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Enhancing Pastors' Welfare as Success Strategy in The Ministry: Case of Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference

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Abstract

The study examined how enhancing the socio-economic welfare of pastors contributes to stability, effectiveness, and sustainability of pastoral ministry in the Free Methodist Church, Kinyaga Conference in Rwanda. It specifically identified key socioeconomic challenges faced by pastors, assessed the impact of current remuneration policies on motivation and ministry sustainability, and proposed strategies for improving welfare and long-term commitment. The study used a convergent parallel mixed-methods design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected and interpreted together. Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary review were used with 60 purposively selected respondents composed of active pastors, retired pastors, and church administrators. Findings showed that 72% of respondents considered pastoral income insufficient, 80% were unable to save regularly, and 60% often relied on borrowing. Housing and health-related welfare were also weak, as 65% reported inadequate housing, 70% reported limited access to affordable healthcare, and 65% indicated that ministry demands affected mental or physical health. Remuneration policy concerns were evident because 62% did not understand existing policies, 70% viewed salary structures as non-transparent, and 78% reported that current remuneration did not motivate them. Respondents strongly supported reform measures, including minimum salary standards, pension schemes, health insurance, housing allowances, financial training, and mentorship support. The study concluded that pastors' socio-economic insecurity weakens ministerial effectiveness and institutional stability, while structured welfare reforms can strengthen motivation, resilience, and sustainable ministry.

Keywords: Pastors, socio-economic welfare, remuneration, ministry sustainability, institutional reform.

1. Introduction

The socioeconomic welfare of pastors plays a pivotal role in the sustainability and stability of ministry, particularly in contexts marked by economic fragility and institutional vulnerability such as Rwanda. Historically, the Church has been a cornerstone of social transformation, moral formation, and community resilience in Rwanda, especially following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, which devastated national infrastructure, displaced millions, and fractured the moral fabric of society (Longman 2010, 45–47; Clark 2019, 88–90). In the aftermath, faith-based institutions became crucial agents of healing, reconciliation, and social reconstruction (Gatwa 2005, 102–105; Gishoma 2020, 56–59).

However, while the Church's societal role has expanded, the welfare of its pastoral leaders has not received proportional attention. Pastors in Rwanda, particularly in rural conferences such as the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference, face precarious socioeconomic conditions characterized by low and irregular income, limited access to healthcare, inadequate housing, and absence of retirement planning (Kamanzi 2022, 73–75; Ndahayo 2021, 33–36). These conditions place pastors in an ecosystem where spiritual responsibility is high but material support remains insufficient.

The problem addressed by this study is that pastors in the Kinyaga Conference struggle to meet their families' basic needs, leading to psychosocial stress, reduced ministry efficiency, and in some cases premature departure from pastoral service (Adejumo 2021, 62–64). The absence of structured welfare systems such as health insurance, pension schemes, and housing allowances further exacerbates pastors' dependence on irregular congregational giving, leaving their livelihoods vulnerable to economic fluctuations and crises (Mukamana 2021, 70–73).

In the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference, the current pastoral remuneration system has generated significant concern regarding its fairness, sustainability, and impact on ministry outcomes. Under this model, pastors collect tithes and offerings from their congregations, submit monthly financial reports, and receive remuneration based on the financial performance of their parishes. Although this system aims to promote accountability and financial stewardship, it has unintentionally created economic pressure, competition, and discouragement among ministers (Mukamana 2021, 76–78).

Pastors thus operate within a context where unmet basic needs hinder the pursuit of higher-order goals such as self-actualization and effective service (Maslow 1943, 376). Similarly, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework emphasizes that stability and productivity depend on secure access to financial, human, social, and physical capital (Chambers and Conway 1992, 53). Therefore, enhancing pastors' socioeconomic welfare is not treated in this study as a peripheral concern, but as a strategic foundation for ministry stability, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The general objective of the study was to examine how enhancing the socio-economic welfare of pastors contributes to the stability, effectiveness, and sustainability of pastoral ministry in the Free Methodist Church, Kinyaga Conference, Rwanda.

