

**EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DISCIPLESHIP ON FAITH RETENTION IN THE  
CHURCH OF UGANDA DIOCESE OF EAST RUWENZORI**

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**M23M04/004**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BISHOP TUCKER SCHOOL OF DIVINITY AND  
THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF  
THE OF DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
UNIVERSITY**

**August, 2025**



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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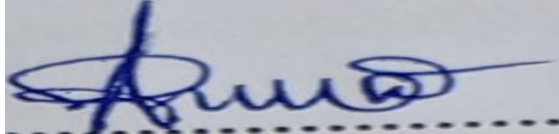
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## DECLARATION

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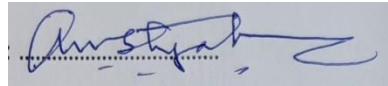


Date: **26<sup>th</sup> August, 2025**

## APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “Evaluating the Impact of Discipleship on faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori” has been done under my supervision and is now ready for submission.

Name: REV. CAN. AMOS TURDAHABWE Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Amos Turdahabwe'. The signature is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2025

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere thankfulness to the Almighty God, the source of all blessings, for His immeasurable grace, guidance and victory that He has granted to me throughout the course.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to my mentor (supervisor), Rev. Can. Amos Turyahabwe, for his irreplaceable support, and continuous encouragement throughout this study which played a great step towards the completion. My heartfelt thanks also go to the entire staff of Uganda Christian University especially those of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology whose teachings and guidance have been central in shaping my academic journey.

I would like to acknowledge the Bishop of the Diocese of East Ruwenzori, Rt. Rev. George K. Turyasingura, for permitting me to pursue further studies. Great thanks also go to the Christian community at St. John's Sayuni COU Parish and All Saints Ntara COU Parish for their endless encouragement during my academic endeavors.

Special thanks to my beloved wife, Mary Asiimwe Ajuna, for the love, encouragement, and sacrifices throughout the duration of my studies; and also to our children, Esther Ainomugisha, Ezekiel Ajuna, and Abigail Niyomigisha whose love, joy and patience kept me motivated. I am equally thankful to my parents, Mr. Christopher & Mrs. Vanice Twesigye, and my siblings. Their prayers and confidence in me were a source of strength. Lastly, I am sincerely grateful to all the respondents for their time and support given during this study. Your willingness to disclose your understandings and experiences has been invaluable. May the good Lord richly reward you.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY WORD**

**Disciple** = Follower of Jesus

**Discipleship** = Process of mentoring and guiding believers toward spiritual Maturity.

**Faith Retention** = Continuous nurturing and deepening of individuals' adherence to the core beliefs and practices of their faith tradition over time.

**A convert** = Someone who has changed their beliefs.

**A new believer** = Someone who has recently accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

**Long-standing believers** = Someone who has been a follower of Christ for many years and has grown in their faith and understanding

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the impact of discipleship on faith retention within the Church of Uganda, focusing specifically on the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Discipleship which is understood as the intentional process of mentoring and guiding believers toward spiritual maturity plays a crucial role in sustaining long-term commitment to the Christian faith. Faith retention, in this context, refers to the continuous nurturing and deepening of individuals' adherence to the core beliefs and practices of their faith tradition over time. The Diocese faces significant challenges, including faith abandonment, stagnation in spiritual growth, and declining engagement among long-standing members. This research evaluates existing discipleship practices, identifies key hurdles, and explores opportunities for improvement. It emphasizes the influence of Jesus Christ's teachings and the role of the church community in promoting spiritual formation through a Christocentric model of discipleship. Data collected indicate that discipleship positively influences faith retention. However, several barriers such as lack of culturally relevant teaching materials, inadequate follow-up for new believers, limited training for discipleship leaders, and the neglect of practical tools hinder its effectiveness. The study offers recommendations like the appointing dedicated focal persons for discipleship programs, establish home cells and zonal fellowships, among others that aim to strengthen the Diocese's discipleship framework, foster deeper spiritual growth, and also improve faith retention. Ultimately, the study contributes meaningful insights to the broader academic and ecclesial dialogue on discipleship within the Church of Uganda.

## **CHAPTER ONE: SETTING OF THE PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The impact of discipleship on faith retention is a vital area of inquiry for the Church of Uganda, particularly in light of growing concerns about declining religious commitment and spiritual engagement. This study examines how discipleship influences the sustainability of faith within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori, aiming to assess the effectiveness of current discipleship practices in fostering lasting spiritual growth and active participation in church life.

Given global trends of diminishing church membership, understanding the relationship between discipleship and faith retention is important for strengthening the church's mission and certifying long-term community interrelation. Through focusing on the Diocese of East Ruwenzori, the study provides perceptions on how well-thought-out discipleship can contribute to maintenance of religious identity and strength within the Church of Uganda.

This chapter includes the background, problem statement, research objectives and questions, scope, justification, and significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The Church of Uganda, as part of the global Anglican Communion has all long been a significant religious institution in Uganda; and has played a central role in the spiritual, cultural and social life of her communities. Discipleship, which is the process through which believers are mentored in their faith and encouraged to live

according to Christian teachings, is very important to the mission and growth of the Church (Bagorogoza, 2011, Wright, 2006). The Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori which is located in the western part of Uganda has made discipleship a focal point in nurturing believers, fostering spiritual maturity, and enhancing active participation in the life of the church (Turyasingura, 2018). However, the challenge of faith retention remains a key concern; and the Church of Uganda has made efforts to address this, though there is still limited focus on evaluating discipleship programs' impact on faith retention within the context of the Diocese of East Ruwenzori.

The study specifically focuses on evaluating Discipleship's impact on faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori. It accentuates sacred status and need in the Churches, Parishes, and Archdeaconries in the Diocese. The level of and gaps in Discipleship's impact on faith retention is examined. Discipleship is extremely rooted in both biblical teachings and historical Christian traditions which originate from Jesus Christ's commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). The early church stressed discipleship through teaching, mentoring, and modeling Christian virtues as seen in the following biblical texts Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:1; and 1 Peter 5:1-3. In addition, discipleship grew to integrate theological growths and cultural contexts (Hull, 2004), with a particular focus on personal engagement with Scripture and spiritual growth through the Protestant Reformation (Hillerbrand, 2009; Linder, 2015). Discipleship has gained renewed attention, with research focusing on effective models and mentoring relationships that foster spiritual growth (Briggs et al., 2016) in this contemporary context.

The relevance or significance of discipleship is evident in its potential to deepen faith, demonstrate Christ's teachings, and also ensuring the program of the Christian faith across generations. The challenge of faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori climaxes the need for a more planned approach to discipleship that strengthens believers' commitment to their faith and promotes their spiritual growth.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Regardless of the active quest of the Great Commission as in Matthew 28:19-20 through missions and evangelism, a concerning trend continues within the Church of Uganda. Most of the converts, as well as long-standing members, either abandon their faith or engage in behaviors contrary to Christian teachings (Sserwadda, 2004; McGrath, 2014). In addition, a number of new believers experience underdeveloped spiritual growth and remain stagnant in their faith (McDonald, 2017). Research shows that new converts in the Church of Uganda face challenges in transitioning from conversion to discipleship due to inadequate spiritual formation, lack of support, and a disconnect between their expectations of Christian life and the realities of discipleship (Lartey, 2016; Oduro, 2018).

