

**THE INFLUENCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LAITY AND
CLERGY ON THE GROWTH OF A CHURCH: A CASE OF ST. STEPHEN
PARISH**

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DECLARATION


I Twebaze Elly, hereby declare that research report is my original work and has not been submitted anywhere else before.

Signature 

Date..... 9th September, 2025.

APPROVAL

This is to verify that, this report has been carried by Twebaze Elly under my supervision and is now ready for submission to bishop tucker school of divinity and theology with my approval.

Signature  Date 9th September 2025

PROF. ANDREW DAVID OMONA

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family members, whose unwavering support, endless patience, and boundless love have carried me through every season of life. You are my greatest champion and my truest companion, and this book exists because of the strength and inspiration you so provide.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy on the growth of a Church, with a specific study on St. Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda. It was guided by the specific objectives: (i) to assess the state of the working relationship between the clergy and laity in St. Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda, (ii) to analyse the effects of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church in St Stephen's Kitara church of Uganda and (iii) to examine the effects of negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church in St Stephen's Kitara church of Uganda. This study was a qualitative research that utilized a case study research design, thus collecting qualitative data from a sample 30 respondents using both the interview and focus group discussion methods. The findings reveal that the biblical allusions underscore the vital principles that can guide clergy and laity in overcoming negative relations and fostering a healthy church environment. By embracing unity, effective communication, servant leadership, conflict resolution, and mutual encouragement, the church can enhance its growth and vitality. Also, the findings of the study underscore the critical role that positive clergy-laity relationships play in the overall health and growth of the church. Biblical principles affirm the importance of unity, effective communication, and servant leadership, which are vital for cultivating a supportive and engaged church community. The findings also reveal that as negative relations persist, churches risk experiencing a downward spiral of membership and attendance. The longer these tensions go unaddressed, the more challenging it becomes to restore trust and collaboration between clergy and laity. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Churches should prioritize creating avenues for open dialogue between clergy and laity. Regular forums, workshops, and feedback sessions can facilitate discussions about concerns, suggestions, and ideas. Also, providing training in conflict resolution for both clergy and laity can equip members with the skills necessary to address disagreements constructively.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has long been acknowledged that a church's ability to grow and flourish depends heavily on the interaction between its clergy and lay members. A religious community's overall success and spiritual life are greatly influenced by the cooperation, synergy, and shared vision of these two groups (Romo, 2004). The lay members of the church, known as the laity, are essential to its operations. Despite not being ordained clergy, they actively participate in the outreach, ministries, and activities of the church. Their commitment, zeal, and contributions mold the church's personality and impact its development. Conversely, the clergy - which includes ordained priests and pastors—offer the congregation pastoral care, leadership, and spiritual direction (Kiarie & Mwangi, 2020).

Understanding the dynamics of the relationship between the laity and clergy is essential for comprehending the factors that contribute to the growth and success of St. Stephen Parish (Nkonge, 2011). This study therefore aims at examining the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy in the growth of a church: a case of St. Stephen Parish. This chapter covers the back ground of the study, statement of the problem the objectives of the study, research questions, justification, significance and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

The clergy is comprised of any individual who is placed in an official ministerial position within the church (Pali, 2018). On the other hand, the laity represents anyone who is directly receiving ministry from the clergy. Clergy and laity are therefore one as members by baptism of the one

people of God, members of the same body which all are called on to build up. Nevertheless the individual members of the Church carry out its mission in different ways. The clergy and laity are regarded as co-workers in the church leadership. In fact, the clergy and laity play the same role but at differing levels. However, this relationship is marred by some laity's' attitudes towards the clergy. On the other hand, some clergy resist and regard the laity as laymen who did not acquire theological and pastoral training and are in the habit of pretending to be above the pastors (Grint, 2011).

The relationship between the laity and clergy has evolved over centuries in the context of the Christian faith. In the early Christian church, the clergy held a position of authority and were responsible for leading and guiding the church (Branson & Juan, 2011). The laity, on the other hand, consisted of the ordinary members of the church who did not hold any formal leadership roles. However, with the Protestant Reformation and the rise of the priesthood of all believers, the role of the laity became more prominent. The laity began to actively participate in the life of the church, taking on responsibilities, and contributing to its growth. This historical development has shaped the understanding of the laity-clergy relationship in contemporary church contexts (Muhanji, 2021).

The gradual division of clergy-laity relationships can be traced back to an early date in the existence of the Church (Adeyemo, 2006). During the first century, the Church comprised of men and women who ministered together without much distinction. Indeed, there were appointed church leaders, set apart to do specific works in the Church and wider world, but it were the sphere of the whole church to minister and be ministered to. The people of God, commissioned for service by virtue of their baptism, were active in all areas of church life. There was strong lay participation in liturgical worship and catechesis, and even preaching (Nelson & Quick, 2006)

Today, as throughout most of Church history, another wall separates God's people into two distinct groups; the clergy and the laity. Despite the fact that the New Testament makes no such distinction, this division among God's people clearly exists which has affected the relationship between the two that could be detrimental to the growth of the Church. The clergy are most commonly recognized as a special group of Christians set apart for ministry while the laity are recipients of the ministry (Kanuba, 2016). Clergy increasingly seek to empower the laity by giving them a variety of opportunities to serve within the church; however, even when laypersons take part in ministry, they often fall into the role of amateurs who assist the professional clergy in ministry. The disparity in the sharing of ministry may be due partially to the laity's perception of the clergy as different from them in an ontological way. The typical layperson often views their pastor as a type of super Christian who lives on a higher plane of spiritual devotion. Laypersons usually respect their leader for attaining such levels, but believe they could never get there themselves (Arinze, 2013).

Globally, the role of the laity has expanded beyond passive participation to active involvement in the decision-making processes, ministries, and leadership roles. The growth of the church is often dependent on the collaborative efforts and shared vision between the laity and clergy (Hinze, 2016). In African, the relationship between the laity and clergy holds unique characteristics influenced by cultural, historical, and sociopolitical factors. Traditional African religious practices often involved active participation and shared responsibilities among the community members, which can influence the expectations and roles of the laity within the church (Gakuna, 2019). Additionally, the African concept of communalism emphasizes collective decision-making and a sense of shared responsibility, which can be integrated into the laity-clergy relationship. In Africa,

the church recognizes the importance of fostering a collaborative and inclusive relationship between the laity and clergy for the growth of the church (Viagappan, 2018).

In Uganda, Christianity has experienced significant growth and has become deeply rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the country. The relationship between the laity and clergy within Ugandan churches plays a vital role in shaping the spiritual vitality and impact of these religious communities. The laity's active involvement, commitment, and contributions contribute to the growth and development of churches in Uganda (Isiko, 2020).