The specific objectives were:

- i. To identify the key socioeconomic challenges facing pastors in the conference.
- ii. To assess the impact of current remuneration policies on ministry effectiveness and sustainability.
- iii. To propose strategies that can improve the welfare, motivation, and long-term commitment of pastors.

The study was guided by three hypotheses: pastors in the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference face significant socioeconomic challenges; the current remuneration model affects pastoral motivation, ministry effectiveness, and institutional sustainability; and structured welfare systems positively influence pastors' welfare, morale, and long-term commitment to ministry.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews the theoretical and empirical literature that guided the study of pastoral welfare, remuneration, and ministry sustainability. The review connects theological, organizational, psychological, and livelihood perspectives to the welfare realities of pastors serving in the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review presents the main frameworks used to understand why pastoral welfare matters for ministry stability and sustainable church leadership. The study was mainly supported by Shalom Theology, Stewardship Theology, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework.

2.1.1 Shalom Theology

Shalom Theology presents welfare as wholeness, peace, human dignity, justice, and flourishing. Plantinga (1995, 10–16) argues that shalom is “the way things are supposed to be,” encompassing spiritual, relational, economic, and emotional well-being. Wolterstorff (2008, chap. 9) broadens this understanding by highlighting that shalom involves social justice, human dignity, and equitable resource distribution.

This theory was relevant because pastoral ministry cannot be separated from the well-being of pastors. In Kinyaga Conference, pastors are expected to provide spiritual care and social guidance, yet their ministry effectiveness is weakened when income, housing, healthcare, and social protection remain unstable. Shalom Theology therefore supports the study's argument that pastoral welfare is a theological and institutional responsibility.

2.1.2 Stewardship Theology

Stewardship Theology emphasizes responsible management of God-given resources, including financial, human, relational, and institutional resources. Wright (2006, 365–380) describes stewardship as the faithful utilization of all God-given capacities to promote flourishing, while Stott (2006, chap. 4) emphasizes the ethical management of ecclesiastical finances and Christian responsibility in service to others.

The theory was applicable to the study because churches manage resources that should support ministry sustainability. Fair compensation, transparent financial systems, and welfare schemes for pastors are part of responsible ecclesial stewardship. In the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference, stewardship is not limited to collecting reports and offerings; it also includes using church resources to protect pastors from chronic vulnerability.

2.1.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's theory postulates that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of hierarchical needs, ranging from physiological and safety needs to social, esteem, and self-actualization needs (Maslow 1943, 372). When lower-level needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and security remain unmet, pastors are likely to experience stress, anxiety, and reduced focus on higher-level ministerial goals.

The theory was relevant to pastoral welfare because pastors cannot fully pursue visionary ministry when lower-level needs remain insecure. Income stability, decent housing, healthcare, and predictable support systems enable pastors to serve with focus and confidence. In the Kinyaga Conference, the theory explains why insufficient remuneration and weak welfare systems can reduce motivation and ministry effectiveness.

2.1.4 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework explains that people's ability to achieve sustainable livelihoods depends on their access to human, social, physical, financial, and natural capital. Chambers and Conway (1992, 7) emphasize that sustainable livelihoods help people cope with stress and maintain capabilities, while DFID (1999) organizes these assets into a practical framework for strengthening resilience.

The framework was important because pastoral welfare is not only a salary issue. It includes education, health, supportive networks, church infrastructure, social capital, and financial resilience. For pastors in Kinyaga Conference, limited access to these livelihood assets creates vulnerability, while strengthening them through pensions, insurance, housing support, financial training, and mentorship improves ministry sustainability.

2.2 Empirical Review

The empirical review summarizes previous studies and institutional evidence related to socioeconomic challenges, remuneration policies, and welfare strategies. These studies show how pastoral welfare influences motivation, resilience, leadership stability, and ministry continuity.

2.2.1 Socioeconomic Challenges and Pastoral Welfare

Carroll (2006, 74–78) examined pastoral leadership and congregational life and showed that pastoral effectiveness is influenced by the leader's relational, organizational, and personal stability. The study indicates that pastoral work becomes more sustainable when ministers receive adequate institutional support and operate within healthy congregational systems. This evidence supports the present study because pastors in Kinyaga Conference also require stable welfare conditions to serve effectively.

Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie (2013, 29–58) studied resilient ministry and identified emotional health, spiritual vitality, relationships, and self-care as central factors in long-term pastoral endurance. Their work shows that pastoral burnout often results when ministry expectations exceed support structures. This is consistent with the Kinyaga Conference situation where workload, stress, and limited welfare support affect pastoral effectiveness.

Barna Group (2022) reported that pastoral stress, burnout, and ministry sustainability are major concerns in contemporary church leadership. Although the context differs from Rwanda, the study demonstrates that pastoral welfare is a global concern that affects retention, motivation, and ministry performance. The present study extends this concern to the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference by focusing on income, housing, healthcare, and social protection.

2.2.2 Remuneration Policies and Ministry Sustainability

The Free Methodist Church (2019) Book of Discipline provides guidance on church order, ministry responsibilities, and pastoral service. Institutional policy documents are important because they define expectations placed on pastors and shape the systems through which pastoral work is supervised and supported. The present study examined how such structures relate to actual welfare experiences in Kinyaga Conference.

Rwanda Governance Board (2018, 12–14) emphasizes responsible organization, accountability, and proper management of faith-based organizations. While regulatory frameworks strengthen institutional discipline, they also create an environment where churches need transparent and sustainable internal systems. This evidence is relevant because remuneration transparency was one of the concerns raised by pastors in the Kinyaga Conference.

Republic of Rwanda (2020, 18–20) stresses social transformation, decent livelihoods, and improved quality of life as part of national development aspirations. Pastors contribute to moral formation, unity, and community resilience; therefore, their welfare should align with broader social protection and decent living goals. This connection supports the study's concern that ministry sustainability is weakened when pastors remain economically insecure.

2.2.3 Welfare Strategies and Pastoral Support Systems

Cohen and Wills (1985, 310–357) demonstrated that social support provides emotional, psychological, and instrumental resources that buffer individuals from stress. This evidence is important for pastoral ministry because pastors often face emotional, spiritual, and social demands from congregations. Peer-support groups, mentorship, and structured pastoral care can therefore improve resilience among pastors in Kinyaga Conference.

Becker (1993, 15–28) argues through Human Capital Theory that investment in people through education, training, health, and skills development improves productivity. In ministry, investment in pastors through training, healthcare, and professional development strengthens leadership quality and service delivery. This supports the study's recommendation that financial training and mentorship should accompany remuneration reforms.

Scoones (1998, 3–12) emphasized livelihood assets, strategies, and institutional support as essential for resilience in vulnerable communities. Applied to pastors, this means that sustainable ministry requires more than spiritual commitment; it also requires financial capital, social networks, physical support, and human capacity. The Kinyaga Conference can therefore strengthen ministry sustainability through structured welfare systems and capacity-building programmes.

3. Methodology

This section presents the methodological procedures applied in the study, including research design, target population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity and reliability procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The methodology was arranged to support both quantitative measurement and qualitative explanation of pastoral welfare issues.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed separately, then brought together during interpretation. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017, 18), mixed-methods research enhances validity through triangulation, while the convergent parallel design allows the researcher to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon by integrating findings during interpretation (Creswell and Plano Clark 2017, 67–72). It was appropriate because the study examined numerical patterns in pastors' welfare while also capturing deeper explanations of lived experiences.

3.2 Target Population and Sample Size

The study targeted pastors and church leaders within the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference. The sample comprised 60 respondents selected from three key categories: 30 active pastors, 15 retired pastors, and 15 church administrators. This composition allowed the study to collect views from those directly affected by welfare policies and those involved in leadership or administrative decision-making, which strengthened contextual validity in a case-based study (Neuman 2014, p. 246).

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used because the study required respondents with direct knowledge of pastoral welfare, remuneration practices, and ministry sustainability. Active pastors provided current ministry experiences, retired pastors provided long-term welfare perspectives, and administrators contributed institutional views on remuneration and policy implementation. The selection of information-rich participants strengthened contextual validity in the case-based study (Neuman 2014, p. 246).

