

# ***THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES***

## **Critical Analysis of the Pastoral Challenges Facing Christ the King Parish, Catholic Diocese of Yei- South Sudan**

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### **Abstract:**

*The exodus of the Catholics to Pentecostal Churches is a great challenge to the Catholic Church worldwide. This study investigated two research questions namely; what are the challenges that led to the exodus of the catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches, and what strategies can the parish employ to address the challenges. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design using a mixed method approach. The study employed strata, cluster, snowball and purposive sampling for 113 participants. Data was collected using structured and unstructured questionnaires, interview guides, focus group discussions, and document review. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, charts and tables using the statistical package for social sciences, version 20, and a narrative interpretation. The findings revealed major challenges include the shortage of priest in the Diocese, shifting of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches, and inadequate remuneration for catechists among others. The study recommended the creation of Catholic chaplaincy in schools, lobby for Fidei Donum priest from sister Dioceses to enable deeper evangelization; enhancement of the small Christian communities, enrollment of female catechists, creation, and implementation of Diocesan strategic goals.*

**Keywords:** Pastoral challenges, Christ the king parish, exodus & catholic diocese of Yei

## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1. Introduction*

This chapter presents the outline of the study of the pastoral challenges facing Christ the King parish in the Catholic Diocese of Yei, South Sudan. It discussed the background to the study; the statement of the problem and research questions. It also explained the significance of the study, the scope and delimitations to the study, and the justification for the study.

### *1.2. Study Background*

The Catholic Church command the greatest number of worshippers globally, nonetheless it is also facing numerous pastoral challenges in her mission of evangelization

A study carried out by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University-A private research University (The oldest Catholic and Jesuit institutions of higher education) in Washington, D.C. - in the United States of America reported that the Catholic Church has experienced the conversion of the faithful to the Pentecostal churches. The report also revealed that though one-in-three Americans (31%) were raised in the Catholic faith, the study recorded that it has dropped to 24 %, hence, a large number of Catholics have left the Catholic Church and joined other denominations (CARA, 2008).

According to Mark Woods (2014), 90% of the population in Latin America including the U.S.A and the region of Puerto Rico identified with the Catholic Church in the 1960s. However, the population of Catholics has dropped from 67% in 2010 to 55% in 2014. The survey further revealed that 84% of the young people expressed their desire for a diverse style of devotion, worship or a church that benefits its followers' needs (Boorstein, 2014).

This argument, however, should not be applied to Catholic Church in general; the truth is that each and every Christian must be accountable for his or her acts of faith. On the other hand, we agree that pastors also may have a share of the blame because the faithful are entrusted to their pastoral care. The Sacred Scripture teaches that Christ himself entrusted the care of his flock to the apostles and the latter did to their successors when he said to Peter, "feed my sheep" (Jn 21: 17).

A study carried out in Bulgaria reported that there is a mass conversion of the Roma (Gypsy) Catholics to the Pentecostal churches. The report further stated that the Gypsy people have lost interest in their own Church. They claimed that the Catholic Church in Bulgaria is rigid with its liturgical conservatism and patriotic attitude. They accused the Catholic clergy of being unenthusiastic to offer them spiritual services; they have not been active in delivering aid to the underprivileged while reproving the Pentecostals and other evangelical pastors for doing so (Atanasov, 2014).

A study carried out by Swatos (1998) focused extensively on the factors that influenced the increase of Pentecostal churches in Ghana, and their countercultural beliefs in the 1960s. Sackey (2001) replicated a similar study in Ghana, and the findings were based on political, rather than religious grounds; for example, resentment of the African people against the missionary colonialism, and racial discrimination in the leadership positions in South Africa.

Another research was carried out in Nigeria and reported that the mainstream churches have become highly institutionalized. The researcher added that the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria have become an issue of major concern to most Nigerians. He lamented that there is religious fervor all over the place. According to Onah and Diara (2014), asserted that few members of the mainline churches have a critical attitude to the influence of Pentecostalism in the mainline churches; hence, the latter tend to condemn them (Adesanya, 2011).

Akoko (2002) carried out a similar study on the increase of Pentecostal churches in Cameroon and reported that the flourishing churches were because of the then economic crises. He noted that Pentecostal churches lay some strong doctrine of religion in attracting people in large numbers and many people have been persuaded to join them because of their own ill health or that of a relative. Some have joined these churches because of family crisis resulting from alcoholism, unemployment, or domestic strife.

A journal articles by Nyabwari & Kagema (2014) reported that the mainstream Churches in Kenya have lost more of the faithful because of the presence and activities of the Pentecostal churches. They added that the Pentecostal churches attracted many Christians from the Catholic Churches because of the latter's strict traditions, beliefs, and practices; for example, some levels of liturgical ministries are limited to the ordained male ministers.

A study carried out in South Sudan revealed that the growth of Pentecostal churches is rapid. Some of their leaders (pastors, moderators, and self-proclaimed Bishops) are former-Catholics. A majority of them have neither completed the required Philosophical nor Theological standards of training to guide the flock (Deng, 2001).

Recent studies carried out in Juba demonstrated that the Catholic Church in South Sudan faces a big challenge due to the rapid growth of the Protestant Church, and the mushrooming of new churches. The report revealed that there are more than 220 new churches in Juba town and the majority of those are Pentecostal churches. The findings revealed that the Episcopal Church of South Sudan has created more Dioceses, and is now in the process of creating five new ecclesiastical provinces. This indicates that the Catholic Church in South Sudan is not growing. The youngest Diocese in South Sudan is now 31 years since its creation, hence, this raises some questions to the Catholic bishops: what is preventing them from bringing pastoral services nearer to the people (SSCBS, 2017).

### 1.2.1. Diocesan Strategic Activities

**Pastoral services**—Christ the King is endowed with God's gift to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace as stipulated in the Scripture (1Pt 4: 10). St. Peter emphasizes on responsibility, sharing justice with the local and universal Catholic Church. The Church is God's flock with the Lord Jesus as the Good, Chief and Great Shepherd (John 10:11; 1 Pet. 5:4; Heb. 13:20), but from within the community of the flock, Christ raises up leaders who are to act as under-shepherds. They have been given the responsibility of leading, protecting, feeding, and caring for His sheep (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:12; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Therefore, the Diocese of Yei has set priorities to recruit qualified pastoral agents, provide relevant training in biblical and spiritual services, provide an on-going formation of catechists, and youth ministry.

### *1.3. Statement of the Problem*

Christ the King Parish stands on three strategic pillars namely; pastoral service, social service, and administrative personnel development with all-embracing programs. Nonetheless, in practice, some Catholics and potential trained catechists as well as lay leaders among others have left the Catholic Church and embraced the Pentecostal faith, and their numbers are on the increase (DSP, 2013; SCBCS, 2017). What is wrong with the Diocesan spiritual and pastoral role of shepherding the flock? What is lacking in the Parish that the pastoral agents and clergy are unable to offer? These observations justify this study.

### *1.4. Research Questions*

The study was guided by two questions:

1.4.1. What are the pastoral challenges that caused the exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches in Christ the King Parish?

1.4.2. What strategies should the parish employ to address the movement of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches?

### *1.5. Justification for the Study*

The exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches was one of the internal forces that are a threat to evangelization in Christ the King Parish, hence, the study sought to bridge this gap.

### *1.6. Significance of the Study*

The study will motivate the leadership of Christ the King Parish to address the challenges that are encountered amidst inter-faith dialogue and ecumenical activities, and mitigate the negative effects encountered.

It helps the pastoral and catechetical centers create inclusive programs for an active participation of the Catholics in the spiritual activities. It helps furnish the diocese with the necessary facilities to train, motivate, and retain catechists who have specific roles in teaching catechesis to new members.

It has contributed a working document for the congregation for the propagation of the faith among others to improve transformative catechesis and deeper.

### 1.7. Scope and limitations of the Study

Geographically, the study was carried out in Christ the King Cathedral Parish located in the center of Yei town. The parish is the See of the Bishop and center of all Diocesan administrative structures.

### 1.8. Conceptual Framework

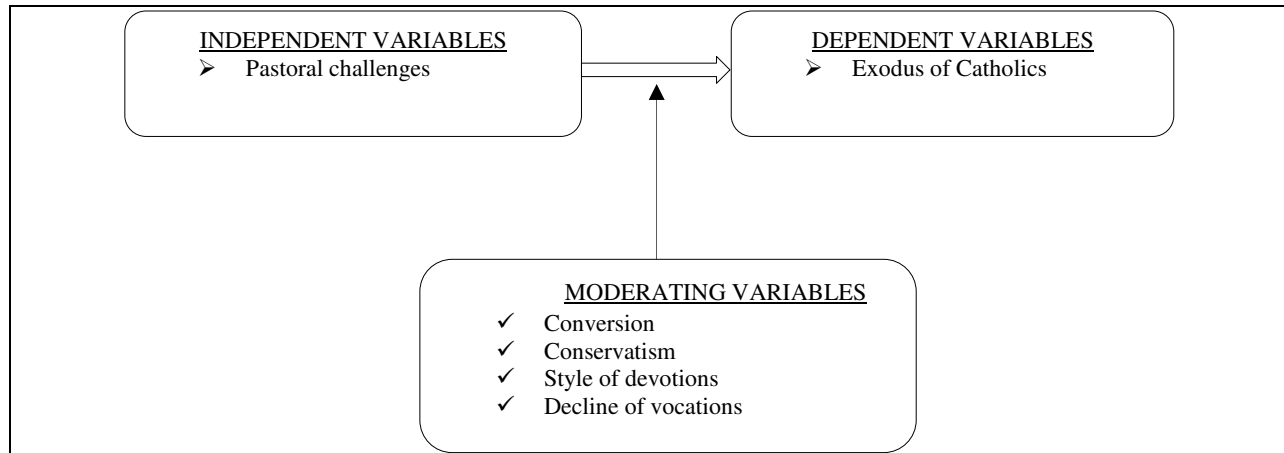


Figure 1: Conceptual framework  
Source: Author (2017)

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

The main purpose of the literature review is to determine what other scholars have done and related to the topic under study. "The literature review section provides a foundation for the proposed study in terms of what other researchers have done" (Mugenda, 2013:28).

