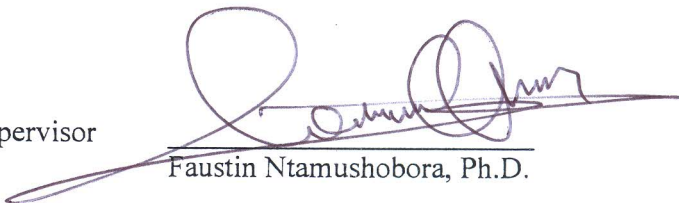AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AS A FOUNDATION FOR SHALOM IN AFRICAN
FAMILY BUSINESSES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify biblical principles that support leadership in African Christian family businesses and to identify the manner in which these principles can be utilized by leaders of family businesses to bring about *shalom* within family businesses. This study used the mixed methods research approach using a concurrent transformative research design. The target population comprised individuals known to be operators or stakeholders in family businesses. The sample was selected using a combination of purposive, quota and snowball sampling methods in order to arrive at a sample that was as representative as possible. The data collected revealed that the majority of family business practitioners had religious affiliations, that the majority expect religious convictions to form the basis of decisions made within the family businesses and that they, therefore, had an appreciation for biblical principles of leadership. The data demonstrated that while practitioners within family businesses had some understanding of the biblical principles that determine the success, very few depended on the Bible as a knowledge/wisdom resource; consequently, some of their practices were in contradiction to biblical principles. The data revealed that family business practitioners had high expectations of founders/elders for leadership and direction in conflict resolution and a high value for relationships among family members and commitment from staff members. The study made recommendations as to how threats to *shalom* in these businesses could be countered by establishing clear, well explained/understood succession mechanisms, putting governance, management and operations structures in place and the deployment of practical Bible-based leadership development training programs as church ministries targeting both founders and other stakeholders within family businesses.