The challenges stated accentuate the need for a complete evaluation of discipleship's impact on faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori which aims to examine how discipleship can foster spiritual growth and maturity, certifying the retention of faith among both new and long-standing believers.

### **1.3.0 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

The main objective of the study is to evaluate the impact of discipleship on faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study**

Below are the three specific objectives of the study:

- i. To evaluate the impact of discipleship practices on faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori.
- ii. To identify the gaps and challenges in the discipleship process that hinder faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori.
- iii. To propose practical strategies and improvements for enhancing discipleship and faith retention in the Diocese.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

This research's questions are:

- i. How has the Diocese of East Ruwenzori evaluated Discipleship's impact on faith retention?
- ii. What are the key challenges and gaps in the discipleship process that hinder faith retention among the members of Diocese?
- iii. What practical strategies can be implemented to address the challenges in discipleship and improve faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori?

## **1.5 Justification**

This research was justified by the need to address the decline in faith retention and spiritual stagnation within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. The challenges of faith abandonment, behaviors contrary to Christian teachings, and the rise of alternative religious movements highlight the importance of evaluating and improving discipleship. A strong discipleship process is essential for spiritual growth, fostering resilience in believers and ensuring they remain committed to their faith.

## **1.6 Significance**

The verdicts of this study will assist the Church in addressing the challenges faced by believers, particularly new converts, and help church leaders develop strategies to strengthen faith retention. The study will also contribute to the broader academic discussion on discipleship and faith retention, providing insights for scholars and church leaders seeking to improve discipleship models and foster deeper spiritual growth.

### **1.7.0 Scope of the study**

#### **1.7.1 Geographical scope**

This research study was carried out specifically on the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori which covers the districts of Kamwenge and Kitagwenda that are located in the Western part of Uganda. The Diocese is currently composed of Nine (9) Archdeaconries namely: St. Stephen's Deanery, Kamwenge, Kyabenda, Ntuntu, Nkoma, Kicwamba, Biguli, Nkongoro, and Kihumuro.

### **1.7.2 Time scope**

The study focuses on the period between 2017 and 2023, coinciding with Bishop George Turyasingura's tenure and his emphasis on missions, evangelism, and discipleship.

The study covered the seven-year period (2017 - 2023). The researcher chose this period of time because it has been Bishop George Turyasingura's time in office; and on his charge at his consecration and enthronement, he pledged to invest much in Missions and evangelism and Discipleship is a major way to attaining them.

### **1.7.3 Content scope**

The study focuses on the evaluation of Discipleship's impact on the faith retention amongst the believers' lives, the current discipleship models and practices employed by the Church of Uganda, particularly in the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. It examined how these practices align with the biblical foundation of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), and assess their effectiveness in fostering spiritual growth and faith retention. It also included; an exploration of structured discipleship programs, small groups, mentorship initiatives, and church services as tools for spiritual formation.

This research investigated the direct impact of discipleship on faith retention, particularly concerning the spiritual development of both new converts and long-standing believers within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori.

The study identified key challenges that hinder discipleship efforts and contribute to the decline in faith retention, and the gap between the expectations of converts and

the realities of discipleship. The scope encompassed both personal and systemic factors within the church context that influence the spiritual maturity of believers.

The study proposed recommendations for improving the discipleship process, addressing gaps in spiritual formation, and enhancing the church's support systems to foster deeper faith and commitment among believers.

The research primarily focused on faith retention and spiritual growth through discipleship, and will not delve into other aspects of church life, such as governance or administrative functions, unless they directly impact the discipleship process.

### **1.8 The theoretical framework**

The study employed a Christocentric discipleship model, centered on the example of Jesus Christ as the ultimate model of teaching, mentoring, and communal engagement. The model emphasizes the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the importance of community, intentional growth, and holistic discipleship. Faith retention and growth are framed as a continuous relational process, relying on practices like prayer, Scripture study, and community worship. Discipleship is not just about knowledge transfer but also emotional, social, and spiritual growth, encouraging believers to re-examine their faith, beliefs, and behaviors to deepen their commitment to Christ. Faith retention is influenced by social environments, role models, and community dynamics. It stresses observational learning, where believers learn from the behaviors and attitudes of mentors, and community support systems, such as small groups and church gatherings, that provide reinforcement, accountability, and emotional support for spiritual growth. The Church is viewed as a

key agent of socialization, helping individuals form and maintains religious meaning through shared experiences like worship, rituals, and Bible study, which foster group interconnection and ensure the transmission of faith across generations. This framework will guide the analysis of discipleship practices and their impact on faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori, integrating biblical teachings, Christian theology, and contemporary discipleship models.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter is a review of the literature that covers numerous presentation areas for the impact of Discipleship on faith retention as doctrine from deferent authors. The discussion was designed to be directed by the objectives of the study: evaluating the impact of discipleship practices on faith retention, identifying gaps and challenges in the discipleship process, and proposing strategies to enhance discipleship and faith retention.

### **2.1 Evaluation of the Impact of Discipleship Practices on Faith Retention**

The combination of spiritual disciplines plays a vital role in discipleship and its impact on faith retention. Practices such as prayer, fasting, meditation, and Scripture reading are widely recognized as foundational for deepening one's relationship with God and nurturing spiritual health (Foster, 2019). They are also critical in the long-term faith journey of disciples, fostering spiritual growth and retention of doctrine.

Discipleship is more than conversion or mere learning; it is about embodying the teachings of Jesus through a close relationship with Him. Historically, disciples of Jesus were not just students, but followers who mirrored their teacher's way of life (Pratt, 2012). This relational model of discipleship is significant in understanding how faith is nurtured and retained. The depth of commitment in discipleship (reflected in constant and intimate relationships) has proven to be essential for faith retention in the early Church (Rueb, 2016). The Great Commission, which called disciples to both go and make disciples, accentuates the importance of a reproducible, relational

model of discipleship that continues to impact communities today (Hooker, 2003; Coleman, 1998).

The Province of the Church of Uganda's vision is "to see a local church-based disciple-making movement in every diocese of Church of Uganda, which is resulting in a sustained and effective missions' mobilization to unreached areas of Uganda and beyond" (Provincial Strategic Discipleship Movement, 2020). This vision aligns with broader global patterns, where discipleship is central to spiritual and mission success.

The effectiveness of discipleship in faith retention is also shaped by practical engagement. As Harrington (2016) notes, discipleship is about hearing, obeying, and reflecting Christ, which leads to a lifestyle that demonstrates faith to the world. Similarly, the implementation of discipleship requires more than information transfer; it involves transformation and the internalization of faith, which impacts retention (Briggs, 2016).