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected through structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary review. Questionnaires generated quantitative responses on income, housing, health, workload, remuneration transparency, motivation, and reform preferences. The questionnaire items were aligned with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow 1943, p. 376) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (Chambers and Conway 1992). Interviews and focus group discussions provided qualitative explanations about lived experiences and institutional realities shaping welfare outcomes (Kvale and Brinkmann 2015, 89).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity was strengthened through careful alignment of the data collection instruments with the research objectives and questions. The instruments focused on socioeconomic challenges, remuneration policy effects, and welfare improvement strategies. Ensuring validity and reliability was necessary because validity confirms that instruments measure what they are intended to measure, while reliability supports consistent and stable measurement (Bryman 2016, p. 159). Reliability was supported through consistent administration of questionnaires and systematic organization of qualitative responses, and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, p. 125).

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to summarize respondents' views. Qualitative data were organized through transcription, familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation, following thematic analysis procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 82–90). Significant statements were coded to capture emerging concepts related to welfare challenges, institutional dynamics, and spiritual interpretations (Saldaña 2016, 9), and themes were organized to support coherent interpretation across participant categories (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012, 50). The two sets of findings were then integrated during discussion to provide a holistic understanding of pastoral welfare and ministry sustainability (Creswell and Plano Clark 2017, 213).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical standards by obtaining permission to collect data, explaining the academic purpose of the research, ensuring voluntary participation, and protecting

respondents' confidentiality. The ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, and confidentiality guided the study (Resnik 2020, p. 52). Participants were not required to disclose unnecessary identifying information, and the collected data were used only for academic analysis of pastoral welfare and ministry sustainability. Data were handled through confidentiality, secure storage, and anonymization of participant identities during reporting (Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden 2001, 93).

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents findings on pastors' welfare, remuneration policies, motivation, and proposed welfare reforms. The findings were derived from 60 purposively selected respondents, including 30 active pastors, 15 retired pastors, and 15 church administrators. This means that the study had a complete response base from the intended respondents, which provided a reliable basis for discussing the welfare conditions of pastors in the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic findings describe respondents by age, gender, and role in the conference. These characteristics help to understand the type of participants who provided information about pastoral welfare and ministry sustainability.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Category	N=30 Active Pastors	N=15 Retired Pastors	N=15 Church Administrators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-30	2	0	3	5	8.3
31-40	5	0	7	12	20.0
41-50	18	0	4	22	36.7
51-60	10	0	6	16	26.7
Above 60	0	5	0	5	8.3
Total				60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that the largest group of respondents was aged 41-50 years, representing 22 respondents or 36.7%. Respondents aged 51-60 years were 16 or 26.7%, while those aged 31-40 years were 12 or 20.0%. The age structure indicates that many respondents were mature and experienced ministry actors who could provide informed views on pastoral welfare, household responsibilities, and ministry sustainability.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	N=30 Active Pastors	N=15 Retired Pastors	N=15 Church Administrators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Males	23	14	11	48	80
Female	7	1	4	12	20.0
Total				60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 2 indicates that 48 respondents representing 80% were male, while 12 respondents representing 20% were female. The findings show that pastoral and administrative roles in the conference were largely male-dominated. This distribution indicates that welfare concerns

mainly affected male pastors, while the limited female representation also points to structural patterns in church leadership participation.

Table 3: Role in the Conference

Role	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Active Pastors	30	50.0
Retired Pastors	15	25.0
Administrators	15	25.0
Total	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that active pastors represented 50% of the sample, retired pastors represented 25%, and administrators represented 25%. This composition was suitable because it captured current pastoral experiences, retirement-related welfare perspectives, and administrative views on policy implementation. The results therefore reflect the voices of respondents who experience, oversee, or are affected by pastoral welfare systems.

4.2 Socioeconomic Challenges Facing Pastors

This subsection presents findings related to income, housing, health, workload, and ministry demands. These findings respond to the first research question on key socioeconomic challenges faced by pastors in the Kinyaga Conference.