St. Stephen Parish which is part of Kampala Diocese is located in the middle of Kampala outskirts just along Entebbe road. The church conducts Sunday services mostly in Runyakitara language and also conducts different missions across the country. The church also has fellowships in the evening from Monday to Friday. Thursday is youth fellowship and Sunday 3 services from 7am - 9am, 9am- 11am, 11am-2pm and another Sudanese service 3pm-5pm. Like any other church, St. Stephen Parish has faced challenges in aligning the clergy and the laity together in order to achieve church growth. However, the roles of the clergy and the laity has not been fully defined which has always brought in conflicts between that two which could further hinder church growth if not properly dealt with.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The working and power relations between the clergy and laity in the St. Stephen Parish have not been clearly defined, and there is a lack of demarcations and terms of reference that specify the responsibilities of each party within the church (Khamadi, 2020). This ambiguity has given rise to conflicts over leadership roles and responsibilities, with the clergy often perceiving themselves as the primary decision-makers and, in some cases, even employers, while the laity view themselves

as visionaries and spiritual leaders. This tension within the church is exacerbated by a broader structural issue in the Diocese of Kampala, where the autonomy principle has blurred the lines of authority, creating a power struggle between the clergy and the laity (Obiorah, 2020). Moreover, these clashes between the laity and clergy can have significant repercussions on the church's growth and overall health (Mbabazize, 2014). Despite the apparent challenges posed by this relationship dynamic, there has been a notable absence of studies investigating the extent to which this relationship has impacted the growth of St. Stephen Parish. This research seeks to fill this gap by examining the multifaceted influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy on the church's growth, thereby addressing an area that has been hitherto unexplored.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy in the growth of a church: a case of St. Stephen Parish.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To assess the state of the working relationship between the clergy and laity in St. Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda.
- ii. To analyse the effects of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church in St Stephen's Kitara church of Uganda
- iii. To examine the effects of negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church in St Stephen's Kitara church of Uganda

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the state of working relationship between the clergy and laity in St. Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda?

- ii. What are the effects of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church?
- iii. What are the effects of the negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church?

1.6 Justification of the study

Considering the rate at which conflicts are happening within the church between the clergy and laity, it was important to find out the clergy/ laity relationship and its effects on church growth. This study thus sought to examine the clergy/ laity relationship and its effects on church growth in St. Stephen Parish. Therefore once this study was finished, it would help in giving an insight to the clergy and the laity on how they can relate and work together to achieve church growth.

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study was mainly focus on an examining the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy in the growth of a church: a case of St. Stephen Parish. It specifically focused on analyzing the influence of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church and analyzing the influence of the negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church.

1.7.2 Geographical Scope

The study was carried out in St. Stephen Parish located in Kampala diocese, Kampala district. St. Stephen Parish was chosen given that it has in the recent past faced challenges between the clergy and the laity.

1.7.3 Time Scope

This study considered a period of 10 years from 2013 to 2023. This was considered long enough for the researcher to examine the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy in the growth of a church in St. Stephen Parish.

1.8 Significance of the study

For the lay members of St. Stephen Parish, this study provided an opportunity to reflect on their role within the church and their relationship with the clergy. It empowered them to contribute to the growth and development of the church by highlighting the significance of their active participation, spiritual engagement, and collaboration with the clergy. The study's findings inspired and encouraged lay members to further invest their time, talents, and resources in the church's ministries, programs, and outreach efforts.

Furthermore, for individuals aspiring to be future church planters or leaders, this study will provide a case study that offers practical lessons and recommendations. By examining the relationship dynamics at St. Stephen Parish, future church planters and leaders will learn from the successes and challenges encountered in fostering a fruitful partnership between the laity and clergy.

This study will contribute to the academic community by adding to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between the laity and clergy in church growth. It provided empirical evidence and insights that can inform future research and scholarship in the fields of religious studies, theology, and pastoral care. Researchers and scholars will build upon this study's findings to explore similar dynamics in different church contexts and deepen our understanding of the factors that contribute to the growth and vitality of religious communities.

This study offered valuable insights to the clergy and church leadership into the dynamics of the laity-clergy relationship and its impact on church growth. By understanding the factors that contribute to a healthy and productive partnership, church leaders can cultivate an environment that fosters collaboration, shared vision, and effective leadership. The findings of this study will enable them to make informed decisions and implement strategies that enhance the spiritual vitality, engagement, and growth of the church.

Finally, the study findings benefited the broader diocese and denominational leadership. Understanding the influence of the laity-clergy relationship on church growth can inform policies, guidelines, and training programs for clergy and lay members within St. Stephen Parish. This knowledge can help shape the strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering healthy relationships, collaboration, and spiritual development within the diocese.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

To assess the clergy-laity relationship, several theoretical frameworks are pertinent. One such framework is the role theory, which posits that social roles come with expectations that can impact interactions and effectiveness. In the context of clergy and laity, this theory helps explain how the distinct roles of religious leaders and congregation members shape their interactions and the overall dynamics of the church (Biddle, 1986)

2.2 Working relations between clergy and laity

In fulfilling their pastoral responsibilities, the clergy collaborate with all Church members, particularly the laity. This collaborative approach involves working co-responsibly alongside other priests, deacons, religious, and lay members, all of whom possess both the right and duty to support clergy in advancing pastoral action. The clergy's dual responsibility encompasses utilizing their personal gifts within the community while simultaneously identifying and nurturing the community's own resources. Missionary duties within respective communities are not the exclusive responsibility of clergy; rather, other ordained ministers, religious, and laity who constitute individual communities share equal rights and duties in promoting pastoral action (Iwuamadi, 2009).

The laity's role extends beyond merely receiving salvation's benefits to actively sharing these same gifts with others (Obiorah, 2020). Through baptism-not clerical delegation-the laity possess an inherent and proper role in Church ministry. Nevertheless, certain Church ministries undeniably require the sacrament of orders. Consequently, clergy must not only provide salvation's goods to

their entrusted communities but also empower the laity to share these same benefits with others. The clergy's responsibility includes distinguishing between ministries requiring ordination and those that do not, helping the laity discover their charisms and vocations, preparing them for appropriate ministry, and coordinating the faithful's various activities (Pali, 2018).

An essential distinction exists between clergy and laity regarding their respective roles. Non-ordained participation in ministries does not transform them into pastors of the lay faithful, nor does it make laity into pastors. Non-ordained faithful are prohibited from assuming titles such as pastor, chaplain, or moderator. Entrusting churches to non-clergy occurs only during clergy shortages, not for lay convenience or advancement. The Congregation of Clergy's instructions on lay faithful collaboration in clerical ministry warn against abuses and confusion regarding lay roles in several specific areas: collaborative structure limitations, liturgical celebrations, Sunday celebrations, extraordinary communion ministers, apostolate to the sick, marriage assistance, baptismal ministry, and funeral celebration leadership.

The laity plays a crucial role in the Church's mission, with numerous signs indicating the Spirit's empowerment for an even greater role in the new Millennium—an era being called the age of the laity. Their evangelization commitment, ecclesial life involvement, and enthusiastic participation in small Christian communities exemplify these promising signs (Khamadi, 2020).

2.3 Effects of positive relations between laity and clergy on growth of the church.

Enhanced community engagement. Constructive relationships between clergy and laity significantly influence community outreach initiatives. Smith and Denton (2005) demonstrate that churches characterized by healthy clergy-laity partnerships are more successful in planning and implementing community service programs. This collaborative approach facilitates the

mobilization of volunteers and resources, consequently increasing the prominence of the Church and the effect within the broader family.

Understanding corer dynamics for the connection between Laity and Clergy. Constructive relationships between laity and clergy are distinguished by reciprocal respect, transparent communication, and common objectives. These dynamics are essential for creating an atmosphere where both groups collaborate toward mutual goals (Wuthnow, 1994). Congregants who view their clergy as accessible and encouraging are more inclined to participate actively in religious activities and support institutional development (Campbell, 2002).