In this study, the researcher summarized and synthesized all the material that was relevant, and integrated what other scholars have done and said. The researcher identified the central issues and gaps in the literature reviewed.

This chapter outlines the format that focused on examining four theories: Sociology of Religion Theory, Rational Choice Theory, the theory of Religious Economy, and the Encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI - *Populorum Progressio*. These were used together with the two which are derived from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks as road maps in chapter one that guided the study.

Related literature focused on an empirical review of previous studies with specific reference to the pastoral challenges that are affecting Christ the King Parish and the strategies that could be employed to address the challenges. Finally, the study focused on critical reviews and established the knowledge gaps after the reviewed literature.

The researcher used multiple sources that include materials from textbooks, journals, documentaries, tertiary and current internet postings. The authority of this study was based on the Sacred Scripture, the Vatican Council II documents, the Papal Encyclical letters, and bishop's pastoral letters.

#### 2.1.1. Sociology of Religion Theory: Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917)

Emile Durkheim founded the Sociology of Religion Theory (SRT). Sociology of religion is the study of the beliefs, practices and organizational forms of using the tools and methods of the discipline of sociology. Sociologists study the shared meanings that humans attach to their interactions with one another, and they study human experience as it unfolds within societies over time. They study social patterns that are stable and those that are changing. The theory is distinguished from the philosophy of religion, and in that, it does not set out to assess the validity of religious beliefs. It broadly differs from theology in assuming indifferences to the supernatural (Durkheim, 1897).

Durkheim believes that religion is about community. It binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavior consistency (social control) and offers strength for people during life's transformation and tragedies (meaning & purpose). He held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mindset of society. He contends that these values need to be maintained to uphold social stability. He added that religion is something that represents the power of society and applies two theoretical perspectives (influence of beliefs and experiences) namely; functions of religion and symbolic interactionism of religion.

#### 2.1.2. Rational Choice Theory: (Adam Smith, 1776; Finke & Stark, 2000)

Adam Smith is generally acknowledged as the forefather of the Rational Choice Theory (RCT). The rational choice theory was first formulated by Adam Smith and later adopted and developed by Rodney Stark & Roger Finke (2000). Finke and Stark were the first

proponents of Adam Smith who considered the use of RCT to explain some aspects of religious behavior: the human side of religion. Rational choice theory is the view that people make rational choices based on their goals, and those choices govern their behaviors. The theory tries to explain why people make decisions or take actions, and it is not unique to sociology (Smith, 1776). RCT proposes that in a pluralistic society, the religious institution will compete for members and people's choice between different churches or denominations is the same way as they select other consumer goods, balancing costs and rewards in a rational manner.

### 2.1.3. The Theory of Religious Economy (Iannaccone, 1998)

The economics of religion applies socio-economic theory and method to explain the religious behavior patterns of individuals, groups or culture and the social consequences of such behavior. One example is Adam Smith's analysis of the effects of competition for religious denominations on the quantity and quality of religious service to the worshipers. He is considered one of the pioneers of the field, and of its most staunch advocate. He is the proponents among others that includes Muller, 1975; Williams Sims Bainbridge, 1985; Roger Finke & Rodney Stake, 2000 among others and dozens of economists, and several sociologists who have picked up where Adam Smith (1776) left (Agbikimi, 2014).

Religious economic perspectives were built on rational choice assumptions. In particular, these approaches assume that there are potential benefits to religious participation, both psychological and interpersonal, that people may seek. The theory of religious economy argues that the economic model of supply and demand has a significant role in the development and success of organized religions.

### 2.1.4. Populorum Progressio (Paul VI, 1967)

Pope Paul VI urged the Church leadership to address the human person holistically and bring them closer to God. It draws the world's attention to unity, progress and authentic human development. It addresses both spiritual and material needs and satisfaction in God. The encyclical appeals for an integral human and pastoral development.

### 2.2.1. Pastoral challenges in the Catholic Church

#### 2.2.2. Decrease in Membership in the Catholic Church

One of the challenges to the Catholic Church is loss of her members to the evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Cardinal Walter Kasper remarked that there must be something wrong in the battle for souls. He added that many Catholics are leaving the Church to join Pentecostal churches and other Evangelical movements. He recommended that the Catholic Church must undergo a self-critical pastoral examination of conscience to control the extraordinary rise of Pentecostal churches (Lukose, 2007).

#### 2.2.3. Lack of Comprehensive Catechesis in Evangelization Process

According to the Apostolic Exhortation (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*), catechetical instruction must be given to all to form patterns of Christian living, and not to remain only nominal or passive Catholics. The effort for evangelization will profit greatly at the level of catechetical instruction given at Church, in schools, where this is possible, and in every case in Christian homes (Paul VI, 1975).

The Holy Father further explained that those giving catechetical instruction should have suitable texts, updated with wisdom and competence, under the authority of the bishops. "Such catechesis should be presented by local and regional catechism, which aims to serve the church in all diversity of her rites and cultures" It is necessary above all to prepare good instructors-parochial catechists, teachers, and parents who are desirous of perfecting themselves in this superior art. The catechesis must be with full Gospel vitality and circumstances (Paul VI, 1975).

The younger generations feel that have they already learned catechesis, hence, don't have anything more to learn. Hence, the church should teach the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and tradition (Ayers, 2015). Today the world in which we live presents to our youth many realities and choices. This leaves the youth vulnerable and most of them are unable to decide on the right choices because their desires and needs are not settled. They are increasing in number and their presence in society does not isolate them from the problems assailing them (Paul VI, 1976).

According to Adossi (2009), there are threefold reason that attracts the youth to the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria to namely; religious, social and recruitment. They claim to have joined the Pentecostal churches in search of a greater sense of fulfillment of their religious needs. The young people claim that the Pentecostal churches offer some cultural traits, which are similar to the culture of the people such as extended family ties, recognition of the personal worth of the individual and the spontaneity of community life and affection.

White (2012) remarked that Christians are moving from one denomination to another without committing themselves to any specific church for any significant period. The challenge is that such Christians have no deep foundation in their faith. They are like the man who built his house on sand as described in the sacred Scripture: "The rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had" (Mt 7:27). Phillips (2015) asserted that some of the deserters are merely Catholics who go to Church under the label "Catholics" but have no personal meaningful faith. They might go sometimes to please their parents. Their grievance is that they are not being "spiritually fed" within the Catholic community.

According to Taylor et al. (1995), 80% of the youth in the USA leave the Catholic Church and shift to Protestant churches by the time they turn 23 years old. Only 30% of them who were raised by Catholic families remain practicing Catholics, 10% are known as ex-Catholics and 80% are no longer Catholics.

The study concluded that Catholics who have become Pentecostals claim to have a guarantee of stable church attendance as adults. Others have left the Catholic Church because of some scandals (i.e. pedophilia or child abuse by the clergy) and the Church's handling of it. A growing reason is the church's attitude toward homosexual marriage, birth control, contraceptives and abortion among others (Taylor et al., 1995). The Catholic Church however, has a firm stand on her moral and dogmatic teaching.

#### 2.2.4. Religious Pluralism

Some countries are like a melting pot of cultures and religions. With immigration, new religious movements from within a nation, around Africa, America, Asia, and Latin America have become competitors for the souls of the faithful. How does the Catholic Church address this confrontation of pluralism? The authors of the Rational Choice Theory (Smith, 1776; Fink & Stark, 2000) who pointed out that in a pluralistic society with many beliefs and practices, religious institutions will compete for members. The rational choice theory also explains the development and decline of churches because of the exodus of Christians and competition for members among denominations. It further explains that people will choose between different churches and denominations that meet their spiritual and material needs.

Central to this pastoral challenge is the idea of knowing the truth, claiming the truth, and wanting to share it with others, and yet; on the other hand, respecting others, especially those who do not want to be evangelized (Essien, 2010). Jesus Christ himself said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, a sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of favor from the Lord" (Lk 4: 18).

The implication is that care is needed to address the spiritual and temporal needs of the flock in Christ the King Parish. Pope Paul VI (1967) also emphasized these concerns in his encyclical: *Populorum Progressio*, about the role of the Catholic Church to humanity by bringing them closer to God.

#### 2.2.5. Freedom of Religion

The concept of freedom of religion might have contributed to the decline of enthusiasm among Catholics on the one hand, and on the other, it encourages evangelization. The concept of freedom of religion does not prohibit Catholics from being proactive in their efforts to attract new members (Bruce, 2011).

According to the United States Department of State (USDS, 2013), the Transitional Constitution (TC) of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) stipulated that religious beliefs shall not be used for divisive purposes. Instead, it recommended the right to worship of assembly freely in connection with any belief and to establish places of worship for these purposes. This statement however, does not give way for Catholics to move way or convert to other churches or sects.