Table 4: Income and Financial Security

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Income sufficient	43	72	6	10	11	18	60	100
Struggle meeting essential expenses	10	17	7	12	43	73	60	100
Able to save regularly	48	80	6	10	6	10	60	100
Often borrow money	13	22	11	18	36	60	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4 indicates that income and financial security were major challenges. Seventy-two percent disagreed that income was sufficient, 73% agreed that they struggled to meet essential expenses, and 80% reported inability to save regularly. In addition, 60% agreed that they often borrowed money. These findings show chronic financial vulnerability among pastors and indicate that current compensation arrangements do not sufficiently protect household welfare.

Table 5: Housing Conditions

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Housing is adequate	39	65	7	12	14	23	60	100
Access to water/electricity	31	52	9	15	20	33	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 5 shows that 65% of respondents disagreed that housing was adequate, while 52% disagreed that access to water and electricity was sufficient. Housing inadequacy therefore appears as a core welfare issue. Poor housing conditions may affect dignity, rest, family

stability, and ministry focus, especially for pastors serving in areas with weak infrastructure or limited parish resources.

Table 6: Health and General Well-Being

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Access to affordable healthcare	42	70	6	10	12	20	60	100
Work affects mental/physical health	11	18	10	17	39	65	60	100
Church provides emotional support	18	30	12	20	30	50	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 6 indicates that 70% of respondents disagreed that they had access to affordable healthcare, and 65% agreed that ministry work affected their mental or physical health. Half of the respondents agreed that the church provided emotional support, while the rest were either neutral or disagreed. These findings suggest that pastors experience health-related vulnerability and that support systems are not yet consistent across the conference.

Table 7: Workload and Ministry Demands

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Workload manageable	33	55	11	18	16	27	60	100
Stress due to expectations	12	20	9	15	39	65	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 7 shows that 55% of respondents disagreed that workload was manageable, while 65% agreed that they experienced stress due to ministry expectations. The findings imply that pastoral work involves heavy spiritual, administrative, social, and community responsibilities. When workload is high and welfare support is weak, ministry demands become a source of stress that can undermine pastoral effectiveness.

4.3 Remuneration Policies, Motivation and Ministry Sustainability

This subsection presents findings on policy awareness, transparency, fairness, equity, and motivation. These findings respond to the second research question on how remuneration policies affect motivation and ministry sustainability.

Table 8: Policy Awareness and Transparency

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Understand policies	37	62	11	18	12	20	60	100
Salary is transparent	42	70	9	15	9	15	60	100
Policy changes communicated	39	65	11	18	10	17	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 8 shows that 62% of respondents did not understand remuneration policies, 70% disagreed that salary arrangements were transparent, and 65% disagreed that policy changes were properly communicated. The findings reveal a communication and transparency gap in remuneration management. Such gaps can reduce confidence in leadership decisions and create uncertainty regarding pastoral welfare.

Table 9: Fairness and Equity

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
System treats pastors fairly	41	68	7	12	12	20	60	100
Remote allowances adequate	45	75	6	10	9	15	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 9 indicates that 68% of respondents disagreed that the system treated pastors fairly, and 75% disagreed that remote-area allowances were adequate. These findings suggest that pastors serving in economically disadvantaged or remote parishes may feel unfairly treated. Perceived inequity weakens morale and can discourage mission-oriented placement in areas where pastoral presence is most needed.

Table 10: Motivation and Ministry Effectiveness

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Remuneration motivates me	47	78	6	10	7	12	60	100
Financial constraints affect focus	7	12	9	15	44	73	60	100
Adequate pay improves commitment	6	10	3	5	51	85	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 10 shows that 78% of respondents disagreed that remuneration motivated them, while 73% agreed that financial constraints affected ministry focus. At the same time, 85% agreed that adequate pay would improve commitment. These findings demonstrate a strong practical link between pastoral welfare and ministry effectiveness. Financial insecurity does not only affect household life; it also affects attention, energy, and long-term commitment to ministry.