The bond between Laity and Clergy: A Foundation for Religious Institution Success. The connection between congregants and religious leaders serves a vital function in the comprehensive well-being and expansion of faith-based institutions. Constructive exchanges and reciprocal respect between these two constituencies can substantially influence the congregation's capacity to broaden its membership base, cultivate participation, and strengthen its mission effectiveness. This literature examines essential themes and discoveries from research regarding how favorable relations between laity and clergy influence religious institution growth.

Heightened volunteerism and active participation. Congregants who maintain constructive relationships with clergy demonstrate greater likelihood of participating in religious activities and volunteering for diverse responsibilities. Becker and Woessmann (2009) emphasize that encouraging clergy can motivate laity to assume leadership positions and become more engaged in congregational programs. This enhanced participation not only fulfills the church's operational requirements but also contributes to dynamic congregational life that draws new members.

Growth in Church membership numbers. Studies reveal that congregations with robust laity-clergy relationships frequently witness greater membership expansion. Research by Hoge and Roozen (1979) discovered that churches featuring positive interactions between clergy and laity demonstrated elevated rates of new member recruitment and retention. This supportive atmosphere encourages current members to invite acquaintances and relatives, contributing to membership growth.

Conflict minimization and resolution strategies. Constructive relations between laity and clergy assist in reducing and addressing disputes. Congregations with transparent communication channels and mutual respect typically encounter fewer internal conflicts, which might otherwise impede growth (Baker, 2011). Successful conflict resolution approaches, frequently guided by clergy, ensure that disagreements do not undermine church initiatives or distance members.

Spiritual and Emotional Well-being: The relational dynamics between laity and clergy have implications for the spiritual and emotional well-being of both groups. According to Pargament (1997), supportive clergy can significantly enhance the spiritual growth and emotional health of laity. This, in turn, creates a more committed and engaged membership base, contributing to overall church growth.

Case Studies and Empirical Evidence: Practical insights into how positive clergy-laity relations affect church growth emerge from empirical studies. Chaves and Eagle's (2001) case study of evangelical churches, for instance, revealed that congregations with greater laity-clergy collaboration experienced more significant increases in both attendance and financial contributions. This case study underscores how effective leadership and communication contribute to creating a growth-oriented church environment.

Clergy's role as community builders is essential for fostering a sense of belonging within the church. They provide pastoral care and counseling services, offering guidance and a supportive presence during times of personal crisis and celebration (Kline et al., 2008). This not only strengthens the bonds among existing members but also attracts new ones seeking a close-knit and welcoming community. Studies have shown that when people feel a sense of belonging and find a supportive environment within a church community, they are more likely to become regular attendees and active participants. The inclusive and supportive atmosphere created by clergy often serves as a magnet for those searching for connection, and it significantly contributes to the growth of the church by forming a spiritual home for its members (Arinze, 2013).

Cultural adaptability represents a crucial component of church expansion, particularly in multicultural areas. Both clergy and laity work together to guarantee that the church's rituals, doctrines, and community engagement efforts align with the cultural and social framework of the community they minister to (Enemu, 2018). Clergy frequently lead in comprehending and honoring the subtleties of local culture while preserving the fundamental tenets of the faith. Laity members, who are typically deeply rooted in the community, can offer valuable perspectives on the particular requirements and inclinations of the population. When the church successfully adjusts to local culture, it becomes more accessible and welcoming, attracting individuals who might otherwise feel excluded by unfamiliar religious customs. This flexibility, as shown in numerous studies, is crucial in promoting church expansion by transforming the church into an approachable and inclusive environment for diverse populations, ultimately broadening its reach and membership (Edomwonyi, 2021).

Youth ministry represents a vital component of church expansion, requiring coordinated efforts from both clergy and laity. These initiatives are structured to engage and develop younger

congregation members, offering them significant opportunities for spiritual growth, learning, and community participation (Burgest, 2022). Clergy frequently assume a primary role in developing and supervising these programs, providing guidance and spiritual mentoring to young people. Meanwhile, laity members often volunteer as youth coordinators and actively engage in these endeavors. Involving young people within the church is crucial for their spiritual development and identity building. Research consistently demonstrates that churches with dynamic and well-organized youth ministries achieve greater success in maintaining younger members, who subsequently become future leaders and active contributors in the church community. By providing a supportive and stimulating environment for youth, both clergy and laity contribute to the church's long-term expansion and vigor (Muthuku, 2023).

Laity-driven evangelism and community outreach initiatives serve as powerful drivers for church expansion. The laity, empowered by clergy and often deeply rooted in their local neighborhoods, are strategically positioned to participate in personal, accessible forms of evangelism (Afolabi, 2019). Through sharing their faith, personal narratives, and testimonies, they can reach individuals who might be uncertain or unfamiliar with formal religious establishments. The laity's community-based approach is frequently viewed as more approachable and less daunting than clergy-directed initiatives, making it an effective instrument for drawing new members. Their personal relationships and genuine nature can establish trust and reliability, motivating individuals to attend worship services and connect with the congregation. Research has repeatedly shown the success of laity-driven evangelism and outreach programs in extending the church's influence and membership, as they utilize the relatability and authenticity of individual members to attract new participants (Van Aarde, 2017).

Financial contributions from both clergy and laity are essential for the expansion and continuity of the church (Mbabazize, 2014). Clergy often assume responsibility for coordinating fundraising activities, capital drives, and financial strategies to ensure the church's operational requirements are fulfilled. Conversely, laity members support the church's financial health through consistent tithes, offerings, and charitable contributions. Their steady financial backing provides the essential resources for maintaining and expanding the church's programs, outreach efforts, and community services. A financially secure church is better positioned to invest in growth-oriented activities, such as facility expansion, hiring additional personnel, and supporting new ministry initiatives. Research consistently emphasizes the significance of effective financial management and the collaborative contributions of both clergy and laity in securing the church's future and promoting its growth (Addo-Nartey, 2021).

Laity involvement represents a cornerstone of church expansion. Rather than being passive receivers of spiritual direction, the laity assumes an active and essential role in contributing to the church's vitality and growth. Their engagement in diverse ministries, volunteer activities, and outreach programs not only enhances the congregation's life but also extends the church's impact beyond its boundaries (Francis & Village, 2021). Active laity members frequently function as church representatives in their communities, sharing their beliefs and principles with others. This dynamic participation can result in attracting new members who are inspired by the church's mission and the dedication of its laity. Furthermore, when laity assume leadership positions within the church, they help guarantee the congregation's sustainability and growth, cultivating a sense of ownership and dedication that is precious to the church's ongoing success. Research and practical evidence consistently validate the significant role that laity involvement plays in expanding the church's membership and influence (Joynt, 2018).

In conclusion, constructive relationships between laity and clergy create a substantial influence on church expansion. These relationships cultivate an atmosphere of reciprocal support, strengthen community involvement, boost volunteerism, and contribute to overall church dynamism. Future studies could further investigate specific processes through which clergy-laity interactions affect various aspects of church growth.

2.4 Effects of negative relations between the laity and Clergy on Church Growth

The overall health and functionality of a church depends vitally on the relationship between laity and clergy. Various adverse effects can emerge when negative dynamics develop between these two groups, resulting in hindered spiritual growth, reduced participation, internal conflicts, and declining membership. Using academic sources to highlight common themes and implications for the church's future, this literature examines how strained relations between laity and clergy impact church growth.

Decline in Church Membership: A decline in church membership represents one of the most significant consequences of negative relations between laity and clergy. When laity feel disconnected from or misunderstood by their clergy, they are less likely to invite new members or remain active participants, according to Chaves (2004). Research demonstrates that tensions between church leadership and congregants frequently result in lower retention rates, as disillusioned members opt to leave the church entirely (Carroll & Roozen, 1992). A vacuum emerges from this disconnect, stunting both spiritual and numerical growth.

