitchen garden. The practices at the Centre enabled farmers to create jobs, create land, generate income as they rear chicken in nests boxes in towns and, keep dairy cows. Farmers have increased hope for the present as well as the future. They have learnt waste recycling which has resulted to clean, green towns and homes. This saves their money and ensure good environment. Farmers' standards of living are improved. This is empowerment.

7.4 Research Contribution

This research is a contribution in the research field. I have documented about the agricultural ministry of Diakonia. This has been manifested through the activities that are carried out at the MCK bio intensive training Centre. The empowering activities that farmers are involved in address the needs of the marginalized farmers and the town dwellers in Meru. These include street families, orphans, women and immigrants. The activities have contributed to care for the environment which is a global concern today. This has been addressed through tree planting; waste recycling and offering alternatives to chemical farm inputs. These are organic manure, composts, cover cropping and crop rotation for chemical fertilizers, repellants and natural pest predators for pesticides.

Moreover in this thesis I have exposed the Diakonia aspect in the Methodist church in Kenya. This is new because according to MCK, the church is involved in social Christian responsibilities. This is Diakonia. According to Ham, (2015), empowerment is the mainstream of Diakonia. It cares about human dignity which is harassed by challenges such as poverty. Diakonia empowers recipients and at the end it is also empowered (Ham, 2015). This is clear in this research as the Centre empowers farmers it is also empowered to come up with new and better practices depending on farmers demand.

Finally my comment is that farmers have adopted the methods and have been empowered but I have found out: Farmers face the following challenges as said by respondents of different categories. One is the financial challenge. This is a factor that discourages some farmers despite their interest and motivation. The other thing is gender roles as well as reduced interest depending of the type of activity. These are seen in this thesis. Hence I recommend the empowering arm of Diakonia manifested in MCK bio intensive training Centre to examine these challenges as said in this study, the cause, effects and finally their solution.

References

- Babbie, E. R. (1998). *The practice of social research* (Vol. 112). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth publishing company.
- Bazeley, P. & Jackson, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. London: Sage Publications Limited.
- Breed, G. (2015). "Finding guidelines on social change in the two-tiered narrative and Diakonia in the Gospel of John". *HTS Theological Studies*, 71(2), 01-08.
- Bryman, A. (2015). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford university press.
- Dietrich, S. (2015). 'Mercy and Truth Are Met Together; Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other' (Psalm 85: 10): Biblical and Systematic Theological Perspectives on Diakonia as Advocacy and Fight for Justice. *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction*, 28. Oxford: Regnum.
- Dietrich, S. (2015). Reflections on Core Aspects of Diaconal Theory. *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction*, 13. Oxford: Regnum.
- Ham, C. E. (2015). Empowering Diakonia: A Perspective from the World Council of Churches. *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction*, 107. Oxford: Regnum.
- Jeavons, J. C. (2001). Bio intensive sustainable mini-farming: III. System performance–initial trials. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, 19(2), 77-83.
- Jordheim, K. (2015). Bridge-Building and Go-Between: The Role of the Deacon in Church and Society. *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice: An Introduction*, 187. Oxford: Regnum.
- Kagama, D. N. (2015). The Role of the Church in the Realization of Vision 2030 in Kenya. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 2(3), 61-72.
- Kerber, G. (2015). Stewardship, Integrity of Creation and Climate Justice: Religious Ethics Insights. In *Earth Stewardship* (pp. 383-393). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Moore, S. R. (2010). Energy efficiency in small-scale biointensive organic onion production in Pennsylvania, USA. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 25(03), 181-188.

Mason, M. (2010, August). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 11, No. 3).

Njeru, L. K., & Gichimu, B. M. (2014). Influence of Access to Land and Finances on Kenyan Youth Participation in Agriculture; a Review. *International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, 2(3), 1-8.

Nordstokke, K. (2012). Empowerment in the perspective of ecumenical Diakonia. *Diaconia*, 3(2), 185-195.

Nordstokke, K. (2009). Diakonia in context: transformation, reconciliation, And empowerment: an LWF contribution to the understanding and practice of Diakonia (edited by Kjelle Nordstokke).

Ochieng, W. R., & Maxon, R. M. (Eds.), (1992). *An economic history of Kenya*. Nairobi: East African Publishers.

Page, N., & Czuba, C. E. (1999). Empowerment: What is it. *Journal of extension*, 37(5), 1-5.

Parhiala, P., & Simango, G. (2014). Diakonia and Human Dignity. *The Ecumenical Review*, 66(3), 330-340.

Rajbhandari, B. (2001). Bio-intensive farming and community animation for food security and sustainable livelihoods. *Development*, 44(4), 67-72.

Rajbhandari, B. P. (2011). Bio-intensive farming system: validation of its approaches in increasing food production, improving food security and livelihoods. *Nepalese journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 112.

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25-41.

Shanguhya, N. (2008). *State Policy and Food Insecurity in Kenya's Arid and Semi-arid Land (ASAL) Regions*. Nairobi: ProQuest.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: SAGE Publications Limited.

Appendix 1

Interview Guide Questions

1. What is contained in MCK bio Intensive training Centre in Meru- Kenya?
2. How are activities and services conducted in the farm?
3. To whom are the activities and services in Centre offered?
4. What farming methods do farmers practice before and after the training?
5. Why is the Centre called Bio intensive training Centre?
6. What are the technologies adopted by farmers?
7. Who adopts more the technologies of Bio intensive farming: male or females?
8. Why do whoever adopt more adopt, are there motivating incentives?
9. What discourages those farmers who do not adopt the technologies?
10. How were farmers farming before and after training? (production system, land use)
11. What are the impacts of training on the target group? (in Production, income, sale, consumption, more stable food access, nutrition)
12. Are farm products for domestic use or for sale? If for sale where are the produce sold?
13. What are the benefits of the new technologies to farmers and the society?
14. When was the Centre established? Who established it? How is the Centre Operated?
15. What contributed to the establishment of the Centre?
16. What is the importance of the Centre to the farmers and the community?