Evangelism is the tip of Great Commission, and the commission for missionaries to make disciples of all nations begins with calling others to repentance and faith in Jesus (Payne, J. D, 2011, p. 6). This commissioning also involves teaching new kingdom citizens to obey all of Jesus' command (Mathew 28:20). In the two-thousand-year history of the church, the journey of discipleship has been front and center in the thoughts and hearts of so many of the great men and women who have gone before us (Harrington, 2011, p.16).

## **2.2 Identification of Gaps and Challenges in the Discipleship Process that hinder Faith Retention**

Despite the recognized role of discipleship in sustaining faith, several gaps and challenges continue to weaken its effectiveness within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori. These issues reveal both practical and conceptual shortcomings in the current discipleship frameworks.

Misunderstanding of discipleship itself is seen as another key challenge. In most cases, discipleship is narrowly equated with evangelism which reduces it to a one-time event rather than an ongoing, relational process. This understanding causes new converts to lack depth in spiritual formation, thus weakening faith retention. As Harrington (2016) confirms that, whereas evangelism efforts may be strong, the failure to nurture long-term spiritual growth through meaningful discipleship remains a critical gap.

Absence of contextual adaptation in discipleship approaches is another momentous issue to note. Programs are regularly relocated from external models without adequate consideration of local cultural dynamics. This deviation reduces relevance and engagement. Smith (2018) accentuates that effective discipleship must reflect and respect the diverse cultural backgrounds within the Ugandan context which is an area where current efforts fall short.

Further still, lack of systematic and long-term planning further confines the impact of discipleship initiatives. Several churches function without a coherent, sustainable strategy, leading to inconsistent efforts. Beard (2015) highlights that without an

intentional framework; discipleship becomes reactive rather than transformative, undermining its long-term value.

Furthermore, shortage of long-term impact assessments is another gap identified. Most appraisals of discipleship success are unreliable or short-term which leads into sustained spiritual growth or retention over time. This breach in evidence makes it difficult to enhance or scale programs based on reliable data (Johnson, 2019).

In addition, the theological depth of discipleship resources remains unsatisfactory. Materials or resources habitually lack a strong doctrinal foundation which fails to bridge theological insight with practical application. Brown (2020) remarked that, the absence of accessible yet theologically rich content reduces the capacity of discipleship to anchor believers firmly in their faith.

Further still, an evolving but underexplored area is the integration of psychological perceptions into spiritual formation. Discipleship practices hardly address mental health, emotional maturity, or interpersonal relationships which are the factors that significantly affect spiritual growth. Thompson (2017) contends that integrating psychological understanding can enhance relational dynamics and personal transformation within discipleship, and this remains largely absent in current models.

These challenges or gaps reveal a pattern: discipleship efforts are regularly under-contextualized, and lacking both strategic planning and depth. To addressing these gaps, it requires a holistic, culturally sensitive, and long-term approach to nurture believers toward mature and lasting faith.

### **2.3 Practical Strategies for enhancing and Improving Discipleship and faith retention**

To improve discipleship practices and faith retention in the Diocese of East Ruwenzori requires intentional strategies which can enhance effectiveness, deepen engagement, and foster holistic spiritual growth within the community of believers collected from literature or various scholars and writings as below:

Attractive discipleship program effectiveness through developing organized discipleship programs that are comprehensive, intentional, and tailored to various stages of spiritual growth (Smith, J. R., & Johnson, 2018). Focusing on intentional planning ensures clarity of purpose, measurable outcomes, and long-term sustainability. Building structures that enable multiplication and replication through small groups, new leaders, and church planting efforts (Briggs, 2016) also helps in establishing structured and intentional Discipleship Programs

Another way of improving the level of discipleship is through promoting mentoring and coaching relationships. According to Brown, & Williams, 2019, it can be done by encouraging intentional mentorship programs where mature believers invest in the spiritual development of others through guidance, accountability, and discipleship.

Additionally, developing discipleship materials that honor cultural diversity and context, while preserving theological accuracy and significance (Lee, 2017, pp. 201-218). This leads to the development and builds the strongest bond of discipleship and spiritual nurture amongst the believers. Therefore, there is a need to develop culturally relevant discipleship materials.

Combine theological education with practical skills training to equip disciples for effective ministry and service within their communities (Thompson, & Clark, 2018). Therefore, integrating spiritual formation with practical theology improves the level of discipleship and spiritual nurture amongst the believers.

Utilize digital platforms, apps, and online resources to supplement traditional discipleship methods, reaching a wider audience and enhancing accessibility (Doe, A, 2020). Integrating technology in discipleship practices can be of a great value if put into consideration.

Many spiritual activities - good as they may seem - can actually distract and detract us from what we are called to pursue: making disciples. If your church fails to make disciples, your church fails. It may involve planting churches out of your church, or it may involve starting new small groups or discipling new believers or equipping and unleashing people in your congregation to start “Kingdom experiments” in the neighborhood. Healthy Churches reproduce disciples (Briggs, 2016, pp. 47-48). Paul tells the Church in Ephesus that God gives people different gifts in order to “equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12-13). Healthy churches think structure and embody a multiplicative mindset. Structuring for multiplication sounds great, but it requires great sacrifice. If people don’t disciple, train, equip and unleash leaders to use their gifts, our structure would fall apart, quite literally, in two weeks.

Regularly assessing discipleship programs to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement based on participant feedback and outcomes (Johnson, & Davis, 2021) helps in the wellbeing and breakthroughs in the areas of discipleship and spiritual nurture amongst the body of Christ. Therefore, there should be the implementation of continuous evaluation and feedback.

Through prioritizing structured planning, relational investment, contextual relevance, practical training, digital engagement, regular assessment, and a culture of multiplication, the Diocese of East Ruwenzori can significantly enhance discipleship outcomes and faith retention. This holistic approach addresses both foundational gaps and emerging opportunities for spiritual growth and community impact.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

A qualitative research methodology which was chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth survey of the intricate dynamics and lived experiences surrounding the impact of discipleship on faith retention within the Church of Uganda, Diocese of East Ruwenzori was employed in this study. Qualitative methods were considered to be well-suited for understanding the distinctions of individual and group experiences which are central to this investigation. Engaging with church leaders, discipleship program coordinators, and congregation members through the questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions, and the research aims to gather detailed understandings into personal experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges faced in the context of discipleship programs. The study seeks to uncover the primary factors that influence faith retention or abandonment and also to identify the potential gaps in existing discipleship practices.

#### **3.1.0 Research Design**

##### **3.1.1 Area of the study**

The study was completed in the entire Diocese of East Ruwenzori which consists of Nine Archdeaconries presently. It is located in the Western part of Uganda and covers two districts namely; Kamwenge and Kitagwenda.

##### **3.1.2 Sources of Information**

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data in the study. Through the primary source, data was obtained through questionnaires and interviews as the researcher gathers the information from the selected respondents. In

Secondary sources the researcher got secondary data that is already available, collected and analyzed by other researchers. He used published data available in books, online source articles, magazines, text books, minutes of scheduled and unscheduled meetings, journals, newspapers and reports about the topic of the study.