### *2.3. Strategies to Address the Challenges*

Researchers have suggested that in order to retain affiliated (registered) Catholics and mitigate the continued loss of members, Catholic leaders should create the necessary environment to have a warmer atmosphere in the Church. They should encourage the right use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit or charisms. The Catholic Church should revive her mission strategy and address the factors that are paving way for the Catholics shift to the Pentecostal churches (Vu, 2007).

The Catholic Church Leadership has the liturgical and spiritual responsibility to create a spiritually vital religious life with a strong identity, and good leadership. This is related to the number of worship services a congregation is likely to have one or more "contemporary" worship style with upbeat music, including electric guitars, drums, and selections from pop-Christian artists. When churches also plan for growth by developing a recruitment plan, their synergy of growth strategies coupled with multiple services, diverse programs, and younger members with families will more likely encourage growth (McMullen, 2008).

Congregations that are able to plan for growth, implement strategies to meet the needs of congregational members, and create a more diverse organizational culture are most likely to experience growth. The Church that faces the loss of members must make decisions about how to survive in a changing environment, especially the situation in South Sudan where new churches are mushrooming. Leaders should do well to stay in touch with the needs of their members and create a culture of spiritual vitality that accommodates people according to schedule (McMullen, 2008; Paul VI, 1967). They learn to respond to environmental changes not as a threat, but as an opportunity to expand or transform their mission of evangelization. There is a need to use an invitation to weekly worship and regular fellowship activities to incorporate new participants. Another factor is the financial barriers that hinder the growth of the faith; nevertheless, the Catholic Church should embark on the opening of on-going formation centers in order to retain old members and retain the existing Christians who would be on the verge of defection (Akoko, 2002). This could be a response to one of the pastoral care responsibility of the Church in serving the Church and society.

FACT 2008 research indicated that the ability to have large entertaining worship experiences must be supplemented by utilizing small groups to facilitate the development of more intimate relationships in order to retain the on-going commitment of new members. The Church leadership must introduce outreach ministries that serve the needs of the poor but largely contained within the small Christian community, as well as strong mutual support within the parish and Diocesan levels (McMullen, 2008).

#### 2.3.1. Pastoral Care

In his letter (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation: *Amoris Laetitia*), Pope Francis (2016) recommended that the Catholic Church needs a specific pastoral program addressed not only to families that migrate but also to those family members who remain behind. This pastoral activity must be implemented with due respect for their culture, for the human and religious formation from which they come and for the spiritual richness of their rites and traditions, even by means of a specific pastoral care.

Jesus wants a Church attentive to the goodness, which the Holy Spirit sowed in the midst of human weakness, a mother who while clearly expressing her objective teaching, “always does what good she can.” The Pope stressed that pastors must also help them to treat the weak with compassion, avoiding aggravation or unduly harsh or hasty judgments. The Gospel itself tells us, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; because the judgments you give are the judgments you will get, and the standard you use will be the standard used for you” (Mt 7:1; Lk 6: 37). Jesus expects us to enter into the reality of other people’s lives and know the power of tenderness (Francis, 2016).

#### 2.4. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature on the two theories of Sociology of Religion, and Rational Choice Theories that guided this study and other related theories. It also viewed an extensive related literature that sought answers to the research questions under study from textbooks, relevant journals, and the internet. This study sought to fill the following knowledge gaps: Lack of global focus on topic under study, a limited critique of previous scholars, unspecified scope, dominant qualitative approach, one sampling procedure (non-probability) and unspecified data collection instruments.

### 3. Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methods that were used in conducting the research. It is divided into nine sections namely; introduction, the research design, target population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, validity and reliability of instruments, and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2. Research Design

The study adapted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This design was selected because the researcher picked only some representative sample participants of the cross section of the population (Creswell, 2014). The specific design was prepared because it allowed the researcher to obtain a detailed report on the pastoral challenges affecting Christ the King parish. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of mixed method research provides a number of advantages, namely: provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. Thus, by using both types of research, the strengths of each approach can make up for the weaknesses of the other.

#### 3.3. Target Population

The target population was selected from Christ the King Cathedral Parish. It included the clergy, religious women, catechists, and former Catholics. The participants selected were aged 18 and above.

#### 3.4. Description of the Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study used both probability and non probability sampling procedures for the sampling. Under the probability sampling the researcher employed stratified random, and cluster sampling techniques, and snowball. For the stratified random sampling, the researcher divided the target population into 15 strata (outstations), and drew five lists, which represented the age groups between 18 and above. In each of the stratum, the participants were selected according to the formula (nth). The lay faithful were chosen from each stratum using odd figures (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>).

The researcher divided other participants according to the zone boundaries which have been defined by the parish pastoral organ. They were selected using even numbers (2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>). The researcher used the zones as clusters. Thus “it was the groups or clusters that were randomly selected” (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003: 49). It is a sampling technique that was “appropriate to have selected the sample on the basis of knowledge of the population, its elements, and the purpose of the study” (Babbie, 2010:199).

The researcher also selected seven respondents conveniently and purposively for the focus group discussion. The clergy and religious were selected purposively because they were easily accessible. The “purposive sampling is a sampling technique that provided the required information with respect to the objectives of the study” (Mugenda, 2013:42). The researcher also selected the religious and clergy purposively because they are few and from one parish. The respondents in this study were knowledgeable people and well versed in the vision and mission of the Diocese. This concurs with Amin (2005), who asserts that people who are knowledgeable would be very good for obtaining reliable information.

##### 3.4.1. Determining Sample Size

According to Cheney (2015), the total population of registered Catholics in the Diocese of Yei is 410,200 that comprise nine parishes. However, Christ the King Parish has a population of 26,070 Christians (personal communication, July 25, 2016) as suggested by the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication text book (APA, 2010:179). Furthermore, the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (SSNBS, 2010) and the National Baseline Household Survey (NBHS) reported that more than half (51%) of the population of South Sudan is under the age of 18 (eighteen). Hence the researcher adapted the scientific formula which was developed by Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

Therefore, the sample size was 379 participants based on the formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), and it was representative of the target population in Christ the King Parish. However, for the purpose of this study, the sample size was calculated at 49% of the

desired sample based on the report that more than 51% of the population in South Sudan is under the age of 18 (SSNBS, 2010). Therefore the specific sample size was  $(49\% \times 379)$ , equal to  $185.71 = 186$  participants.

### *3.5. Description of Data Collection Instruments*

The researcher used both open and close-ended questionnaires, interview guide, Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) guides, and document analysis

### *3.6. Description of Data Collection Procedures*

The researcher obtained an authorization from the Head of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; and an approval letter from the Diocesan authority which facilitated the data collection. Questionnaires were administered to the participants with the help of an experienced research assistant from the research center in Yei County.

The participants were requested to fill the questionnaires individually. The researcher then carried out a face-to-face interview with 12 participants (4 clergy, 2 religious women, and 6 ex-Catholics) using the structured interview guide. The interviewees gave some substantial qualitative data as per their experience which was anticipated. While carrying out the interviews, the researcher did ask questions and took note of the responses on a notebook as recommended by Amin (2005). The researcher encouraged the interviewees to share their experiences freely. The researcher also organized a focused group discussion of 7 participants. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected concurrently.

#### 3.6.1. Primary Data

The respondents filled the questionnaires within a period of 6 weeks. The data was recorded in a notebook and the verbal speeches were taped and transcribed into words as accurately as possible.

#### 3.6.2 Secondary Data

The researcher consulted several secondary sources for the information for the data in Christ the King Parish namely; minutes of the Diocesan annual pastoral council, Diocesan strategic plan document, Bishop's pastoral letters, personnel data, and the Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference pastoral guide. The researcher also consulted information from the Catholic Encyclopaedia, Sudanese Catholic clergy directory, and manuscripts from the Diocesan archives.

### *3.7. Description of Data Analysis Procedures*

According to Kothari (2004), data analysis is the interpretation of findings based on the research questions on the subject under study. The data collected from the questionnaires was coded and tabulated. It was then analyzed using descriptive statistics and narratives. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommended that the purpose of descriptive statistics is to allow a meaningful description of a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices or statistics. The primary quantitative data was coded and analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0, one of the most suitable analysis tool (IBM Corp, 2011). Both data bases were analyzed using the convergent parallel mixed method. The interpretation was also done in the discussion section (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies, percentages, and charts. The qualitative data was analyzed by developing categories and themes (sub-headings from the interview and focused group guides), then a narrative interpretation of the data. The findings were presented in form of tables, charts, frequencies, graphs, and narratives.

### *3.8. Validity & Reliability*

#### 3.8.1. Validity

Coolican (2009) speaks of instruments for validity as the extent to which it does verifiably intend to measure. Therefore, the researcher ensured the validity of research instruments and their relationship with the variables of the study. For validity, the researcher gave the questionnaires to the approved University supervisors for corrections and clarifications. The instruments were validated through the application of content analysis. Before going to the field, the research questionnaires were revised according to the recommendation of the two supervisors of this study. In addition, three other experts validated the instruments as recommended by Connelly (2008), that a researcher should choose an odd number people between 3 & 5 to validate the instruments.

#### 3.8.2. Reliability

The researcher involved 19  $(10/100 \times 186 = 19)$  participants for the pilot test in three different locations as recommended by Connelly (2008) and Hertzog (2008) that a 10% of the sample size is representative for a pilot test. It helped to ensure consistency of the instruments and the achievement of the objectives of the study. The raw data were subjected to statistical computation using the IBM Corp (2011), version 20.0 and tabulated.

