

**Title of Thesis.** The church against poverty: A critical analysis of the work of the Christian community services (CCS) in the Kirinyaga Anglican Diocese in Kenya  
**Date:** 1999

**Abstract:** This study centres on church involvement in community development. The study seeks to demonstrate that the model adopted by the Christian Community Services (CCS) is a fruitful experiment of church involvement in community development - one that has a tremendous potential to shed theological as well as practical light on church involvement in community development. After offering the statement of the problem and a brief geographical and social analysis of Kirinyaga Diocese, the study traces the genesis, vision and the *modus operandi* of the Christian Community Services. It then discusses the CCS 'Food Increase Programme' through the organisation's Rural Development Department. The Community Health and Social Services Programmes are presented as some of the CCSs interventions to reduce poverty in the community. The impact of these interventions was evident after the data collection, analysis and interpretation. The study then offers a theological evaluation and reflection of the work of the CCS as a model of church involvement in development activities in the community. The study argues that Christian theology has a particularly significant contribution to make to the debates about community development. In a pluralistic society in a secular age, a special responsibility is laid on the church to present its distinctive understanding and insights to address the abject poverty among the vast majority of her followers. Without this, the public life of the church becomes impoverished. Theology of development is the tool of the church to achieve this vision. Although difficult to define, development is seen as the process of transforming the conditions of life of the people referred to as 'the poor' such that they can lead a more holistic life. The main objective of the CCS development activities is to allow the poor to become the subject, not the object, of development strategies. Given the opportunity to do so, they have shown themselves to be capable of making rational choices regarding their own destinies. In this context, it is hoped that this study will help to contribute to an increased understanding of church involvement in development from within for, by and with the poor. As a result therefore, new optimism for the role of the church in development may emerge from the current pessimism. The study concludes that the church's involvement in development is not an 'extra' but a *bona fide* function of the Church.

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