### **3.2.0 Population and Sampling techniques**

The population of interest for this study includes members of the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori, spanning the nine archdeaconries. The target population included both new converts and long-standing believers, with a focus on those who have actively participated in discipleship programs. The researcher used 120 respondents.

#### **3.2.1 Population Description**

The population included: New converts, Long-standing believers, Church leaders, Discipleship program facilitators, and non-participants in discipleship programs.

#### **3.2.2 Sampling Strategy**

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with diverse experiences related to discipleship within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Stratification by age, gender, and length of church affiliation ensured balanced representation.

### 3.2.3 Sample Size Justification

The total sample included **120 participants**, distributed as follows:

| Group                         | Number of Respondents | Tool Used              |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Congregation (General)        | 45                    | Questionnaires         |
| Church Leaders & Facilitators | 37                    | Interviews             |
| Focus Group Participants      | 38                    | Focus Group Discussion |

### 3.3.0 Procedures and Protocols for Data Collection

Data collection occurred over a six-week period, following a structured schedule (Appendix III). This included specific start and end dates for each method (surveys, interviews, and focus groups), ensuring adherence to deadlines and a structured approach to data gathering.

#### 3.3.1 Questionnaires

Surveys were administered to 45 congregants. These included both closed-ended questions and open-ended prompts to assess their participation in discipleship programs and perceived faith retention.

#### 3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 37 individuals (priests, lay leaders, program coordinators). A semi-structured guide was used during the study and sessions lasted for 30-45 minutes. This was done to gain insights into their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the effectiveness of discipleship practices on faith retention.

### **3.3.3 Focus Group Discussions**

Two groups (Adults: 20; Youth: 18) were involved. The study focused on shared experiences, challenges, and faith paths. Focus groups were conducted using a discussion guide to maintain focus.

### **3.4.0 Data Processing and Analysis**

#### **3.4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The analysis of the qualitative data that was collected for this study involved a systematic process of coding transcribed interview responses to identify recurring themes and patterns relevant to the impact of discipleship on faith retention. The primary emphasis was on key areas such as: the barriers hindering spiritual growth and faith retention, sensitivities of the current discipleship programs and their perceived effectiveness, and the influence of mentorship and community support in sustaining faith over time.

A narrative analysis approach was employed in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of participants' experiences. This method allowed for an exploration of individual church members' personal journeys within the discipleship process, shedding light on the challenges they encounter, as well as the role the church plays in providing guidance and support. By identifying common threads across the interviews, the analysis highlighted the factors that contribute to or detract from faith retention, offering valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the existing discipleship framework.

### **3.5.0 Instruments or Tools**

Research tools that were used include:

**3.5.1 Questionnaires:** Questionnaires were used in the study and this targeted the entire selected population. The questionnaires (printed out questions) were self-administered to forty-five (45) respondents and enough time was given to them to fill them, and then be collected after a period of at least a week. He made sure that the questions are clear and adequate to avoid getting unclear responses as in appendix i.

**3.5.2 Interviews:** The researcher used this tool to get information by interviewing verbally the respondents individually and during the interviews while recording. He also interviewed thirty-seven (37) participants and these included; some of the mission coordinators and discipleship group leaders. This was used to ensure accurate information and allow deeper investigation into the study. He also observed non-verbal behaviors so as to get the first-hand information (data), and also used an interview guide as shown in appendix ii.

**3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion:** In this method, two groups were involved; one group consisting of nine (9) males and nine (11) females (including the Diocesan Mothers Union President and Diocesan Mothers Union Community Coordinator) above the age of 35 who are officially married in the Church of Uganda; and another one consisting of the youth leaders (nine females and nine males) who have been active in church for at least three years.

### **3.6.0 Ethical Considerations**

To safeguard the participants, the researcher used the following ethical considerations;

#### **3.6.1 Informed Consent:**

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

#### **3.6.2 Confidentiality**

The identities of participants were protected through anonymization of data, ensuring all information remains confidential.

#### **3s.6.3 Cultural Sensitivity**

The data collection process respected the cultural and religious sensitivities of participants, ensuring that the study does not interfere with spiritual practices or beliefs.

### **3.7.0 Methodological Constraints**

#### **3.7.1 Time Constraints**

The study failed to capture broader historical trends or reflect changes in leadership or diocesan priorities before or after this period.

### **3.7.2 Data Availability and Access**

Limited empirical research and available documentation on discipleship practices hindered the collection of reliable and comprehensive data, affecting the depth of quantitative analysis or longitudinal tracking of discipleship outcomes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents what was found out in the study on the impact of discipleship on faith retention within the Church of Uganda, Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used as tools to collect the data. Primarily, this chapter's aim is to analyze and interpret the data in relation to the research questions and objectives outlined in the previous chapters. Specifically, the focus is on evaluating the effectiveness of discipleship programs, identifying challenges, and proposing strategies for improving faith retention within the Diocese. The results that came out from the study are organized into four main sections including; the demographic profile of respondents, the assessment of discipleship practices, the evaluation of discipleship's impact on faith retention, and identification of gaps in discipleship.

#### **4.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

A total of 120 individuals (participants) contributed to the study, consisting of 45 respondents via questionnaires, 37 through interviews, and 38 through focus group discussions. This section provides in depth breakdown of the demographic variables, including age, gender, and the length of their involvement in the church.

The demographic profile of the participants as summarized below shows the distribution of them (participants) by age, gender, and length of church membership/involvement.

| <b>Demographic Variable</b>             | <b>Number of the respondents</b> | <b>Response Percentage of Total Respondents</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Age</b>                              |                                  |   |
| 12-25 years                             | 31                               | 25.8%   |
| 26-45 years                             | 50                               | 41.7%   |
| 46-65 years                             | 23                               | 19.2%   |
| 66 years and above                      | 16                               | 13.3%   |
| <b>Gender</b>                           |                                  |   |
| Male                                    | 57                               | 47.5%   |
| Female                                  | 63                               | 52.5%   |
| <b>Length of Membership/Involvement</b> |                                  |   |
| Less than 1 year                        | 10                               | 8.3%  |
| 1-5 years                               | 32                               | 26.7%   |
| Over 5 years                            | 78                               | 65%   |

*Source: Primary Data - 2025*

**4.1.1.1 Age Distribution**

The researcher grouped or distributed the participants in three major age groups, with the highest percentage of about 41.7% falling within the 26-45 years category, and this was followed by the 12-25 years group which was represented by 25.8% of the respondents. 19.2% of participants were between the ages of 46-65, and 13.3% of the respondents were 66 years and above.

#### **4.1.1.2 Gender Representation**

The study reflected a fairly balanced distribution in terms of gender whereby 52.5% of participants (respondents) identified as female and 47.5% as male. This indicates a relatively equal representation of both genders in the sample population.