4.4 Strategies for Improving Pastoral Welfare

This subsection presents respondents' views on institutional reforms and capacity-building strategies. The findings respond to the third research question on strategies that can improve pastoral welfare, motivation, and long-term commitment.

Table 11: Proposed Institutional Reforms

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Minimum salary standard	3	5	5	8	52	87	60	100
Pension scheme	2	3	4	7	54	90	60	100
Health insurance	2	4	6	10	52	86	60	100
Housing allowance	6	10	9	15	45	75	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 11 reveals strong support for structured institutional reforms. Eighty-seven percent agreed on the need for a minimum salary standard, 90% supported a pension scheme, 86% supported health insurance, and 75% supported housing allowances. These results indicate that pastors view stable income, social protection, and housing support as necessary reforms for restoring dignity and strengthening sustainable ministry.

Table 12: Capacity Building and Support

Statement	Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%	Nb	%
Financial training	5	8	7	12	48	80	60	100
Mentorship groups	3	5	11	18	46	77	60	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 12 shows that 80% of respondents supported financial training and 77% supported mentorship groups. These findings indicate that welfare reforms should not focus only on pay and benefits. Pastors also require knowledge, peer support, and practical skills that strengthen resilience, resource management, emotional stability, and ministry continuity.

4.5 Hypothesis Verification and Discussion

The first hypothesis was supported because findings showed significant socioeconomic challenges in income, savings, borrowing, housing, healthcare, workload, and stress. The second hypothesis was supported by evidence that the current remuneration system was poorly understood, perceived as non-transparent, viewed as unfair by many respondents, and associated with low motivation. The third hypothesis was supported because respondents strongly endorsed minimum salary standards, pensions, health insurance, housing allowances, financial training, and mentorship groups as strategies for strengthening pastoral welfare and long-term commitment.

The findings align with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs because unmet basic and safety needs affected motivation and focus (Maslow 1943, 372). They also align with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework because pastors' resilience depends on financial, human, social, and physical support systems (Chambers and Conway 1992, 7; DFID 1999). Overall, the results show that pastoral welfare is not a peripheral administrative issue but a strategic foundation for stable, effective, and sustainable ministry.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section presents the conclusion, recommendations, and areas for further research based on the findings on pastoral welfare, remuneration, and ministry sustainability in the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference.

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that pastors in the Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference face serious socioeconomic challenges that affect their welfare and ministry performance. Insufficient income, inability to save, dependence on loans, inadequate housing, limited healthcare access, workload pressure, and stress collectively weaken pastoral stability and reduce ministry effectiveness.

The study also concluded that remuneration policies influence motivation and ministry sustainability. Poor understanding of policies, limited transparency, weak communication, and perceived unfairness reduce trust and morale among pastors. When compensation depends heavily on parish financial performance, pastors serving disadvantaged areas experience deeper vulnerability.

The study further concluded that structured welfare reforms are essential for sustainable ministry. Minimum salary standards, pension schemes, health insurance, housing allowances, financial training, and mentorship groups can strengthen pastoral dignity, resilience, commitment, and institutional stability. Therefore, enhancing pastors' socioeconomic welfare is a strategic necessity for preserving the future of ministry in Kinyaga Conference.

5.2 Recommendations

Free Methodist Church Kinyaga Conference leaders should establish a minimum fixed salary for pastors to protect them from extreme income instability and ensure that basic pastoral welfare is not fully dependent on parish financial performance.

The Church should develop a transparent written remuneration policy that clearly explains payment formulas, allowances, review procedures, and communication channels so that pastors understand how welfare decisions are made.

The Church should introduce structured social protection mechanisms including pension schemes, health insurance support, and housing allowances to strengthen long-term pastoral security and dignity.

Conference leaders should provide regular financial management training, mentorship groups, and peer-support systems to improve pastors' practical resilience, emotional support, and capacity for sustainable ministry.

5.3 Areas for Further Research

Further studies should examine pastoral welfare across other conferences of the Free Methodist Church in Rwanda and compare urban and rural pastoral welfare experiences. Future research may also assess the financial feasibility of introducing pension, health insurance, and minimum salary schemes for pastors in faith-based organizations.

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