Reduced Volunteerism and Engagement: When negative relations exist between laity and clergy, congregants often withdraw from church activities and leadership roles. Campbell (2002) noted that the lack of mutual trust and respect between clergy and laity discourages members from

volunteering or investing in church ministries. In a church setting where volunteers are essential for running programs and community outreach efforts, this reduction in engagement can severely limit the ability of the Church to fulfill her growth and mission. Apathy and disengagement become widespread, further weakening the church's influence both internally and externally (Friedrich, 2015).

Increased Internal Conflict: Negative relations between clergy and laity can lead to increased internal conflicts, which are destructive to the church's unity and growth. According to Dougherty and Whitehead (2011), unresolved tensions between congregants and clergy often escalate into broader church-wide disputes. Conflicts regarding governance, decision-making, and the direction of the church may arise, with members feeling alienated or disregarded by leadership. These conflicts can erode trust, break down communication, and create divisions within the congregation, ultimately resulting in members leaving or disengaging (Baker, 2011).

Emotional and Spiritual Distress: The emotional and spiritual well-being of both the clergy and laity is negatively impacted when their relationship is strained. Laity who feel unsupported by their clergy may experience spiritual disillusionment or burnout, while clergy may feel isolated or overburdened (Pargament, 1997). This creates a toxic environment where neither group feels adequately supported or nurtured in their faith journey. Spiritual apathy can ensue, leading to decreased worship attendance, loss of motivation for spiritual growth, and a decline in overall church participation (Becker & Woessmann, 2009).

Loss of Authority and Credibility of Clergy: Negative relations can also undermine the authority and credibility of the clergy. Congregants who lose trust in their pastors may question their decisions and spiritual guidance, thereby weakening the pastor's ability to lead effectively (Carroll,

2006). According to Hoge and Wenger (2005), clergy members who are perceived as unapproachable, authoritarian, or out of touch with the needs of the laity struggle to maintain their leadership roles. This loss of credibility often leads to further disengagement from the laity, exacerbating the problem and making it difficult for the church to recover.

Decline in Financial Contributions: The financial health of a church can also be impacted by negative clergy-laity relations. Hoge, Zech, McNamara, and Donahue (1996) found that strained relations between clergy and laity often result in reduced financial giving from congregants. Laity who feel disconnected from the church's leadership are less likely to support its activities financially, and this reduction in giving can impact the church's ability to fund its ministries, outreach programs, and day-to-day operations. As financial resources dwindle, the church may struggle to grow or even maintain its current level of service.

Stunted Community Outreach and Evangelism: Negative relations between laity and clergy also have implications for a church's ability to engage in effective community outreach and evangelism. When internal conflicts dominate church life, the focus often shifts away from mission and service. According to Roozen and Hadaway (1993), churches with ongoing tensions between laity and clergy find it challenging to sustain community service projects, outreach programs, or evangelism efforts. As a result, the church's presence in the community diminishes, which directly affects its capacity to attract new members and grow.

Empirical studies support the assertion that negative clergy-laity relations can stifle church growth. For example, a study by Carroll (2006) on mainline Protestant congregations revealed that churches experiencing conflict between clergy and laity showed lower rates of attendance, reduced financial contributions, and higher turnover of both members and staff. Similarly, a case study by

Meek and McMinn (1999) on pastoral burnout found that strained relationships with congregants were one of the leading causes of clergy leaving ministry, which further destabilizes the church and hampers growth.

Insufficient effective communication and involvement between religious leaders and congregation members can produce harmful impacts on church expansion. When religious leaders fail to actively include congregation members in decision-making procedures or offer a forum for their perspectives to be expressed, it can generate a feeling of separation and disinterest among church participants (Burgest, 2022). The congregation frequently desires opportunities to engage and contribute to the church's purpose, and when their opinions are not valued, they may feel unappreciated and sidelined. Such sentiments of disconnection can result in decreased enthusiasm, diminished participation, and even departure of members who pursue more inclusive and collaborative religious communities. Scholars emphasize the significance of transparent and open communication, cooperation, and involvement between religious leaders and congregation members to sustain a dynamic and expanding church (Muthuku, 2023).

Exclusiveness and bigotry within faith communities can serve as substantial barriers to church expansion. When a faith community advocates exclusiveness and neglects to welcome diversity, it can restrict the church's attractiveness to a wider spectrum of people (Addo-Nartey, 2021). Individuals who do not align with the church's inflexible standards or who recognize a deficiency of inclusiveness may feel ostracized or unwanted. Consequently, they may opt not to participate with the church, thus constraining its growth potential. Welcoming diversity and fostering an inclusive atmosphere, conversely, can increase the church's appeal to a more varied and extensive audience. This inclusiveness not only enables the congregation to connect with a broader demographic but also demonstrates a more Christ-centered approach to ministry, creating an

environment where individuals from all backgrounds feel appreciated and supported in their spiritual path. Researchers highlight the significance of accepting and inclusive church communities to ensure expansion and vigor in today's diverse and interconnected world (Stonehouse, 2018).

Religious leader scandals constitute one of the most destructive adverse elements for church expansion. Cases of moral or ethical wrongdoing by religious leaders can have extensive repercussions (Viagappan, 2018). These scandals not only weaken the confidence that the congregation places in their spiritual guides but also damage the standing of the church organization. Church members may experience profound disappointment and betrayal, resulting in decreased attendance and membership. The adverse publicity surrounding such scandals can discourage prospective new members from associating with the church, as they may connect it with controversy and ethical failures. As scholars have indicated, the recovery of trust and reputation is an extended and difficult process, making it essential for religious organizations to implement preventive measures to avoid and address religious leader scandals to ensure continued growth and the maintenance of their spiritual purpose (Kanuba, 2016).

In conclusion, negative relations between laity and clergy have profound and detrimental effects on the growth of the church. These strained relationships lead to membership decline, decreased engagement, financial instability, and diminished authority of the clergy. Furthermore, unresolved conflicts and a lack of trust within the congregation hinder spiritual growth and outreach efforts. Churches that aim to grow and thrive must prioritize fostering positive and collaborative relationships between laity and clergy, ensuring that both groups feel supported, valued, and empowered in their roles.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

A case study research design was employed for this investigation. Creswell (2009) identifies several distinguishing characteristics of case study as an empirical research approach: it involves an inquiry where an investigator examines a bounded system or multi-bounded systems; it investigates contemporary phenomena within real-life contexts, particularly when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Additional characteristics include treating context as a relevant component of the research problem while addressing how and why questions; conducting deep exploration through comprehensive, detailed data collection from multiple information sources (such as observations, interviews, documents, and reports); and examining interactions between factors that explain current conditions or influence change and growth. This thesis employed a case study design because the research possesses all the aforementioned distinguishing characteristics that qualify it for this methodological approach.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The research was conducted at St. Stephen Parish, situated in Nsambya, Kampala diocese, Kampala district. The selection of St. Stephen Parish was based on its recent experience of challenges between clergy and laity. Consequently, the study population comprised both lay members and clergy of St. Stephen's Church.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample of 30 respondents were used for the study. These will include 25 laity (Christians of the church) and 5 Key informants who included the clergy and the head of laity in the church. The sample size is represented in the table below;

Table 3.1: Categories and number of study participants

Category of respondents	Sample size	Sampling method
Laity (Christians of the church)	25	Simple random sampling
Head of laity in the church	1	Purposive sampling
Clergy in the church	4	Purposive sampling
Total	30	

Source: *Primary data, 2023*

3.4 Sampling Method

Both simple random and purposive sampling methods were employed in this study. Simple random sampling was used to select the laity (Christians of the church) from St. Stephen Parish, considering their large numbers. This method facilitated their selection by providing each person an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was preferred due to its unbiased procedure, which prevents bias in the work and makes research on large populations more practical.