#### **4.1.1.3 Length of Church Involvement**

Regarding the length of church involvement, the majority of respondents (65%) reported being members for over five years. A significant proportion (26.7%) had been involved for a period of 1-5 years, while 8.3% had been members for less than one year. In the focus group discussions two groups were held: one consisting of 20 married participants (predominantly female and aged over 35), and the other comprising 18 youth members (more females than males), who meet bi-monthly for discipleship sessions.

These findings offer valuable insights into the demographic composition of the study's participants, which will inform the subsequent analysis of the data and the study of themes related to church engagement and experiences.

#### **4.1.2 Discussion of Demographic Profile**

Respondents provided valuable understandings into the population engaged in the Diocese's discipleship programs. The age as it was distributed shows that a majority (41.7%) of respondents was between the ages of 26 and 45 and this represents the core of the church's active membership. This age group is in a critical stage of life where individuals are managing various roles (family, work, and community involvement) that usually influence their engagement in church activities. Having

understood this age group's unique challenges, it becomes so important in assessing the value of discipleship programs, particularly in terms of their ability to foster long-term spiritual growth while accommodating the competing demands of daily life.

In addition, the gender distribution (52.5% female and 47.5% male) echoes a nearly equal representation of both genders, though there was a slight gender slope in the focus group discussions with more female participation in the youth group. The balanced gender distribution suggests that discipleship programs are reaching a diverse group of church members, an essential element for certifying that inclusivity of the church's spiritual formation efforts.

Furthermore, the length of membership (65% involved in the church for over five years) is also another critical factor in understanding respondents' engagement. This suggests that a significant percentage of the contributors had a long-term exposure to the church's teachings and programs, which implies a deeper understanding of the church's discipleship practices. The range as it was given in age, gender, and membership length qualifies a rich variety of views on the value and challenges of the Diocese's discipleship efforts.

## **4.2 Results**

### **4.2.1.0 Assessment of Discipleship Practices**

The Diocese of East Ruwenzori has employed a complex approach to discipleship, across its nine archdeaconries. Data which was collected from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups indicates that discipleship programs are available and their delivery varies significantly. The outcomes propose the following:

#### **4.2.1.1 Need for Training**

About 75% of respondents that were involved in the study identified a need for more focused training more especially in small group settings. This was seen as a way of impacting and fostering individual growth and encouraging active participation which is essential for deeper engagement with the teachings of the church. One of the respondents said that,

“Since I converted to the Anglican church of Uganda, I have never attended any seminar or attended any discipleship class”

In most cases, small groups are the most effective environment for fostering spiritual growth and building meaningful relationships that yields to a successful discipleship (Thompson, 2006). There is a need for thorough and participatory training as observed in the findings from other studies which argue that church leaders often lack the necessary skills to effectively guide and support discipleship (Mugisha, 2019). A focus to provide more specialized training can address some of the conflicts perceived in the delivery of discipleship programs.

#### **4.2.1.2 Program Consistency and Follow-Up**

71% of the respondents articulated concerns about the loophole of discipleship programs as well as the lack of follow-up after individuals participate. One participant in an interview commented, "Instead of looking for the lost sheep, much emphasis is put on looking for the lost coin, which has driven many away from the church." This reveals frustration with the church's focus on attracting new members without sufficiently nurturing those that are already involved.

#### **4.2.1.3 Frequency of Engagement and Retention**

Faith retention rates of 62% in the study varied significantly based on the level of involvement in the discipleship activities. It was observed that respondents who attend small group fellowships reported a high retention rate compared to those who participated less frequently. This shows the significance of consistent engagement for spiritual growth and long-term commitment amongst believers.

#### **4.2.2.0 Evaluating Discipleship's Impact on Faith Retention**

Discipleship is a crucial factor in both spiritual growth and faith retention. During the study, 18 and 8 respondents by interviews and focus groups respectively shared their personal testimonies that emphasized the long-term effects of discipleship. For example, one clergy member noted that, "I have walked for 46 years as a committed Christian who started saved and I am retiring saved." This declaration accentuates the thoughtful impact of sustained discipleship on individual faith journeys. Significant results from the data include:

#### **4.2.2.1 Spiritual Growth and Community Building**

During the study, 62% of the total respondents highlighted the role of discipleship in fostering spiritual maturity and building a sense of community. One participant in the questionnaires commented that, “We need one another to grow in thoughts, understanding, and faith,” referencing Proverbs 27:17. Fellowship, Bible study, and retreats for both the new and long-stayed believers were frequently mentioned as activities that help believers grow individually and collectively.

#### **4.2.2.2 Strengthening the Church's Foundation**

In both the interviews and the focus groups, the view that discipleship programs are integral to strengthening the overall foundation of the church that was widely shared. Specifically, 32 out of 37 interviewees, (which is equivalent to 86.5%) clearly accentuated the foundational role of discipleship in nourishing church growth and faith retention. Similarly, in both focus group discussions, participants totally agreed that discipleship provided spiritual grounding, with multiple individuals highlighting its role in mentoring, accountability, and long-term commitment to faith. A group leader in one of the focus group discussion remarked that, “believers encourage one another, support each other in discipleship, and lead to the multiplication of other Christians in the community.” This determines that discipleship not only benefits individuals but also contributes to church growth and expansion.

#### **4.2.3.0 Identification of Gaps in Discipleship**

The study identified several positive outcomes of discipleship; it also revealed significant gaps that hinder its full effectiveness. These gaps include:

#### **4.2.3.1 Cultural Relevance**

54% of the respondents (65 participants out of 120) pointed out that discipleship materials that was distributed in most cases they lacked cultural relevance, and this made it difficult for participants to connect the teachings to their daily lives. 65 participants noted that, “Sometimes, the teachings feel disconnected from our everyday lives,” signaling the need for more context-sensitive content.

#### **4.2.3.2 Misunderstandings about Discipleship**

Some church leaders acknowledged that many members had a limited understanding of what discipleship entails, which led to confusion about its purpose and importance.

#### **4.2.3.3 Missing Programs**

Respondents identified the absence of critical discipleship programs, such as men’s discipleship groups and comprehensive follow-up for new believers. One respondent remarked,

“The Diocese currently does not prioritize important activities that lead to the development of the spiritual part of believers, like following up new believers and men’s discipleship programs.”

#### **4.2.3.4 Under emphasis on Practical Aspects**

Key aspects such as Bible ownership and entrepreneurship training were underemphasized, despite their importance for holistic spiritual development. Most of the respondents through questionnaires and some through the interviewees remarked that,

“Discipleship should address not only spiritual matters but also practical life skills, such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and Bible ownership”

#### **4.2.3.5 Lack of specific Trained Personnel in charge of discipleship**

The need for more trained personnel specifically to lead and facilitate discipleship programs was another issue raised. 30 out of 45 respondents in the questionnaires and 29 out of 37 that were interviewed noted that the availability of adequately trained discipleship leaders blocked the success of existing programs. In the focus groups, members expressed the need for trained personnel for discipleship classes to be effective.

#### **4.2.3.6 Competing Priorities**

Out of 120 respondents, 63 confirmed that the church's in these days majorly focus on non-spiritual priorities such as infrastructure development that in most cases overshadowed the need for a more healthy focus on spiritual growth.