In social sciences research, Cronbach's Alpha was used as a reliability coefficient measure. It is a measure of internal consistency. It is meant to check whether all the items in the scale really tap into one construct. The benchmark for an acceptable reliability should be greater or equal to  $(\geq) .700$ . In this study, however, the Cronbach's Alpha is .783 as shown in table 3.4 above; hence, the reliability is high and acceptable as recommended by IBM Corp (2011).

Given that the Cronbach Alphas were greater than .070, as recommended by Amin (2005), the items measuring the variables were considered dependable for the data collection. A statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 (IBM Corp, 2011).

### 3.9. Ethical Considerations

This study was done in accordance with the ethical principles. The interviewees were assigned pseudo names to protect their identity. The researcher took the sole responsibility of the questionnaires and kept all collected data out of reach of outsiders.

## 4. Presentation, Discussion, and Interpretation of Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the presentation, discussion and interpretation of the findings of the study. It gives details of the challenges facing Christ the King Parish and the strategies that could be employed to address the challenges. The findings are presented in tables, charts, and narratives.

### 4.2. Response Rate

Response rate, also known as completion rate, or return rate, refers to the number of participants who answered the questionnaires, interviewees and focus group discussions (113), divided by the sampled population (186), and multiplied by 100. Hence, the response rate was 68.48% that is considered adequate in social science research (Hager et al., 2003; Babbie, 1998; Bailey, 1987).

### 4.3. Pastoral Challenges Facing Christ the King Parish

Pastoral challenges	Frequencies	Percentage	Rank
Change of affiliation to Pentecostal churches	20	21.27	2
Ecumenical collaboration	4	4.25	7
Shortage of clergy in the field	26	27.7	1
Lack of lay training for the apostolate	8	8.50	5
Inadequate support to pastoral programs	18	19.14	3
Insufficient remuneration of catechists	12	12.76	4
Decline in spiritual commitment	6	6.38	6
	94	100	

Table 1: Findings on the pastoral challenges facing Christ the King Parish

Source: Primary data (2016)

- What are the pastoral challenges facing Christ the King Parish?

The researcher sought to investigate the pastoral challenges in the parish, and the findings in Table 18 revealed seven major challenges among others. The shortage of clergy 26(27.7%) is the first strongest challenge and change of affiliation to the Pentecostal churches was ranked the second 20(21.27%). Inadequate support for pastoral programs was ranked the third 18(19.14%) and insufficient remuneration for the catechist was ranked the fourth 12(12.76%). The fifth-ranked challenge was the lack of skill training for the apostolate 8(8.5%). The sixth challenge was the decline in spiritual commitment 6(6.8%) and the seventh challenge was the lack of ecumenical collaboration between the two denominations 4(4.25%).

The above results imply that the shortage of clergy in the diocese of Yei is the most felt need; hence, it resulted in the change of affiliation from the Catholic Church to the Pentecostal churches. In this case, inadequate support to pastoral programs comes because of the shortage. There could be other reasons, but the concerns concurred with the views of Shorter & Njiru (2001) that the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches in Africa has attracted new members and pulled away many Catholics to the Pentecostal churches.

The researcher asked the participants about the major pastoral challenges facing Christ the King Parish in her mission of evangelization.

In response to the question, the participants shared the following concerns:

“In Christ the King parish the harvest is plenty but the laborers are few. The major pastoral challenges facing the parish are the limited number of priest and religious in the field. Due to their limited number, the workload is heavy and hectic. The training of the few clergy is doubtful because some of them have shown clear signs of incompetence and lack of initiatives. The leadership style of the authority is autocratic, hence some clergy quitted the active ministry, and more than 94% of the future priest under formation left the seminary. The majority of the catechists are not trained; hence, it renders the mission of evangelization weak and uncertain. The gap between the Catholic faithful and the clergy is large; hence, it renders pastoral activity at stake. These are the gaps, which pushed the Catholic faithful to look for pastoral care, spiritual and psychological needs which are not so much catered for. The high rate of the exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches was no other than spiritual and material care” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

These observations concurred with the sentiments of Pope Paul VI in his encyclical letter, *Populorum Progression* (1967) that the Catholic Church has the responsibility to look into the spiritual and physical needs of the whole human person, and accord them human dignity and share in God's life. Emile Durkheim's theory also confirms it in his explanation of the human temporal needs and desires.



#### 4.3.1. Change of Affiliation to the Pentecostal Churches

The participants ranked the change of affiliation to the Pentecostal churches as the second challenge 20(21.27%).

In a related interview with a member of the clergy, his point of view was that:

- “The rapid urbanization and Pentecostal outreach to the needy and the marginalized population have pulled away a majority of the Catholic faithful. The reasons they give are not always the same, but the most common were that some Catholics gradually drifted away or stopped the belief in some religious teaching and spirituality. Human beings need something more than technically proper care. They need human and heartfelt concern” (Adidi: August 12, 2016)

The implication is that the spiritual and pastoral care need some extensive attention. Some of the Catholic faithful who wonder from one church to another are seeking fulfillment, however, in another interview, the respondent said:

- “The truth remains that no particular church can ever satisfy the needs of every individual. It is true that human beings need care, warmth, love, and security. If their needs are not met, surely they will opt to go where they can be offered a place to feel at home and a feeling of togetherness. Some of them claim that such values are practiced with the Pentecostal churches. Nevertheless, Pentecostal churches also take advantage of the most vulnerable people, and South Sudan is a living example” (Kuri: August 12, 2016).

The views of the interviewee concurred with some scholars who assert that the rapid growth of the Pentecostal outreach ministry to the needy and the marginalized pulled away a majority of the Catholic faithful. This observation, however, needs to be looked into critically. The needs of those who shifted to the Pentecostal churches may not be the same, depending on the circumstances (Shorter & Njiru, 2001; Cooper, 2007).

In a focus group discussion session, the participants expressed that:

“Unity is at stake in South Sudan because the communities identify themselves with tribes and political affiliations. They prefer to worship in their ethnic groups where they feel accommodated and safe. Others do go to their church of origin, yet they participate more in the tribally led churches. Communities based on a tribe where they use their own local languages (especially the dominant ethnic groups in the diocese) head most of the Pentecostal churches. The on-going civil war has also partially contributed to the socio-spiritual dilemma among the people of South Sudan. The current war situation targets local communities; hence, the victims are the vulnerable women whose husbands are mostly soldiers or government forces. They are promoted to high ranks based on ethnic background, loyalty and support to the government. They said, the present phenomenon is not new and yet it is growing. According to them, most of the missionaries were more uniting people unlike the South Sudanese themselves.

Most of the Sudanese Christians are losing hope; they are seeking immediate solutions to their problems. However, unless they are committed to their faith, shifting to the Pentecostal churches can hardly be a solution to the on-going bloodshed and insurgency. Some participants claim that the Pentecostal churches have powers that drive out evil in the community, hence they shift to them temporarily for solutions to their problems (it is like consulting a medical doctor for a specific treatment” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The implication is that majority of the Catholics also believe in the healing practices of the Pentecostal churches. They join them for the purposes of emotional and physical healing. However, the Catholic Church teaches that every Eucharistic sacrifice is a healing mass because of Christ’s presence. Furthermore, anything to do with healing is a matter of faith.

#### 4.3.2. Ecumenical Collaboration

The findings ranked ecumenical collaboration 4(4.24%) as the second challenge. In the Republic of Sudan, the Catholic Church has experienced a reduction in the number of the faithful. In different parishes, lay leaders who served and lived in different communities have returned to their ancestral lands (families of origin). On the other hand, in South Sudan, a majority of the people have returned from internal displacement, refugee camps, and diaspora. This requires interfaith-dialogue among couples who are married, but affiliated to different denominations, understanding, and adaptation to the new model of Christian community that emerges from such a diversified membership.

In an interview with one of the participants, the following was her point of view:

- “The ecumenical aspect of the Christian churches is another area that needs discernment and renewal. Other pastoral challenges are the emergence of new ecclesial communities that never existed in the country, not even before the separation of North and South Sudan. Christian churches must convey and commit themselves to renew and transform their relationships and mission identity. Most of the youth born during the war had not experienced crusades, which they call modernity-a new way of worshipping God. Before the war in South Sudan, children identify themselves with the religion of their parents, but nowadays; they shift according to marriage partner or peer group influence” (Ngote: August 12, 2016).

These findings confirm the views of Deng (2001) who noted that the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in South Sudan made a majority of the Catholic faithful identify with them. They prefer some flexibility and dynamic programs in the catechesis prior to the reception of the sacraments.

In another interview, the researcher asked whether the Catholic Church participate in the activities of the Pentecostal churches, the interviewee said:

- “It is rare, except on a special invitation. Nevertheless, it would also depend on the nature of the activities of the Pentecostal churches. For instance, a funeral function is likely to draw a number of Catholics who go purposely to pay their condolence may be subject to hearing the preaching of the Pentecostal church personnel. Activities such as crusades, open-air preaching, and singing/dancing do attract a good number of Catholics to attending the Pentecostal churches”(Ale: August 12, 2016).

The implication is that the ecumenical meaning of solidarity is fading away with time. There seems to be no initiative from any Christian denomination to create activities that bring them together except during funerals, which are a humane and Christian obligation to mourn with those affected especially during this period of conflicts and civil war.

#### 4.3.3. Shortage of Clergy in the Diocese of Yei

The findings point out that the shortage of clergy in the field 26(27.7%) was ranked the first challenge in the Catholic diocese of Yei. In an interview with senior priest on the shortage of the clergy in the field, the respondent noted that:

- “The difficulties that the Diocese of Yei faces in maintaining adequate number of clergy results in reducing the number of parishes. Sunday Masses would no longer be celebrated in some parish centers or outstations. More so, those that are yet operating have one priest each. The number of clergy available in the pastoral ministry has fallen drastically. There was a gap (No ordination) of ten years in ordination to the priesthood. More than half of the priests have left the ministry for various reasons, and the number of major seminarians in the formation has declined from 64(100) % in 1998 to 5(7.8%) in 2016” (Solom: August 12, 2016).