Conversely, the head of laity and clergy from St. Stephen Parish were purposively selected as key informants. These key informants were chosen based on their leadership roles and their responsibility for ensuring proper coordination and relationships between clergy and laity.

3.5 Data collection methods and instruments

Data collection from respondents was conducted using interviews and focus group discussions as the primary methods.

3.5.1 Interviews (Key Informant Interview Guide)

According to Yin (2003), interviews represent one of the most crucial sources of case study information in research. Primary data collection was conducted through interviews using an interview guide for face-to-face interviews with key informants, specifically the head of laity and clergy from St. Stephen Parish. Interviewing was preferred to obtain in-depth information about the topic under study, particularly given that these individuals are responsible for ensuring proper coordination and relationships between clergy and laity. Interviews also facilitated the generation of first-hand and reliable data, as respondents provided immediate feedback.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (Focus Group Discussion Guide)

This method was utilized to collect data from 25 selected laities (Christians of the Church) from St. Stephen Parish. The instrument comprised open-ended questions designed to solicit information on how the relationship between laity and clergy influences church growth. This approach enabled the researcher to generate and evaluate data from different subgroups within the study population. It further facilitated the gathering of data on attitudes, values, and opinions (Robinson, 2007). Focus group discussions were conducted with selected laity from St. Stephen Parish, with each group consisting of 8-9 members. This size was chosen to ensure each respondent had adequate opportunity to participate in the study, providing sufficient time for participants to share their views on the topic. Therefore, three focus group discussions were conducted, each comprising 8-9 lay church members from St. Stephen Parish.

3.6 Data collection procedure

Following research proposal approval, the researcher obtained a recommendation and introductory letter from Uganda Christian University for data collection. The researcher dedicated time to fieldwork by conducting in-depth key informant interviews with selected participants from St. Stephen Parish.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis involved making sense of written text and audio data, requiring deeper understanding of the provided information. Data analysis was conducted as an ongoing process involving continual reflection about collected data, asking analytical questions, and writing notes throughout the study period, ultimately contributing to the final report. The qualitative data analysis process began with the data management phase and proceeded through the generative phase, interpretive phase, representing phase, and theorizing phase as detailed below. The researcher employed a hierarchical approach, building from bottom to top. Field notes taken by the principal researcher during interviews and document review were used to clarify and triangulate audio records that were unclear. Transcription was conducted each evening for interviews conducted daily. Additionally, the researcher's field notes were typed after every field visit to prevent memory loss.

The researcher read all transcribed data to obtain a general sense of information collected from fieldwork and reflect on its overall meaning in relation to the study's general objective. This enabled the researcher to interpret participants' views, the tone of their ideas, and the impression of overall depth, credibility, and usefulness of the information. During interview sessions, the researcher noted important observed aspects and general thoughts about the data for later analysis. Study findings were organized into themes. The final step in data analysis involved interpretation to draw meaning from collected data. Lessons learned from data interpretation were based on the

researcher's analysis, experiences, and meaning derived from comparing findings with information gleaned from literature. The findings helped confirm past information and, in some cases, diverged from it. This data analysis phase also suggested new questions that the inquirer might not have foreseen in the study.

3.8 Dependability and Credibility of Research Instruments

Dependability (or reliability) in qualitative research refers to the consistency, stability, and repeatability of results arising from using a particular measuring instrument (Gibbs, 2007). It refers to the extent to which a particular assessment would yield identical results if repeated under the same conditions. Credibility (or internal validity) refers to how research findings match reality, while transferability (or external validity) refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated in other environments. The researcher employed three strategies to test the dependability, credibility, and transferability of instruments used in the study.

3.9 Ethical consideration

Ethics are norms or standards for conduct that distinguish between right and wrong, helping determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. The handling of these ethical issues greatly impacts research results' integrity.

Honesty, objectivity, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, confidentiality, non-discrimination, and many others were considered. Voluntary participation and informed consent were ensured. The survey's purpose was fully explained, and respondents were politely requested to participate in the study.

Sensitivity of organizational records and ensuring no harm to respondents were maintained. According to Cohen & Crabtree (2008), it is very important that participants have the option to

refuse study participation, and the researcher must provide this option. This was provided in the questionnaire's introduction and consent form.

Anonymity was another concern. The promise and principle of anonymity together with confidentiality were assured; respondents' names were not requested, and emphasis was placed on treating information in aggregate and purely for research purposes. Appreciation was ensured for respondents after participation for ethical considerations. The researcher shared study findings with respondents since these findings may be useful to the entity where the study was conducted.

3.10 Limitations

There is a risk of insufficient reliable data for this study, as some respondents may not be conscious of the training concept. However, the researcher limited the analysis scope to ensure meaningful information.

Since the study is cross-sectional in nature, this limited the researcher in terms of collecting sufficient data. Data collection occurred within a short period, which does not help determine cause and effect relationships.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a section where data collected and analyzed was presented. The study topic was: the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy on the growth of a church in St. Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda, parish. The findings below come from data collected using focus and interview guides. The data was collected from a total of 30 respondents whereby 25 filled questionnaires and 5 were interviewed face to face. The findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study whereby the raw data in form of questionnaires was edited and interpreted which ensured uniformity, legibility and consistency.

4.1 Response rate

The study recorded a 100% response rate as indicated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 showing the Response Rate

Category	Target sample	Percent
Male	20	66.6
Female	10	33.4
Total	30	100

Source: primary data 2024

According to the table above, the response rate was very good as it attained 100% results

4.2 Demographics of respondents

This section includes cross cutting characteristics of all respondents involved in the study for instance, age, marital status and more.

4.4.1 Age of respondents

The study respondents were from varying age groups as indicated in table below.

Table 4.2 showing age group of respondents

Age group	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	6	20
26 – 35 years	4	13.3
36-45 years	15	50
45 years and above	5	16.7
Total	30	100

Source: primary data2024

4.3 The state working relationship between the clergy and laity in Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda.

The working relationship between the clergy and laity in Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda is a crucial aspect of church dynamics, influencing the overall effectiveness of church activities and community engagement. Based on qualitative research, several key findings illustrate the complexities and strengths of this relationship. The relationship between clergy and laity in religious organizations is often characterized by a dynamic interplay of authority, responsibility, and collaboration. In the context of Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda, this relationship reflects broader trends observed in many Anglican and Protestant denominations, where both clergy and laity seek to fulfill their spiritual roles while navigating the complexities of church governance.

One of the central findings of the study was that there exists a foundation of mutual respect between the clergy and laity. Many informants highlighted the importance of collaboration in church activities. As one lay leader stated, “*We work hand in hand with our pastors. They lead us*

spiritually, and we support them practically. This sentiment was echoed by a clergy member who remarked, “The laity are not just recipients of our ministry; they are partners in mission.”