#### **4.2.4.0 Proposed Improvements for Discipleship**

To address the identified gaps and enhance the value of discipleship programs discovered in the study, participants suggested several improvements:

##### **4.2.4.1 Curriculum Development and Customization**

68% of the participants during the study emphasized the importance of developing a culturally relevant discipleship curriculum. One of the respondents in an interview suggested that, “The church must develop a curriculum for discipleship that provides more enlightenment and training for different stakeholders at various levels in the church leadership.”

#### **4.2.4.2 Comprehensive Discipleship Strategy**

In the questionnaires and in the focus groups, most of the respondents recommended the creation of a clear, overarching strategy for discipleship within the Diocese, ensuring that it aligns with the church's broader mission and vision.

#### **4.2.4.3 Mentorship Programs**

The need to strengthen mentorship programs, particularly those that foster intergenerational relationships, was seen as essential. One group leader suggested that, “using a mobile app to facilitate mentorship, making discipleship more accessible.

#### **4.2.4.4 Use of Technology**

In addition, in the study it was discovered that incorporating technology into discipleship is a means to enhance engagement and support spiritual growth. One respondent stated, “Incorporating technology into discipleship programs can improve engagement and facilitate spiritual growth.”

#### **4.2.4.5 Leadership Development**

50.85% of the respondents stressed that focused training for both clergy and lay leaders was recommended to ensure that those leading discipleship efforts are equipped with the necessary skills. Additionally, refresher courses were suggested to enhance the quality of ongoing discipleship training.

#### **4.2.4.6 Increasing Access to the Word of God**

According to 33 participants that were interviewed out of 37 and 27 that participated over the questionnaires, noted that increase in accessing affordable Bibles and

making discipleship programs more inclusive was recommended especially for men and young people. Ten (10) participants in the questionnaires said that, “there is a need for platforms that encourage that can be accessible by all in need for the word of God.”

#### **4.2.4.7 Strengthening Follow-Up**

In the study, 71% of the participants suggested the need for better follow-up programs for new believers was highlighted as a crucial factor in ensuring faith retention. Follow-up should extend beyond the church setting to include homes and local communities.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

The results that were presented in this chapter accentuate the importance of discipleship in fostering faith retention in the Church of Uganda, Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Discipleship has positively impacted spiritual growth, community building, and the strengthening of the church's foundation though several challenges remain such as lack of cultural relevance in discipleship materials, insufficient follow-up for new believers, and the need for trained discipleship personnel. Applying the proposed improvements given like curriculum development, mentorship programs, and the integration of technology, valuable understandings to the attractive of the effectiveness of discipleship programs the Diocese can ensure sustained spiritual growth and greater retention among its members.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter offers a theological reflection on the connection of discipleship and faith retention within the Church of Uganda, Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Guided by the objectives of study: evaluating the impact of discipleship practices on faith retention, identifying key challenges hindering this process, and proposing practical and theologically grounded strategies for improvement, this reflection uses theological principles, ecclesiology, and Christian formation frameworks to deepen the understanding of discipleship as a transformative, relational journey essential to the believer's spiritual growth and the Church's mission.

### **5.1 Evaluating the Impact of Discipleship Practices on Faith Retention**

Discipleship is understood not only as instruction but as a dynamic relational process of spiritual growth and sanctification, whereby believers progressively conform to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). The findings prove a positive correlation between active engagement in discipleship practices for example small group fellowship, Bible study, and spiritual retreats.

These impacts echo the biblical mandate to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) that stresses discipleship as an ongoing journey beyond initial conversion toward spiritual maturity. Theological reflection brings into line with Hebrews 10:25 which urge believers not to forsake assembling, as communal fellowship strengthens faith endurance and mutual support. Scholars like Brown

(2009) and Van Gelder (2010) uphold that continued spiritual engagement is critical for nurturing lasting commitment to Christ.

Discipleship emerges as a central ecclesial preparation to sustain faith, and also to reflect the understanding that faith is not a static possession but a growing communion with God. This stresses the Church's role as the nurturing community whereby sanctification is fostered through relational and formative encounters.

## **5.2 Identifying Gaps and Challenges in the Discipleship Process**

The study identifies several challenges that undermine the ideal vision of discipleship within the Diocese and its positive impact. Primarily, lack of cultural relevance in discipleship materials as it was identified signals a need for contextual theology. Paul's model of attractive "all things to all people" (1 Corinthians 9:22) recommends that, discipleship content must involve the local culture's lived realities, struggles, and opportunities to make biblical teachings accessible and transformative.

Under-emphasis on practical aspects of discipleship such as Bible ownership and entrepreneurial skills are also among the gap and challenges that were identified during the study. This incomplete focus neglects the holistic nature of salvation that address the whole person, that is, spirit, mind, and body. Jesus' proclamation in Luke 4:18 points to a Kingdom theology that encircles justice, human dignity, and community flourishing. Therefore, discipleship must empower believers to live out their faith in all spheres of life and also transcend the spiritual which include social and economic dimensions.

Lack of trained discipleship leaders climaxes an ecclesiological challenge. The Church must prioritize to raise fortified discipleship leaders who are both theologically grounded and practically equipped to shepherd and equip the community (Ephesians 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3); and this calls for a leadership model that exemplifies servant leadership and discipleship multiplication in the Pauline tradition.

### **5.3 Practical Strategies and Theological Imperatives for Enhancing Discipleship and Faith Retention**

Theologically, the recommendations that were raised from these identified gaps, accentuates the Church's mission to nurture spiritually mature disciples who impact their communities.

#### **5.3.1 Contextualized Curriculum Development**

The Church as the "pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15) must develop a discipleship program that combines Scripture with the cultural and socio-economic realities of the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. This contextualization preserves theological integrity that incarnates the Gospel within local narratives, enabling believers to respond biblically to their environment.

#### **5.3.2 Strengthening Mentorship Programs**

Mentorship reflects the interactive nature of discipleship as modeled by Jesus (Mark 3:14) that emphasizes personal investment and example. Healthy intergenerational mentorship nurtures faith program that fulfils the responsibility to hand down the faith "to the next generation" (Psalm 78:4). Such interactive engagement fosters deeper spiritual formation and leadership growth.

### **5.3.3 Integration of Technology with Relational Discipleship**

Technology bids opportunities to widen access to discipleship resources which connects the isolated believers. However, its use must complement and not replace the essential interactive dimension of face-to-face discipleship. Balanced integration as shown above aligns with the Church's missional mandate to make disciples "of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) using contemporary means to advance the Gospel.