The implication is that the diocese is unable to maintain the few clergy who are persevering, and there is no sign of vocation promotion programs for future priests. The seminary should have been the hope of the diocese. The presence of the priests in the parishes could be a sign of encouragement, but the evidence of that formation is not forthcoming.

In a focus group discussion on the same issue about the shortage of clergy in the parish, the participants had a different that;

“The Catholic Church insists that Catholic priest must be men who are to embrace the life of celibacy, obedience, and poverty. Thus, the Catholic Church has limited vocations for future priests. However, allowing Pentecostal pastors to marry and ordain women have not stopped the decline of clergy globally. They further added that the issue of the shortage has become a common phenomenon; hence, some parishes have remained vacant. In Christ the King parish, the distance that the Catholic faithful travel for Holy Mass and other sacraments have become long. The shortage of priests has led to the temporary closure of two parishes and several outstations. The few priests available have less time for individual church goers since they must care for many of them.

Due to this shortage, parish priests have often multiple parish responsibilities. Some clergy are assigned at least two extra responsibilities each. These tasks could render an ineffective service delivery because of workload. The majority of the parishioners who reside in rural parishes felt abandoned, hence they had to shift to the Pentecostal churches that were available and ready to serve and meet their spiritual needs” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The views of the focus group discussion concurred with Hoge (2013) who noted that the shortage of clergy in the Catholic Church has become a common phenomenon. This has led to a sacramental deficiency for the Christian communities globally. On the other hand the Leadership of the Catholic Church urges that the local Church need not suffer silently; “Nonetheless, dioceses that are suffering from such a shortage of clergy should not therefore close their ears to our supplications for help in the foreign missions. Our Lord for our imitation proposes the widow’s mite. If a poor Diocese helps another poor diocese, it cannot possibly grow poorer in so doing; God does not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity” (Pius XII, 1957, No. 67).

In an interview with one of the priests, he pointed out that:

- “In the history of the Church there have always been moments in which vocations to the priesthood and religious life declined, and these moments will continue to be as long as human history changes. In my own (the respondent) opinion, there are internal factors and external factors that affect the growth of vocations. The internal factors are those that come from the Catholic Church itself such as lack of exemplary living by some priests and religious sisters/brothers who are already in the ministry and lack of proper care for priests and sisters/brothers by those in leadership, and by the Christian communities where these ministers offer service. All this discourages young men and women from daring to enter priestly and religious formation in order to become ministers in the Catholic Church” (Rombo: August 12, 2016).

In another interview, the respondent had this to say:

- “There is a critical issue regarding the number of young people entering our seminaries today. Those enrolling have drastically dwindled and projected numbers showed that the total of newly ordained priests coming out of our seminaries is the lowest in the history of South Sudan. Some Church officials foresee that we will have one-third fewer priests in the years to come and there will be no replacements for those priests who are retiring or leaving for various reasons” (Saleh: August 16, 2016).

The views of the interviewee showed that the shortage of priests in the Diocese of Yei is an internal problem that the leadership has to look into critically. This is evident with the declining number of seminarians from the formation house. The future of the diocese is at stake in as far as there is no vocation to either religious or priestly life.

In a focus group discussion, the researcher sought to establish the effects of priests in the Diocese and the following were their responses:

“The future priests for the Catholic Diocese of Yei were virtually expected from the diocesan minor seminary, which existed since the creation of the diocese in 1986; but due to the civil war in the country before and after separation, the minor seminary was moved to Metu sub-county in Arua diocese-Northern Uganda. Due to changing and unstable circumstances, the relocation of the seminary was not conducive for formation. The seminarians were studying in public schools and exposed to counter difficulties and influences. As a result, the efforts of the diocese proved almost fruitless from 1990 to date-2017. All 94 seminarians deserted and joined secular life. Unlike the other dioceses in the South Sudan, the Diocese of Yei has no local congregations; neither for brothers nor nuns; from creation in 1986 through 2016. Currently, there is no hope for a diocesan priest in the next decade. Therefore the shortage of priests in

the field will remain a major challenge; the pastoral care of the Catholic faithful will remain at stake as the few clergy are also ageing” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The implication of this shortage is being felt across the whole country. In some areas, priests have to serve two parishes. Because of the decline in the number of priests, there is an unfortunate tendency by Catholic Christians to shift to the Pentecostal churches.

#### 4.3.4. Lack of Lay Training for the Apostolate

The findings established that lack of skill training for the apostolate 8(8.5%) was ranked number five.

In a focus group discussion, the participants revealed that:

“The Pentecostal churches encourage lay people training for ministerial work. The training is concerning the doctrines that relate to their ministry. The Catholic Church also encourages that lay ministers are much more practical when they get whatever training in theology, ethics, philosophy and technical skill as a necessity. The distinctiveness of the Pentecostal training programs is that they offer short-term courses within the locality. But the Catholic Church has a minimum training of lay ministries of at least one year, and such programs are offered outside the country which require some funding, and the diocese has limited resources to facilitate some of the courses” (FGD: July 27, 2016).

The findings confirm the Vatican Council document (Degree on the apostolate of lay people: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*) which directs that lay people must be trained in ministerial work. They need to understand doctrines that relate to their ministry regardless of gender (Flannery, 1992 no. 28, p.793).

In an interview, one respondent said:

- “There are few established institutions of training in the Republic of South Sudan. The youth could gain some practical skills such as carpentry, masonry, and computer training. This situation led to the frustration of the youth” (Lubari: August 8, 2016).

The researcher too acknowledges that if there were no such structure that accords training for the laity, the latter would prefer to find it elsewhere. The implication is that those former Catholics might have deserted the Church because they were not given such responsibilities that suit their aspirations.

#### 4.3.5. Inadequate Pastoral Care Programs

An inadequate pastoral care program 18(19.14%) was the third challenge revealed by the respondents.

In a focused group discussion, the respondents had this to say:

“Shortage of priests in the field has also contributed directly to the inadequacy of pastoral care in Christ the King Parish. The same issue has been addressed during the annual diocesan pastoral council meeting, but the resolutions have remained unimplemented. The administration of the sacraments has also deteriorated because of the distance that the catechumens walk to parish centers. Unlike the Catholic Church, the Pentecostal churches administer the sacrament of baptism without strict catechesis; hence, mothers would not wait longer to have their children baptized. The same applies to the sacrament of marriage which in the Catholic Church; it must precede a determined period of catechetical instruction for both couples. The sacrament can only be administered on condition that the customary formalities are complete. This could be part of the reasons that the Catholic faithful find it easy to cross to the Pentecostal churches where they are accorded baptism and marriage with a shorter period of instruction” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The findings of the participants concurred with Pope Francis (2016) views. He asserted that pastoral care of the faithful is one of the worries that the Catholic Church faces globally. The Pope reiterated that pastors must know for the sake of truth they are obliged to exercise careful discernment of the situation. In another development, Subhash (2013) quoted Pope Francis who said that, if the Catholic faithful are deserting the Church to join some sects, or embracing Pentecostal churches, the priests and bishops are primarily responsible. Similarly, Cardinal Kasper urged that the Catholic Church must figure out why Catholics are leaving to join Pentecostal churches (Vu, 2007). Cardinal Tomko (1993) urged that the clergy must see to it that catechists who are the immediate aid to the clergy are facilitated so that they can carry out their mission effectively in the pastoral field.

The implication is that the clergy were charged with the responsibility of shepherding the flock of Christ. In the event that they are left wondering, then they have a reason to seek some spiritual care where they are easily accepted and served. However, a small number of the faithful desert the Catholic Church, the exodus should be a learning experience. The Catholic Church needs to find an effective way of retaining her faithful.

#### 4.3.6. Insufficient Remuneration of the Catechists

The finding in Table 8 shows that insufficiency of remuneration for catechists 12(12.76%) was ranked the fourth challenge.

In a focus group discussion, the respondents remarked that;

“Insufficiency of the catechists’ remuneration and lack of motivation could justify some of the reasons why they have shifted to the Pentecostal churches seeking better subsidies. Christ the King Parish is said to be relying entirely on external support. Experience has shown that the parish does not have local sources of revenue to sustain the least of its pastoral agents. The catechists engaged in the field are more volunteers than full-time pastoral agents because, they have to cater for their families too” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The findings imply that the parish has no clear established remuneration policy for her catechists. In addition, in as far as, catechesis is concerned; part-time catechists are not assured any assistance to motivate them. This situation confirms the statement of Cardinal Tomko (1993) who pointed out that the clergy must see to it that catechists are well maintained to enable them to carry out their duty of evangelization effectively. Without them, the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Yei may not grow as expected by the mission of Christ.

In a document analysis, one of the Diocesan pastoral letters acknowledged that;

“The role of catechists has been, and remains a determinative force in the implementation and expansion of the pastoral programs of Christ the King Parish and the entire Catholic Church in South Sudan. The clergy who are the immediate cooperators of the bishop are to see to it that catechists are assured suitable living conditions so that they carry out their mission effectively. In the midst of the Christian community, catechists’ responsibility should be acknowledged and held with respect. Catechists are the immediate aid to the clergy in the mission of evangelization; hence they need to be accorded both spiritual and material support to motivate their hard work” (Document analysis-Pastoral guide: August 30, 2016).