The findings of the study revealed that there exhibited Educational and Spiritual Growth as a relation at the parish: The clergy play a significant role in fostering the spiritual and educational growth of the laity. A lay member commented, *“The Bible studies led by our clergy have deepened our understanding of faith.”* This reflects a commitment to equipping the laity, which is critical for a vibrant church life.

However, the findings of the study revealed that there existed Communication Challenges: Despite the overall positive relationship, communication challenges were identified as a barrier. The clergy may not always communicate their plans, leading to confusion. This reflects a common issue where the clergy’s intentions may not always align with the laity’s expectations. Communication remains a critical area for development. Effective communication is vital for fostering trust and ensuring that both clergy and laity feel valued and heard. The desire for greater involvement in decision-making processes indicates a shift towards a more inclusive church culture. This aligns with contemporary ecclesiological frameworks that advocate for participatory governance as a means of enhancing church vitality.

Further the findings of the study revealed that the degree of involvement of the laity in decision-making processes varies. Some informants expressed a desire for more participatory governance. One active church member stated, *“We want to be involved in decisions that affect our community. Our voices matter, Conversely, a clergy member mentioned, we try to involve the laity, but it’s challenging to manage diverse opinions.”*

Conflict Resolution: Conflicts, while not frequent, do arise, and the way they are handled can either strengthen or weaken the relationship. A lay leader shared, “When we have disagreements, it helps to have open forums where everyone can express their feelings. A clergy member noted, We strive for transparency in resolving issues, which helps build trust.”

In summary, the working relationship between clergy and laity in Stephen’s Kitara Church is characterized by mutual respect and a collaborative spirit, tempered by challenges in communication and decision-making. As the church continues to navigate these dynamics, fostering a culture of inclusivity and open dialogue will be essential for its growth and effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

4.4 The effect of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church

The relationship between clergy and laity is fundamental to the vitality and growth of a church community. In the context of Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda, a qualitative study reveals that positive relations significantly influence both spiritual and organizational growth. The findings underscore the importance of collaboration, communication, and mutual respect.

A primary objective of the study was to explore how positive relations between clergy and laity impact spiritual engagement within the church. The findings revealed that when clergy and laity work collaboratively, congregants are more likely to engage deeply with their faith.

One lay leader articulated this connection: *“When our reverend involves us in planning services and activities, I feel more connected to the church. It’s not just his ministry; it’s ours.”* This sentiment was echoed by a clergy member, who noted, *I see the enthusiasm in the congregation when they are involved. Their participation enriches the worship experience.”*

Such collaborative engagement fosters a sense of ownership among laity, leading to a more vibrant and participatory worship atmosphere. As congregants feel empowered to contribute, they are more likely to grow in their faith and deepen their spiritual practices.

Another significant finding from the study pertains to the church's outreach and community involvement. A positive clergy-laity relationship promotes a shared vision for mission and service, resulting in more active community engagement.

One key informant stated, *"When our church leader encourages us to reach out to the community, it becomes a collective effort. We organize events and help those in need together."* This collective approach enhances the church's visibility and relevance in the community, attracting new members and fostering goodwill.

A clergy member reflected, *"Our outreach programs thrive because we work as a team. The laity bring ideas, energy, and local knowledge that are crucial for effective ministry."* This collaborative spirit not only aids in fulfilling the church's mission but also strengthens community ties, creating a supportive environment for both existing and potential members.

The findings also revealed that Positive clergy-laity relations also foster an environment conducive to empowerment and leadership development among lay members. The study found that when clergy recognize and encourage the gifts and talents of the laity, it leads to a more active and diverse leadership structure.

A lay leader shared, *"My chaplain encouraged me to lead a small group, and that has changed my life. I feel empowered and valued. This empowerment is echoed by a clergy member, who stated, I believe in sharing leadership. Our church is richer when we allow laity to take the lead in different ministries."* This collaborative approach not only enriches the church's ministry but also

promotes a sense of belonging and purpose among congregants. As lay members take on leadership roles, they become more invested in the church's growth and success.

The findings of the study further showed that the cumulative effect of these positive relations manifests in tangible growth in church membership and attendance. The study revealed that congregations with strong clergy-laity partnerships tend to experience higher rates of new member incorporation and consistent attendance.

One lay member remarked, *“We invite our friends because we feel proud of our church. The community spirit is strong, and it shows. A clergy member added, when laity are actively involved and engaged, it creates a welcoming environment. New people are drawn to that sense of belonging.”*

As positive relations between clergy and laity foster an inviting atmosphere, they contribute to the church's ability to attract and retain members. This cycle of engagement reinforces the church's growth, both numerically and spiritually.

The findings from the study of Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda underscore the critical importance of positive relations between clergy and laity in fostering church growth. Enhanced spiritual engagement, increased community involvement, effective communication, empowerment of lay leaders, and growth in membership are all interconnected outcomes that arise from a collaborative church culture.

In light of these findings, it is evident that churches seeking to grow must prioritize the development of positive relationships between clergy and laity. By fostering mutual respect, open

communication, and shared leadership, congregations can create a vibrant community that not only thrives internally but also reaches out effectively to the surrounding world. The commitment to collaboration serves as a catalyst for both spiritual and organizational growth, ensuring that the church remains a dynamic and relevant presence in the lives of its members and the community at large.

4.5 The effects of negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church.

The relationship between clergy and laity is pivotal to the health and growth of a church. In Stephen's Kitara Church of Uganda, research indicates that negative relations between these two groups can hinder spiritual development, diminish community engagement, and stifle growth as revealed below.

The findings reveal that strained relationships can lead to disengagement and apathy in worship.

One lay member expressed frustration, stating, *"When there is tension between our pastor and us, it feels like the services lack spirit. Many of us stop participating actively. This feeling of disconnection is corroborated by a clergy member who admitted, I notice that when tensions run high, attendance drops. People don't want to come if they feel unwelcome or unheard."* The lack of engagement during worship services can significantly impact the spiritual growth of the congregation. When laity feel excluded or alienated, their commitment to the church diminishes, leading to a downward spiral of attendance and involvement.

The findings of the study revealed that Negative relations often result in a lack of coordinated efforts for community service and engagement. One lay leader remarked,

"When our clergy doesn't consult us about outreach programs, we feel sidelined. It's hard to get motivated to help in the community if we're not involved in the planning. This sentiment was

echoed by a clergy member, who noted, I want to engage the community, but when there's friction with the laity, it becomes difficult to mobilize them for outreach initiatives."

The result is a significant reduction in the church's visibility and impact within the community. As the congregation becomes less involved, opportunities for service diminish, which can alienate potential new members who value active community engagement.

The findings revealed that Negative relations often lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and a breakdown in communication. Such poor communication can exacerbate conflicts, creating an environment where grievances fester rather than being addressed. This cycle of misunderstanding and conflict not only affects individual relationships but also impacts the overall church atmosphere, discouraging attendance and participation.

One lay member explained, "When issues arise, we find it hard to talk to our pastor. It feels like our concerns fall on deaf ears, which just makes things worse." Conversely, a clergy member admitted, I sometimes feel overwhelmed and don't always communicate well. This leads to more frustration on both sides."

The findings reveal that negative relations contribute to a culture of disempowerment among lay leaders. When clergy do not recognize or value the contributions of the laity, it stifles initiative and leadership development. This lack of empowerment can lead to stagnation in church leadership. When lay members feel their contributions are unappreciated, they may withdraw from active participation, which limits the church's ability to grow and adapt to changing needs.