### **5.4 Conclusion**

As I conclude, discipleship plays a foundational role in nurturing faith retention within the Church of Uganda, Diocese of East Ruwenzori. It is best understood as a continuous, interpersonal process reflecting God's sanctifying work. Engaging challenges through contextualized teaching, mentorship, and strategic use of technology is not only practical but a theological authoritative. The Church's mission is to exemplify Christ's love in relevant, transformative, and inclusive ways, fostering disciples who are spiritually mature, biblically grounded, and also actively contribute to the growth and renewal of their communities.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the conclusions from the results concerning the impact of discipleship on faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori. This chapter provides recommendations for improving discipleship practices, strategies for addressing identified challenges, and suggestions for further research aimed at improving the effectiveness of faith retention initiatives within the Diocese basing on the data analysis. The goal is to certify that discipleship not only strengthens individuals' spiritual growth but also promotes lasting engagement with the Church.

#### **6.1.0 Conclusions**

The study emphasizes the critical role of discipleship in shaping the faith retention of individuals within the Diocese. The results from the study recommend that, discipleship programs are recognized as beneficial and that their effectiveness is hindered by several factors such as varying delivery, inadequate training, and a lack of cultural relevance. Though there are challenges, discipleship remains an essential tool for spiritual growth, community building, and the overall growth of the Church.

Furthermore, this study was of a great importance in refining and improving discipleship practices safeguarding a sustainable and thriving Christian community within the Diocese and below includes the important conclusions drawn:

### **6.1.1 Spiritual Growth and Community Building**

It was noted from the findings that discipleship programs contribute significantly to the spiritual growth of individuals, and foster a sense of community among believers. Through regular participation in discipleship activities particularly small group discussions, faith retention can be enhanced greatly.

### **6.1.2 Cultural Relevance**

Lack of culturally appropriate teaching materials in the diocese limits the ability of discipleship programs to echo with participants. There is a great need for Church teachings to be contextualized in order to reflect the lived experiences of the members thus ensuring a deeper connection with the faith.

### **6.1.3 Focused Training for Discipleship Leaders**

Participants stated that for the effectiveness of discipleship programs, there is an urgent need to equip more church leaders with the skills necessary. Training should cover both theological knowledge and practical aspects like small group facilitation, mentoring, and conflict resolution. Unceasing training which must refresher courses should be provided to ensure leaders remain effective in their roles. Shortage of trained discipleship leaders, both clergy and laypersons, hampers the best delivery of discipleship programs, but effective training is essential to meet the diverse spiritual needs of the congregation.

### **6.1.4 Program Consistency and Strengthening Follow-Up Mechanisms**

Discipleship programs must be consistent with a structured follow-up process for new believers to ensure continued spiritual growth to the believers. Absence of such

mechanisms has contributed to a high attrition rate among church members. This follow-up should extend beyond church services to include home visits and engagement within local communities, ensuring that new believers remain engaged, nurtured, and supported in their spiritual journey.

#### **6.1.5 Holistic Approach to Discipleship**

Most of the respondents requested for the need for a need of more holistic approach to discipleship that integrates practical life skills, such as Bible ownership, entrepreneurship, and leadership development, contributing to the overall well-being of church members in order for spiritual growth to remain central.

#### **6.1.6 Curriculum Development and Customization**

Through questionnaires and interviews, most of the participants suggested that, it is imperative for the Diocese to develop a culturally relevant discipleship curriculum that aligns with the local context and addresses the unique challenges faced by the community. It should integrate practical teachings that bridge the gap between scripture and daily life in order to ensure that discipleship materials are relatable and engaging. In addition, a curriculum that addresses the various needs of the church's members (men, women, youth, and marginalized groups) would be particularly beneficial.

#### **6.1.7 Use of Technology in Discipleship**

Most of the participants that were involved in all the methods argued that, integrating technology into discipleship programs could significantly enhance engagement and accessibility for example mobile applications or online platforms

could facilitate virtual small group discussions, Bible studies, and mentorship. The use of technology provides resources like sermon recordings, Bible study guides, and discipleship materials making them more accessible to a broader audience.

#### **6.1.8 Mentorship and Intergenerational Discipleship**

From the finding, establishing a strong mentorship program that emphasizes intergenerational relationships for effective discipleship is very essential. Elders or more experienced members in the church should be encouraged to mentor younger believers and this helps to foster a deeper sense of community and spiritual growth, and these mentorship relationships should extend beyond formal church activities thus providing practical guidance in daily life.

#### **6.1.9 Addressing Practical Aspects of Discipleship**

In the interviews, average number of the participants remarked that, discipleship should address both spiritual matters and practical life skills, such as financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and Bible ownership. These aspects would empower believers to live out their faith in all areas of life in order to provide them with tools to navigate both spiritual and temporal challenges.

#### **6.1.10 Increased Focus on Men's Discipleship Programs**

Furthermore, one of the focus groups and among the respondents through the questionnaires said that, there are identified gap in men's discipleship and also called upon the Diocese to prioritize the development of programs aimed at fostering spiritual growth among men. Programs like Bible study groups, retreats, and

mentorship initiatives tailored to the unique challenges men face in their faith journeys.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Below are the proposed recommendations in order to enrich the effectiveness of discipleship within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori:

### **6.2.1 Appoint dedicated focal persons for discipleship programs.**

To improve the coordination and impact of discipleship initiatives, the Diocese should appoint dedicated focal persons responsible for overseeing discipleship at diocesan, and also at the archdeaconry, parish, and church levels. These persons certify consistent implementation, monitoring, and support of discipleship activities within the diocese.

### **6.2.2 Establish home cells and zonal fellowships in all churches.**

The diocese must prioritize the creation of home cells and zonal fellowships in every church. These small and localized groups help to nurture deeper community involvement and spiritual growth. There is also a need for fellowship meetings specifically for new converts to strengthen their faith journey and also provide ongoing support and nurture their spiritual development.

### **6.2.3 Develop a contextualized and culturally relevant discipleship curriculum.**

There is a need for the diocese to design and implement a discipleship curriculum that reflects the unique cultural, social, and spiritual context of its Christians. Active participation from local church members is paramount to ensure that the curriculum is theologically sound, practically relevant, and responsive to community's specific

needs. A contextualized curriculum promotes a meaningful employment and enables believers to integrate their faith into daily life successfully.

#### **6.2.4 Institutionalise regular and planned discipleship programs with strong follow-up mechanisms.**

The Diocese needs to establish consistent discipleship activities such as small groups, Bible studies, and spiritual retreats to sustain long-term faith retention and spiritual growth. These programs should be strengthened by structured follow-up systems to monitor participants' progress and encourage continuous involvement beyond initial engagement ensuring that discipleship is a lifelong journey rather than episodic participation.

#### **6.2.5 Invest in comprehensive discipleship training for Mission coordinators, Lay, and Clerical Leaders.**

Involving clergy, lay leaders and mission coordinators in discipleship trainings or courses with advanced theological education, leadership development, and practical facilitation skills is crucial. Well-trained leaders excellently guide faith communities, nurture healthy group dynamics, and model Christ-like leadership, thus strengthening discipleship process within the Diocese.

#### **6.2.6 Strengthen Formal Mentorship and Intergenerational Discipleship Programs.**

The Diocese needs to implement formal mentorship programs which intentionally connect mature believers with younger members across generations. This initiative nurtures relational discipleship, facilitates the transmission of faith and wisdom, and

builds a vibrant, supportive community. Mentorship embodies the Great Commission by empowering disciples who, in turn, disciple others.