#### 4.3.7. Decline in Spiritual Commitment

The findings on the decline in spiritual commitment ranked 6(6.38%) as a major challenge facing Christ the King Parish. In focus group discussions, it was revealed that;

“The problem of desertion among Catholics is because of lack of pastoral care for parishioners, and the Catholic Church’s inability to train enough priests to meet the pastoral needs of all the parishes. They also challenge the Pentecostal churches of attracting the Catholic faithful by their crusades and critics against the Catholic Church According to them, the Pentecostal preachers attack other Catholic doctrines, particularly on Tradition, infallibility of the Pope, apostolic succession, celibacy, the Mass, and the use of religious images”(FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The decline in spiritual commitment dominated the discussion. This concurred with (Counted, 2012; and Enang, 2012) who revealed that majority of the Catholic apologists claimed that the problem of exodus of the Catholics to the Pentecostal churches is due to lack of pastoral care and the inability to train more priests to meet the pastoral needs of the faithful. The Encyclical letter; *Populorum Progressio*(Paul VI), also confirms the same views that the Church should address the needs of the whole human person and accord them dignity.

The argument here is that the Catholic Church needs to concentrate on the Catholic social teaching and the doctrines the Church in ministry. They must defend and protect the Catholic Tradition as part and parcel of their teaching office.

#### *4.4. Findings on the Strategies that the Parish Could Employ to Address the Challenges*

<b>Strategies to address challenges</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Deeper evangelization	18	19.14
Formation of small Christian communities	15	15.95
Promotion of liturgy and active participation	14	14.89
Capacity building programs	19	20.23
Comprehensive catechetical instruction	12	12.76
Unity and solidarity	16	17.03
Total	94	100

*Table 2: Strategies to address the challenges  
Source: Primary data (2016)*

The researcher sought to establish the strategies that the parish could employ in order to address the challenges encountered. The findings in Table 20 indicate that 18(19.14%) recommended an engagement into a deeper evangelization among the Catholic faithful, and 15(15.95) suggested the formation of more small Christian communities. Regarding the promotion of liturgy and active participation of the Catholic faithful, 14(14.89%) concurred and 19(20.23%) proposed capacity building programs. 12(12.76%) of the participants recommended a comprehensive catechetical instruction and 16(17.03%) suggested the promotion of unity and solidarity among the Christian communities.

In a focus group discussion, the respondents had the view that:

“In order to regain the loss of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches and other denominations and sects, the participants urged the leadership of the Catholic Diocese of Yei to build the broken bridges between the leadership and the clergy following the example of Christ the good shepherd. The leadership should pay attention to the health and living conditions of the clergy. Enhance a better functional transport and communication facilities in the parish. Open up and relax the bureaucratic policies that barred vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. Attract local and missionary congregations to the diocese to help mentor the mission for the good of evangelization.

The parish leadership should initiate dialogue and ecumenical programs in order to address the exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches and other sister denominations. Allow room for the participation of the skilled laity in the planning strategies of the diocesan programs. Initiate some local income generating projects that can sustain the clergy, catechist, and the entire diocesan activities” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

#### 4.4.1. Deeper Evangelization

The participants 18(19.14%) proposed a deeper evangelization by the parish. The researcher engaged seven participants in a discussion and their response was that;

“Majority of the Catholic families in the Catholic Diocese of Yei received the Word of God from the Comboni missionaries, but there is a need of deepening their formation in faith practices. It is unfortunate that the Catholic faithful still associate Christianity with the

distribution of material goods to the people as the first missionaries did upon arrival to the mission land. Perhaps deeper evangelization would help them carry on the mission of announcing the kingdom of God to others. It is now a challenging task for the clergy and pastoral agents to instill the message of the Gospel in order to penetrate in a deeper way to both individual persons and the Catholic community at large. The Church is encouraged to be self-reliant, but people are still having the hangover of being at the receiving end. It requires a deeper conviction leading to attitudes that govern the integral person, body, and mind in all circumstances of life and work. Deeper evangelization should employ also methods that are more constant to a technical and psychological progress of the Christian community. According to the participants, the Catholic faithful who are not rooted in faith still wonder from one church to another; and currently, they seem to be comfortable with the Pentecostal churches which attract new members with the first impression of donations and scholarship awards” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The results of the findings concurred with the AMECEA Bishops (2002) who were inspired by the pastoral letter of Pope John Paul II - *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001). The bishops emphasized on the need for deeper evangelization in the New Millennium. According to them, deeper evangelization should encourage the formation of Small Christian communities as a priority. The methods of catechesis should go beyond the mere memorization of the ready-made responses in the catechism; it may penetrate and transform the hearts of the recipients. It should be addressed to the entire Christian community in which we live. Cardinal Donald Wuerl also confirmed the same concern that one of the challenges facing the Catholic Church today is poor catechesis. He proposed that there must be an extensive catechesis on the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and Tradition (Ayers, 2015, Iannaccone, 1998).

The implication is that deeper evangelization is not to be addressed to individuals in a private manner, but to the entire diocesan Catholic community at large. More than that, there cannot be deeper evangelization without a communion of love and unity with others and pastoral care of the people. People should be evangelized for life in the community. Deeper evangelization should lead the Catholic faithful to a positive attitude through the courageous denunciation of the structure of dependency and the clear conviction to their faith and denominational identity.

#### 4.4.2. Formation of Small Christian Communities

The findings revealed that 15(15.95%) of the participants proposed the formation of more small Christian communities.

In a focus group discussion of seven participants, the group had this to say:

“In almost every consultation we conducted prayers in our small Christian communities, and in almost every outstation we observed, the issue of assimilation arises. As committed parishioners, if we could just keep the people who join our church, our attendance would be twice as high compared to previous programs. This has been the usual complaint of the parish priest on Sundays. The question that people always ask was whether there were confidential ways of retaining the committed (devoted) Catholics. Experience shows that assimilation was built on four key principles. The outcome of seminars and workshops had not been able to identify anyone principle as more important than others. We do know, however, that a church that is weak in one of the areas will have some degree of assimilation problems.

One of the key commonalities (first principle) among the churches was a sense of expectation of members and prospective members. Clear expectation was that each member was to make a difference through the ministries of the church given by the parish. Giving was not advertised as optional but expected among church members for the good of the larger community.

The second principle was ministry involvement. If a church member does not become meaningfully involved in some type of ministry in the church, his or her drop-out chances increase dramatically. However, the church leadership cannot delay in moving new members to places of ministry.

The most common principle (third) was relationships. What many church leaders do not realize is that the development of these relationships with new members best takes place before the member joins. If the new member has no relationship with a church member when he or she joins the church, it is exceedingly difficult to create relationships. Such is the reason why it is critically important for church members to become highly intentional about developing relationships with that person whenever he/she visits the church.

The last principle (fourth) is small-group involvement. This involvement includes discipleship groups, home cell groups, ministry teams, and choirs and praise teams, among others. Our journey showed that the most effective assimilation group was the Sunday school, which is the open-ended small group that typically meets on the church campus. A person involved in a Sunday school class is five times more likely to be active in the church five years later, than a person who attends worship services alone (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The implication is that Pentecostal members seem to be relatively good on the four above mentioned principles. They excel more than the Catholics with small but meaningful groups; especially among the youth in secondary schools and colleges. Not all Pentecostal practices are misleading. It is, therefore, paramount to emulate some of these strategies that could nurture and retain our Catholic faithful in the Diocese, parish, and Small Christian Communities. The Small Christian Community is a priority for deeper evangelization in the mission of the church today.

#### 4.4.3. Revitalization of Liturgy and Active Participation

The findings reveal that 14(14.89%) of the participants recommended the promotion of liturgy and the active participation of the Catholic faithful as a good strategy. In a focus group discussion, the participant’s views were that;

“There is no doubt that our Catholic faithful find joy and fulfillment in the Pentecostal vibrant liturgical celebrations. Indeed, there is also more happiness in the celebrations of the sacraments in the Catholic Church setting. The catechism of the Catholic Church recommends that pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful, and their active participation. The parish needs

to encourage and involve the laity to play their significant roles. On the other hand, the clergy needs to be flexible in adapting the various languages of the people of Yei and translate the necessary liturgical books into the languages that can be understood by the various ethnic groups” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

The strategy on the revitalization of liturgy concurred with the promulgation: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, which stipulates that there should be an active participation in the liturgy by all Christians. Furthermore, “Pastors of souls must promote liturgical instruction of the faithful, and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally, taking into account their age and condition, their way of life, and the standard of religious culture” (Paul VI, 1963: 19; Durkheim, 1917).

The implication is that the clergy who are the pastors of souls should fulfill one of the chief duties of dispensing the mysteries of God; and in this matter, they must lead their flock not only by word but also by example through witnessing. It is only in the assembly of the Lord that Christians are united in body and soul. The liturgical celebration is the apex of our Christian identity; hence, it should be promoted extensively.

#### 4.4.4. Capacity Building Programs

The findings show that 19(20.23%) of the respondents agreed that capacity building programs would be a better strategy for Christ the King Parish.

In a focus group discussion, the participants held the following views;

“Capacity building is a key strategy that can develop people in all aspects of life. An integral development must not be understood solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human. It is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labor, of concretely enhancing every individual's dignity and creativity, as well as his or her capacity to respond to his personal vocation, and thus to God's call. The apex of development is the exercise of the right and duty to seek God, to know him and to live in accordance with that knowledge. The Catholic Church endorses that social action should be accompanied by in faith –human beings are more than economics or politics - and this must be recognized if integral development is to be possible. The participants suggested that the parish leadership should initiate some integral capacity building programs. Such initiatives could be attractive to the affiliated Catholics. Once such activities are in place, there may not be any temptation to seek for a church that satisfies their basic needs” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

These views concurred with the words of Pope Paul VI (1967) in his encyclical letter-*Populorum Progressio*, that the Catholic Church should address the whole human person: their material and spiritual nourishment, and accord them the awareness of human dignity.