A lay leader shared, "I used to lead a small group, but after some disagreements with the reverend, I stepped back. It's discouraging to feel like your efforts don't matter. This perspective highlights

a broader issue of disempowerment, as another clergy member noted, I realize that sometimes I inadvertently overshadow lay leaders. I need to create space for their voices, but its challenging.”

Perhaps the most concerning finding is that negative relations between clergy and laity led to a decline in church membership and attendance. The study revealed that congregations struggling with tension often see fewer newcomers and declining engagement from existing members. The negative atmosphere created by strained relations can deter potential members, leading to a shrinking congregation. Over time, this decline affects the church’s ability to sustain itself financially and spiritually.

One lay member lamented, “It’s hard to invite friends to church when I feel unhappy with the leadership. I want them to have a positive experience, but I can’t guarantee that. A clergy member echoed this concern: I’ve seen members leave because they feel disconnected. It’s heartbreaking.”

The findings from the study of Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda illustrate the detrimental effects of negative relations between clergy and laity on church growth. Diminished spiritual engagement, reduced community involvement, poor communication, disempowerment of lay leaders, and declining membership are all interconnected consequences of a strained relationship.

To foster a thriving church environment, it is essential for clergy and laity to work towards building positive, collaborative relationships. Effective communication, mutual respect, and shared leadership are vital in creating an atmosphere where both groups feel valued and invested in the church’s mission. By addressing the underlying issues that contribute to negative relations, congregations can reverse the trends of disengagement and decline, paving the way for renewed growth and vitality.

In light of these findings, church leaders should prioritize strategies for improving clergy-laity relations. This might include regular open forums for discussion, leadership training for lay members, and initiatives aimed at fostering collaboration in church activities. By doing so, they can cultivate a more engaged and unified community that reflects the core values of their faith and enhances the overall growth of the church.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The relationship between clergy and laity is a fundamental aspect of church life that significantly impacts spiritual growth, community engagement, and overall church effectiveness. This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relationship to the reviewed literature and persona reflection.

5.2 The state of working relationship between the Clergy and Laity in Stephen's Church

Kitara

The findings of the study revealed that communication is the cornerstone of a healthy clergy-laity relationship. At Stephen's Church, the communication between clergy and lay leaders is generally strong, facilitated by monthly parish council meetings. This personally has in my ministry created a perception of clergy as approachable, further enhances the dynamic, making laity feel valued and heard. This openness is crucial for building trust and ensuring that everyone's voices contribute to the church's mission and activities. When laity feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and ideas, it strengthens their commitment to the church and its initiatives, fostering a more engaged and active congregation.

The findings revealed that many lay members express feelings of being overlooked in decision-making processes. This was evident where I have seen the laity look at the clergy as holier and spiritually close to God than the general congregation. This finding was in relationship with the study by (Grint, 2011). While the clergy often lead discussions, some laity feel their perspectives and contributions are not adequately considered. This dynamic can lead to frustration and a sense of disconnection, suggesting that while communication exists, it may not always be inclusive or

representative of the entire congregation. This findings was in alignment with the study by (Lwuamadi, 2009). who sated that laity form the individual community also have a right and duty in promoting pastoral action

The findings further stated that laity's involvement in various church activities is another critical aspect of the clergy-laity relationship. At Stephen's Church, lay members are actively engaged in ministries ranging from youth programs to community outreach. This has publically brought about essentiality in maintaining the church's vibrant community life, and many lay leaders have expressed a strong commitment to their roles in the modern church. For instance I have witnessed laity engage in evangelism and community crusades as their manner of the spread of Christianity. This collaboration drew a sense of belonging and responsibility to the whole congregation

However, the lack of clarity regarding the specific roles and expectations for lay members has emerged as a significant issue. Some individuals feel underutilized or uncertain about how they can best contribute to the church's mission. This ambiguity can lead to disengagement, as laity may hesitate to take initiative if they are unsure of their responsibilities. This findings was in comparison with the study (Kanuba, 2016), who drew specific roles for each part thus the laity being receivers of the ministry and the clergy the providers of the ministry. Enhancing role clarity and providing opportunities for leadership development could significantly improve engagement and satisfaction among lay members. This should be done in our local church with breaking the hierarchy of leadership but rather respect and cooperation

The findings further revealed that the clergy at Stephen's Church are generally viewed as supportive and approachable figures, providing valuable spiritual guidance to the congregation. This has been possible and portrayed through my involvement in Regular worship services,

pastoral care, and counseling essential components of my roles. Many lay members report positive experiences in their interactions with clergy, appreciating the support and guidance they receive during times of need. Therefore it's incumbent upon the laity to help the clergy attain their charisma and invocation to their ministry. This finding was in line with the study by (Pali, 2018).

Despite the above positive perception, challenges remain regarding the balance between administrative duties and pastoral care. As revealed by the findings laity have expressed concerns that clergy often prioritize administrative tasks over their pastoral responsibilities, leading to unmet spiritual needs within the congregation. This has been witnessed in relation to the finding where the clergy are so dissolved in financial and material development other than ministry as the center for their service. In my personal assessment I can evidently reveal that if the clergy become increasingly burdened by the demands of church management, the risk of neglecting the spiritual and emotional needs of the community grows. It is crucial for clergy to find a balance that allows them to fulfill both their administrative responsibilities and their roles as spiritual leaders.

Many lay members express a desire for more comprehensive training in areas such as church governance, conflict resolution, and effective ministry practices. Without this training, lay leaders may feel ill-equipped to fulfill their roles, leading to frustration and potential conflicts within the church. By investing in the education and development of lay leaders, Stephen's Church can empower its members to take a more active role in church life, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the congregation.

Finally the findings of the study revealed that Conflict is an inevitable aspect of any community, including churches. Conflict at the church have risen in form of balance of power, contempt of hierarchy, financial mismanagement which have created a rift between laity and the clergy.

However the findings of the study revealed that Stephen's Church has established protocols for conflict resolution, often involving mediation by neutral parties to address disputes between clergy and laity. Many members appreciate this structured approach, which helps to foster a sense of fairness and transparency. This finding was in alignment with the findings of Dougherty and Whitehead (2011)

5.3 The effect of positive working relationship between the Clergy and the Laity at Stephen's Church Kitara.

The findings revealed that it was essential to understand the distinct yet complementary roles each group plays within the church. Clergy, as spiritual leaders, are responsible for guiding the congregation through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. Laity, on the other hand, comprise the congregation, bringing diverse gifts, skills, and perspectives that contribute to the church's mission. The study further revealed that when both groups collaborate effectively, the church can flourish in its spiritual and community endeavors. This finding from the study compared to the study by (Campbell, 2002), which laity that perceive the clergy as approachable positively intervened in church operations.

In reflection to my ministry, one of the most significant effects of a positive working relationship is enhanced communication. Regular dialogue between clergy and laity created for my ministry an atmosphere of openness and trust. When laity feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns, it allowed me to understand the needs of the congregation better. This two-way communication leads to more informed decision-making and greater inclusivity in church governance.

Findings from the study indicated that churches with strong communication practices experience fewer conflicts and a greater sense of belonging among members. Laity who feel heard and valued are more likely to engage actively in church activities and support its mission. This engagement fosters a sense of community and unity, which is crucial for the church's health.

Positive relationships between clergy and laity also lead to increased participation in church activities. When clergy actively encourage lay involvement and recognize their contributions, it motivates laity to take on leadership roles and participate in various ministries. This engagement not only enriches the church's programs but also provides lay members with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. This finding was in line with the study by (Campbell, 2002).