#### **6.2.7 Influence technology to expand access and engagement in discipleship.**

Integrating technology into discipleship strategies, such as mobile Bible study applications, virtual small groups, and online mentorship platforms, will enhance accessibility, especially for youth and remote congregants. While technology can broaden participation and sustain engagement, it should complement rather than replace the essential relational aspects of face-to-face discipleship.

#### **6.2.8 Enhance the visibility of men's discipleship groups**

Creating, empowering and prioritizing discipleship programs specifically for men in the diocese, and these programs should introduce these groups on a focused spiritual development, leadership training, and must also address the unique challenges faced by men in the community.

Through discipleship, the Church manifests the Kingdom of God on earth and also draws many to a deeper relationship with Christ and also ensures the continuity of faith from one generation to the next. Ultimately, the Church must embrace discipleship as an endless, relational process that nurtures believers to grow in their faith and to live by the teachings of Jesus. In doing so, the Church fulfills its mission to make disciples who will, in turn, go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

### **6.3 Suggestions for further study**

This study has provided valuable understandings into the impact of discipleship on faith retention, further research is necessary to deepen understanding and improve discipleship practices within the Church of Uganda. Future studies could focus on:

Further research could investigate how technology can be integrated into discipleship programs to enhance faith retention, exploring specific digital tools, such as virtual worship services or online Bible studies that support spiritual growth.

A comparative study of discipleship practices across different dioceses within the Church of Uganda would be beneficial in identifying best practices and areas that require improvement.

A deeper examination of how family and community dynamics influence faith retention in the context of discipleship would be valuable, particularly in rural and village settings.

A longitudinal study exploring the long-term impact of discipleship on individual spiritual growth and overall church growth could reveal whether sustained discipleship practices lead to greater commitment, service, and leadership within the church.

A study examining how church leadership influences the success of discipleship programs could provide insights into the relationship between leadership style, training, and the ability of leaders to foster a culture of discipleship.

Through pursuing these avenues for further study, scholars, church ministers and specialists can deepen their understanding of Discipleship's impact and faith retention for fostering strong and thriving body of believers.

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## APPENDIX I: Research Questionnaires

### Introduction to Participants:

This questionnaire is part of a research study focused on evaluating the impact of discipleship programs on faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Your responses will be anonymous, and your participation will contribute to improving the discipleship practices in the Church.

Do you agree to participate in this study?

1. Yes

2. No

### Section A: Demographic Information

#### 1. Age:

a) 12-25

c) 46-65

b) 26-45

d) 66+

#### 2. Gender:

a) Male

b) Female

3. How long have you been a member of the Church of Uganda?

a) 0-1 years

b) 1-5 years

c) 5+ years

4. What is your current role in the church (e.g., leader, member, youth)?

.....

**Section B: Discipleship Practices and Faith Retention**

6. Have you participated in any discipleship program within the Church?

.....

7. If yes, which types of discipleship programs have you participated in?

.....

8. How often do you engage in discipleship-related activities (e.g., Bible study, group discussions, etc.)? .....

9. Do you feel that the discipleship programs have helped you grow spiritually?

.....

10. What are the main challenges you have faced in your discipleship journey?

.....

11. Do you believe that the discipleship practices in the Diocese of East Ruwenzori are adequately addressing faith retention?

.....

12. What changes would you suggest to improve discipleship practices for better faith retention?

.....

13. Have you ever considered leaving the faith or disengaging from church activities?

.....

14. What factors contributed to your decision to remain or leave the faith?

.....

**Section C: Impact of Discipleship on Faith Retention**

15. Do you believe that being part of a discipleship program has increased or improved your sense of belonging within the church community?

.....

16. How would you describe the relationship between your participation in discipleship programs and your faith retention in the church?

.....  
.....

17. What are the primary ways in which you feel that discipleship has strengthened your faith?

.....  
.....

18. Do you feel equipped to mentor others in their faith through discipleship?

.....

## APPENDIX II: Interview Guide

### Introduction to the Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. This study seeks to discover the impact of discipleship on faith retention in the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori. Your responses will be confidential, and your experiences will greatly assist in improving discipleship practices.

### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about your role in the Church of Uganda and how long you have been involved?

.....  
 .....

### Section B: Discipleship Practices

2. Can you describe the discipleship programs currently offered within the Diocese of East Ruwenzori?

.....

3. What motivated you to join a discipleship program in the church?

.....

4. How would you describe your overall experience with the discipleship programs?

.....

5. Have you noticed any impact of these programs on your personal faith journey?  
 Could you elaborate on how they have influenced you?

.....

**Section C: Challenges and Gaps in Discipleship**

6. In your opinion, what are the main challenges or gaps in the discipleship process here in the Diocese?

.....

7. How do you think these challenges affect the retention of faith among believers?

.....

8. Have you observed any common trends where new converts or long-standing members struggle with maintaining their faith or spiritual growth?

.....

**Section D: Faith Retention and Community Impact**

9. In what ways do you think discipleship programs influence faith retention among believers in the Diocese?

.....

10. How important is the church community in the discipleship process? Do you feel supported in your spiritual journey by fellow members?

.....

11. What role do you think mentors or leaders play in the discipleship process? Could you give an example of how a mentor has influenced your faith retention?

.....

**Section E: Recommendations and Strategies for Improvement**

12. From your perspective, what improvements can be made to the current discipleship programs to enhance faith retention?

.....

13. Are there any new discipleship models or approaches that you believe would be more effective in promoting spiritual growth and faith retention?

.....

14. How can the church better support believers, particularly new converts, in their discipleship journey?

.....

**Section F: Closing Thoughts**

15. Is there anything else you would like to add about the impact of discipleship on faith retention within the Church of Uganda Diocese of East Ruwenzori?

.....

16. What advice would you give to church leaders and fellow believers to enhance the effectiveness of discipleship?

.....




**APPENDIX III: Proposed Work-Plan**

| No  | Activity  | Time schedule     |
|-----|---|-------------------|
| 1.  | Topic Submission and Approval                         | May, 2024         |
| 2.  | Proposal writing                                      | June-Sept, 2024   |
| 3.  | Proposal submission (1 <sup>st</sup> draft)           | September, 2024   |
| 4.  | Editing and Submission of 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft       | Nov-Dec, 2024     |
| 5.  | Final proposal Submission                             | Jan, 2025         |
| 6.  | Submission to UCUREC                                  | February, 2025    |
| 7.  | Field work -data collection                           | Feb-March, 2025   |
| 8.  | Dissertation/Report compilation                       | March, 2025       |
| 9.  | Dissertation submission (1 <sup>st</sup> draft)       | March/April, 2025 |
| 10. | Editing and re-submission of dissertation for marking | April, 2025       |
| 11. | Final copy submission                                 | April, 2025       |
| 12. | Final Submission                                      | April, 2025       |

## APPENDIX IV: Plagiarism Report

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## JA28

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
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