#### 4.5.5. Comprehensive Catechetical Instruction

The findings portray that 12(12.76%) of the participants recommended that there should be a rigorous catechetical instruction as one of the strategies to address the challenges facing the Christ the King Parish.

In a document analysis, the Catholic Diocese of Yei strategic plan stipulated that;

“The catechetical instructions should be in conjunction with the Sudan Catholic Bishop’s Conference (SCBC) national certification standards for lay ecclesial ministers. The document directs that the formation for catechetical leaders in the third millennium should include competence and skills specific to evangelization, the changing parish landscape, the family, cultural realities and the rapid development of technology. This formation should also take into account the educational level of the catechists who are directly in charge of the catechesis. In order to develop and/or support catechetical leaders in their initial and on-going education and formation programs should include; programs that study, and network to address the full scope of evangelization and catechesis, the use of technology for research and identification of resources; and mentoring process for the catechists. The study should research and evaluate catechetical methods and processes that address contemporary parish life and structure and on-going education and spiritual opportunities that support lifelong faith formation” (Strategic plan Booklet: August 27, 2016).

In a focused group discussion, the following was their input;

“The Diocesan leadership should endorse the attendance of regional, national, and diocesan meetings, workshops and conferences that promote the effective training of catechists and parishioners of all ages. The programs should share information about the parish and diocesan safe environment mandates and their implementation throughout the Diocese.

The programs should accord the primacy of the family in the formation of children with their parents as leaders of faith. They should learn information concerning the complexities of today’s family with its cultural, political, socio-economic, organizational, and relational issues. Priority should be given to outreach families, including single adults who are not engaged in Catholic school, parish religious education programs or youth ministry.

The programs should include constitutive elements of culture, theological, sociological, spiritual, historical, psychological, linguistic and economic aspects. The spiritual programs should assist the parishes to examine their belief in light of the Catholic Church teaching as a unified whole” (FGDs: July 26, 2016).

The focused group discussion showed clearly that the catechists need to understand and proclaim the transforming and regenerating force that the Gospel works in every culture. The catechists should be taught the basic knowledge concerning the effective and appropriate use of contemporary media and communication technology. The Diocese of Yei is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural territory because of its strategic location on the Ugandan border in the South and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. Hence, the catechetical instruction materials need to be updated in order to match the changing advancement in learning. Once the catechists are equipped with the necessary knowledge, they will remain loyal and resourceful agents for the growth of the local church in the diocese of Yei, and South Sudan. The diocesan leadership should also ensure that all catechists understand the catechetical vision and mission of the parish, the diocese and the universal Church at large.

#### 4.4.6. Unity and Solidarity

The findings underlines that 16(17.03%) of the participants concurred that unity and solidarity would be a better strategy that could address the pastoral challenges in Christ the King Parish.

In a focus group discussion, the participants emphasized that: “According to them this was a credible argument because unity is a virtue that Christ himself demands from all humanity; especially those who identify with him. Here, unity and fellowship primarily focus on our spiritual unity with Christ, an inner relationship, and among the Christians at large. Solidarity is about valuing our fellow human beings and respecting who they are as individuals. In Christ the King Parish, the situations of inequality, poverty, and injustice, which exist are signs of the absence of a culture of solidarity. We are all one family, (the Body of Christ) in the world because we are all created in the image and likeness of God. The parish leadership needs to build a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential with rights and responsibilities. The leadership needs to embrace unity among the Christian communities and be in solidarity, which must be expressed in linking between the diocesan administrative structures or parishes in different dioceses in South Sudan. This can also be a healing of the challenge of nepotism in the leadership as expressed by some respondents” (FGDs: July 27, 2016).

In an interview, the participant revealed that:

- “South Sudan has been affected by tribalism and civil war. The South Sudanese people especially the youth who were born during the period of war, and have become militarily oriented. The element of tribalism has rooted to a culture of hatred, hostility, and aggressiveness. It is a challenge; hence, the young people must be encouraged to take time and dedicate their energy to eradicate this culture of hate and division. It is unfortunate that they are being mobilized and used by the power hungry; the so-called leaders to fight their own brothers and sisters as militia. The potential youth have lost the sense of unity and solidarity because they are the victims of military conscription in order to carry arms. The church leadership has a big task to carry in this endeavor to foster a sense of solidarity, which must be firmly rooted and persevering determination to commit herself to the good for all. Once unity and solidarity have become part of the community life, there would be no defectors from the Catholic faith” (Lanka: August 22, 2016).

The above concerns concurs with the sociology of religion theory (Durkheim, 1858-1917) which teaches that people are searching for meaning and purpose in life, reinforcing social unity and stability. It is also confirmed by the encyclical; *Populorum Progressio* that religious institutions need to promote people in order to promote unity, stability, physical and psychological well-being (Paul VI, 1967). Pope Francis (2014) argues strongly that, it is necessary to educate ourselves in solidarity, to rediscover the value and meaning of the Christian life. He further added that humanity needs a solidarity that makes an effort to ensure that an ever greater number of persons are independent.

The implication is that we all exist for one another; hence, the Church communities need to be in the forefront to address the needs of our neighbors. We should feel concern for those who are suffering, and those who were deprived of the basic needs, especially among the internally displaced people of the war-torn South Sudan. Unity is power, and solidarity is the inner relationship, which is at the root of fellowship and community fraternity.

#### 4.5. Limitations

The researcher encountered some limitations that were related to the study and most particularly during the data collection process. Some respondents were reserved in filling the questionnaires. The research coincided with the current civil war in South Sudan and many respondents were fleeing for their lives across the borders, hence, some questionnaires 21 (11%) were not returned, though the response rate of 165(89%) is considered as a high response rate and representative of the population (Hager et al. 2003; Babbie, 1998; Bailey, 1987). The projected budget for the study was not funded; hence, the study was limited to one parish only. Two vibrant parishes are not operational; otherwise, a study of all the nine parishes would have been comprehensive.

#### 4.6. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the primary and secondary data. The data have been presented in detailed narrative form following the discussion and interpretation, including personal insights. The presentation was guided by the research questions listed earlier in chapter one accompanied by the open and close-ended questions from the questionnaires. Several brief but comprehensive responses were presented from the face to face interviews and the focus group discussions.

The centrality of the challenges that the Parish faced were the change of affiliation to the Pentecostal churches, shortage of clergy, and decline in the number of seminarians, inadequate pastoral care and insufficient remuneration of the catechists. In order to address the challenges, the participants devised some strategies aimed at retaining the Catholics; especially the maintenance of the clergy, capacity building programs, deeper evangelization through sacramental catechetical preparation. The liturgical celebrations should use modern mass media and promotion of the lay apostolate. There is a need for unity and solidarity in the diocese and an on-going formation program for the clergy. The youth were earmarked as the backbone of the diocese, hence, there is a critical need to build their capacities in different areas and involve them in the planning programs of the Diocese.

### 5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings. It is divided into three major sections that are structured into the summary of findings, and discussion of the findings according to the two research questions (RQ1, RQ2, plus the conclusion. It also underlines the suggested recommendations and areas that may need further research.

## 5.2. Summary of Findings

The summary is presented in four sections according to the research questions listed in chapter one of chapter one (1.4). The first research question is about the factors that led to the influence of the Pentecostal churches in Christ the King Parish. The second focuses on the extent to which the attraction of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches affected Christ the King Parish. The third is about the pastoral challenges that gave way to the exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches, and finally, the fourth section presents the strategies that the Catholic Church should employ to address the pastoral challenges.

### 5.3.1. RQ1 What are the Pastoral Challenges that Resulted in the Exodus of the Catholic Faithful to the Pentecostal Churches?

The third research question investigated the pastoral challenges that have led to the exodus of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches. The majority of the participants 26(27.7%) revealed that the shortage of priest in the Diocese of Yei and the shifting of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches are the major pastoral challenges. This phenomenon is not new because the Catholic Church faces such challenges worldwide. The findings showed that the shifting of affiliated Catholics to the Pentecostal churches is on the rise. This statement concurred with the situation in Latin America where 72% of the Catholic population has deserted the Catholic faith. Other countries include South Sudan, South Korea, India, Nigeria and Kenya, just to mention but a few (Deng, 2001; Shorter & Njiru, 2001; Vu, 2007, Lukose, 2010; County, 2012; Kagema & Muguna, 2014).

In South Sudan, the Christians are affected more than before because of the on-going civil war where some are tempted to look for material needs from both across and outside the country. Deng (2001) reported that in South Sudan, one of the ecumenical challenges is in the forefront: Interfaith dialogue and unity of Christians. He added that people are divided along ethnic or tribal grounds. Church leaders have done more to bring people together, but their efforts have little or no impact.

The Catholic Diocese of Yei has a shortage of priests. More so, the number of seminarians in the formation has declined from 64(100%) in 1998 down to 5(7.8%) in 2016. There was a gap of ten years in the sacrament of ordination to the priesthood. This has led to the temporary closure of two parishes. Hoge (2013) noted that the number of priests has declined globally confirms such situation. Thousands of parishes have been closed due to lack of priests.

Concerning the change of affiliation, majority of respondents revealed that Christ the King Parish has been hit hard by the exodus of the faithful to the Pentecostal churches. An overwhelming majority of the participants emphasized the lack of relevant training for the apostolate. In a focus group discussion, the participants revealed that there are limited established institutions for training in the entire country; and Christ the King Parish in particular does not have any such institution. These concerns are in agreement with the second Vatican Council document, volume one (Decree on the Apostolate of the Lay People No. 59: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*) which urges that lay ministers need some training in order to understand catechesis, spirituality, and ethics, theology, and technical skills. If there are no such structures that accord them, they would prefer to find it somewhere and we lose them (Flannery, 1992).

A group of respondents complained that the Catholic Church is strict in terms of giving the sacrament of marriage. They claimed that ex-Catholics found the Pentecostal church more welcoming in the inter-faith marriage. The position of the Catholic teaching is that marriage is sacred and permanent until death. In the Catholic Church, however, there are mixed marriages as well as inter-religious or inter-denominational marriages. However, the Pentecostal church does not regard marriage as a sacrament; neither do they believe in the dissolubility of a sacramentally contracted marriage. However, they believe in separation in marriage in the case of infidelity (Burke, 2011; Enang, 2012).

The Catholic Church does not encourage early marriage among the youth, unlike the customary marriage among other ethnic groups that allow marriage for the under age. Most of the participants revealed that other ethnic groups (some pastoralists) in South Sudan force their children to marry against their will. The community believes in raising children in the names of the deceased who were victims of the civil war. Women are the most vulnerable and victims of the patriarchal society that force them to follow the religion or denomination of their spouses.

Pastoral care is said to be a great challenge due to the shortage of the clergy in the diocese. This concern was in agreement with Pope Francis (2016) who remarked that the inadequacy of pastoral care is one of the concerns that the Catholic Church faces today. Heblamed the clergy in Brazil and stated that, if Christians are leaving the Catholic Church to join other denominations, the priests and bishops should be held responsible for the lack of proper pastoral care and spiritual guidance (Subhash, 2016).

According to Pope Paul VI in his encyclical-*Populorum, Progressio* (1967) the Catholic Church should build up and care for the integral human person. Cardinal Walter remarked that the Roman Catholic Church is losing her faithful to other churches, hence, it must figure out what it is doing in the battle for souls; revive its pastoral strategy in the mission (Usma, 2005).The leadership of the Catholic Church commends the good work done by the catechists who are the immediate pastoral agents for evangelization. However, in Christ the King Parish, remuneration of the catechists was said to be a major challenge. They labor tirelessly for their families and the Church with inadequate remuneration. This challenge is in agreement with the sentiments of Cardinal Tomko (1993) who urged that the clergy in the Catholic Church must ensure that catechists are guaranteed suitable working conditions so that they carry out their mission properly. In Christ the King Parish however, the clergy do not have enough resources to share, not even for their own maintenance.

The findings revealed that the Diocese of Yei has some pastoral challenges in terms of inadequate pastoral programs, and shortage of priests, and shortage of vocation to the priesthood. This also led to the closer of two parishes; hence, the Catholic faithful finds a reason to desert to seek for spiritual nourishment. This concurs with some Catholic authors (Subharsh, 2013; Lukose, 2007 & Tomko, 1993) among others who claim that the Catholic faithful are deserting the Catholic Church because of the latter's inability to train sufficient priests to meet the pastoral needs of the parishes. Furthermore, Cardinal Arinze (as cited by Saliba, 1986) analyzed the



concern and concluded that the ecclesial communities need to take roots in the parishes. This could have an impact on the universal Church that will transform the very role of both its clergy and the laity (Saliba, 1986).

### 5.3.2. RQ2 What are the Strategies that King Parish Could Employ to Address the Challenges?

The fourth research question sought to examine the strategies that Christ the King Parish could employ to address the challenges encountered. The respondents proposed a comprehensive evangelization to be implemented for a rooted faith. The AMECEA bishops (2002) in their plenary reiterated the same strategy that deeper evangelization is paramount for both the individual person and the Catholic community at large. The bishops emphasized that the methods of catechesis should go beyond the mere memorization of the ready-made responses, but to penetrate the hearts of the faithful.

The recommendation of the participants was in favor of extensive catechetical instruction. This study also agrees with the opinion on condition that it should be in conjunction with the Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference (SCBC) National certification standards for lay ecclesial ministers (SCBC, 2006). Formation for catechetical leaders in the third millennium should include competence and skills specific to evangelization, the changing parish landscape, the family, cultural realities and the rapid development of technology. This formation should also take into account the educational level of the catechists who are directly in charge of the catechesis.

In a focus group discussion, the participants dwelt at length on the formation of Small Christian Communities at all levels of the diocesan pastoral structures (chapel, zonal and parish levels). The participants 5(5.32%) stressed on the mutual involvement of the laity in the various ministries of the Church. The respondents suggested the promotion of the liturgy and active participation of the people.

This argument is in line with the recommendation of Pope Paul VI (1963:19) when he remarked that, "pastors of souls must promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). The participants 7(9.57%) suggested the creation of development programs that could motivate the Christian communities. This position agrees with Pope Paul VI encyclical, *Populorum Progressio* (1967) that the Catholic Church should address the whole human person in his/her material and spiritual concerns. These sentiments were in agreement with Pope Benedict XVI (2005) in his encyclical; *Caritas Veritate*, which asserted that the process of integral human development must be understood in a way, that is fully human. He added that all social actions must be grounded in faith. Once such activities are in place, the Christians will not be tempted to seek for a church that takes care of their needs (Smith, 1776; Benedict XVI, 2005).

The respondents 8(8.51%) also recommended comprehensive youth encounter programs. This should be implemented in conjunction with the Sudan Catholic Bishop's Conference national certification standards for ecclesial ministries (SCBC, 2006). In a focus group discussion, the participants reiterated that catechists who are the immediate cooperators of evangelization should learn information concerning the complexities of today's family, cultural and socio-economic issues.

The participants also recommended the extensive use of mass media at the Diocesan level in an effort reach the Gospel message to the grass-root level. These recommendations concurred with the views of Pope John Paul II (1971) on the role of the media in modern culture. The participants urged that the Catholic Church should consider the mass media as one of her most important means of educating the faithful with the Christian principles.

Majority of participants 16(17.03%) rated unity and solidarity to be a priority in addressing the pastoral challenges in the Catholic Diocese of Yei. This implies that unity and solidarity, which are supposed to be the central values of the Christian community, are not realized or taken seriously. Hence, the participants recommended that it should be a priority. Such concerns are in agreement with Durkheim's (1917) remarks that the communal life of the Church should be bound in unity, love, and sharing of diverse cultures for the good of the Church. He further added that unity and solidarity is paramount.

Pope Paul VI (1967) reiterated in his encyclical that *Populorum Progressio* (Progress of the people) is one of a greater awareness of the Church's mission; to be a sign of unity of the human kind: to foster unity and development of the people and create world peace. He added that mutual respect is the practice of solidarity. It is the good of all and each individual because we are responsible for all Christian community (John Paul, 1987; & Paul VI, 1967). Pope Francis (2014) recommended that it is necessary to educate ourselves and embrace solidarity with one another to rediscover the meaning of the relationship between persons, peoples, and nations; a solidarity that ensures an ever-greater number of persons to be with dignity and independent.

The study suggested that the leadership in Christ the King Parish should foster unity and solidarity, which is the root of fellowship with one another. The participants 33(35.11%) suggested that the leadership should look into the basic maintenance and living conditions of the clergy for the professional and effective management of the Diocesan pastoral activities and care of the faithful. The pastoral activities should be based on the scriptural recommendations that, care must be taken as Paul suggested in his first letter to Timothy that, "Elders who do their work well while they are in charge earn double reward especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (1Tim 5:17).

### 5.3. Conclusion

An overwhelming majority of participants revealed that Christ the King Parish faces the shortage of priests and decline in the number of seminarians in the formation. Secondly, the shifting of the Catholic faithful to the Pentecostal churches is caused by lack of proper pastoral care Pentecostal pastors towards, training, and other development activities.

The majority of respondents 18(19.14%) recommended deeper evangelization to enable the Gospel message penetrate the Christian communities. The formation of more small Christian communities 15(15.95) should be encouraged at the grass-root level.

#### 5.4. Contribution of the Study

The researcher has affirmed and enriched the theories that guided the study by integrating its strengths into the study. The findings and the recommendations should be able to help the parish revive its pastoral strategies and address the problem of the exodus of her faithful to the Pentecostal churches.

#### 5.5. Recommendations

The leadership of Christ the King Parish should, therefore, empower the lay faithful to accelerate and realize the Gospel call for life, human dignity, and care for God's creation. This can be done through social teaching, organized ministries, and opportunities for public advocacy and action. Once the above observations are put in place, the Catholic faithful will not think of other alternative churches that are perceived to meet their social and spiritual needs.

The study recommends the parish leadership to strengthen the lay apostolate movement and form more associations. The Parish clergy needs to enhance the teaching of the importance of the sacrament of confession. The parish leadership should organize short-term Bible courses locally. The laity should be involved in the planning programs of the parish because they are part, and parcel of the Christian community.

The Diocesan leadership should lobby for Fidei Donum priest to aid the pastoral ministry in the parish.

#### 5.6. Areas for Further Research

The study suggests an investigation of the rapid growth of the Pentecostal churches in and their influence in other Catholic Dioceses in South Sudan. An extensive study on the rate of recruitment of new members (converts) in the Pentecostal churches, and the impact on the Catholic Church. The study should involve participants from all the parishes in the Diocese.

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