The findings reveal shows that congregations with high levels of lay involvement tend to have more vibrant worship services and outreach programs. The synergy created by clergy and laity working together can result in innovative ministries that address the specific needs of the community. This collaborative spirit transforms the church into a dynamic hub of activity, drawing in more members and fostering deeper connections among congregants.

The findings further revealed that a positive working relationship between clergy and laity significantly impacts individual spiritual growth. When laity feel supported by their clergy, they are more likely to engage in spiritual practices, such as prayer, Bible study, and service. Clergy who take the time to mentor and nurture lay members create an environment where spiritual development is prioritized. This finding was in comparison with the study by Smith and Denton (2005), who thought to reveal the good relationship destruct bureaucracy which is a major limitation in church growth.

Findings suggest that when laity are involved in decision-making and ministry planning, they develop a deeper understanding of their faith and its application in daily life. This is evident in Kitara diocese where laity and clergy involve in evening church sessions of prayer and weekly overnight prayers that enhance faith and daily being. This involvement in my ministry has allowed individuals to see the direct impact of their contributions, reinforcing their commitment to the church and their personal spiritual journeys. Consequently, a thriving spiritual community emerges, where members encourage one another in their faith. This finding was in line with the research by Pargament (1997), which stated that supportive clergy can significantly enhance the spiritual growth and emotional health of laity

The findings of the study further revealed that important effect of a positive clergy-laity relationship is the enhancement of community outreach efforts. Initially working together with the laity, I have identified and addressed the specific needs of their local community more effectively. Collaborative planning allows me for the development of outreach programs that are relevant, impactful, and sustainable.

Even in healthy relationships, conflicts can arise. However, a positive clergy-laity relationship equips both groups with the tools to address conflicts constructively. Open communication and mutual respect create a foundation for resolving disputes without damaging the church community. This finding from the study was in agreement with the study by (Baker, 2011).

Lastly Findings suggest that when clergy and laity approach conflicts as opportunities for growth, they can foster a resilient church environment. By engaging in dialogue, understanding differing perspectives, and seeking collaborative solutions, both clergy and laity can navigate challenges

effectively. This resilience not only strengthens relationships but also promotes a culture of accountability and unity within the church.

5.4 The effect of negative working relationship between the Clergy and the Laity

One of the most significant effects of a negative working relationship according to the findings of the study is the breakdown of communication. When clergy and laity are at odds, members often feel unheard or dismissed. This lack of open dialogue breeds resentment and frustration, leading to a culture of silence rather than collaboration. I have witnessed personally that in churches where communication is poor, members may withdraw from participation, feeling their opinions are not valued. Breakdown of communication in Kitara diocese has been portrayed by bureaucracy, noncooperation and absence of a formal procedure of communication. This disengagement has created a vicious cycle, as laity pull back, clergy may feel isolated, leading to further misunderstandings and mistrust. Over time, this communication gap can create an environment where problems fester rather than get resolved, ultimately diminishing the church's effectiveness. This finding from the study was in alignment with the research by (Burgest, 2022).

The findings further stated that clergy-laity relationship often results in decreased participation and engagement among lay members. When laity perceive that their input is unwelcome or that their contributions are undervalued, they may become disillusioned and disengaged from church activities. The findings revealed that churches characterized by strained relationships between clergy and laity experience lower attendance rates, reduced volunteerism, and diminished enthusiasm for church programs. This disengagement not only affects individual members but can also create a broader atmosphere of apathy within the congregation. Without active participation from the laity, church programs and initiatives may struggle to thrive, leading to a decline in overall church vitality.

Having witnessed laity that has been disconnected from the church because of a poor relationship, the findings revealed that a negative working relationship can also contribute to spiritual stagnation within the church community. When clergy and laity are at odds, it becomes challenging to foster a shared spiritual vision. Laity who feel disconnected from their clergy may struggle to engage in spiritual practices, such as worship, prayer, and service. This finding was in alignment with the research by (Carroll & Roozen, 1992).who stated that negative conflict leads to decline of church member hence stagnation

Findings suggest that members of congregations with strained clergy-laity relationships often report feelings of spiritual emptiness or dissatisfaction. When clergy are unable or unwilling to provide the necessary support and guidance, laity may feel lost in their spiritual journeys, leading to decreased faith engagement. This stagnation can have lasting effects, hindering both personal growth and collective spiritual vitality. Trust and respect are foundational to any healthy relationship, and the clergy-laity dynamic is no exception. A negative relationship erodes these essential elements, leading to an atmosphere of suspicion and hostility. When clergy and laity do not respect one another's roles and contributions, it becomes difficult to work collaboratively toward common goals. This finding is in line with the study by Friedrich, 2015).

5.5 Theological Reflection

5.5.1 Introduction

The relationship between clergy and laity is a foundational aspect of church life, and its state can reflect broader theological themes. Here's a theological reflection on this dynamic:

5.5.2 Biblical perspective on the relationship between the clergy and the laity

The concept of leadership centered on quality relationships and influence has deep Biblical roots that predate contemporary leadership theories. During the New Testament period, church governance typically involved a bishop (1 Tim 3:1, 2) working alongside a team of elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Pet 5:1) to provide leadership for individual congregations. The relationships between these leaders and their congregation members held paramount importance, with expectations that interactions would demonstrate love, honor, and respect (1 Thess 2:8; 5:12, 13).

Biblical leadership examples demonstrate approaches that parallel modern leadership theories. King Saul's effectiveness as a leader stemmed from his charismatic traits, physical presence, and military capabilities that suited his historical context (1 Sam 10:23). Nehemiah exemplified balanced leadership by maintaining strong interpersonal relationships with the Jewish exiles (Neh 2:17-19) while simultaneously employing task-oriented strategies to accomplish the temple reconstruction for Yahweh (Neh 2:5, 11-16). Both Paul and Jesus demonstrated characteristics consistent with charismatic and transformational leadership through their self-sacrificial approach (Acts 20:24; John 10:11, 15) and their commitment to fostering profound transformation in their followers (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 5:17).

Early Christianity operated without a distinct priestly hierarchy. The initial converts became evangelists, spreading the message of Lord Jesus throughout various regions, often preceding even the apostles' departure from Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). As conversions increased sufficiently in different locations to establish assemblies, believers gathered weekly on the first day to break bread and encourage one another in love (Acts 20:7). When apostles had opportunities to visit these gatherings, they appointed elders to shepherd these small communities, while deacons were

selected by the assemblies themselves. This simple structure constituted the complete organizational framework of the earliest churches.

The relationship between clergy and laypeople should be grounded in Trinitarian principles, emphasizing self-emptying, diversity, unity, and communal spirit to prevent mutual undermining and authoritarian practices. According to Atkinson (2014:142, 143), the self-emptying process within the Triune God manifests in specific ways: The Father demonstrated self-emptying through love by permitting the Son's crucifixion, allowing the sword to pierce his own soul (Luke 2:35). The Son willingly embraced self-emptying by enduring the hardships and limitations of earthly existence. This self-emptying served not only humanity's salvation but also glorified the Father (Phil 2:11) and elevated the Holy Spirit's earthly ministry (Luke 4:18; 11:20; 12:12; 24:49).

5.5.3 The State of Working Relationship between the Clergy and Laity at st Stephen's church

The findings of the study reflects through the church, described as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), illustrates the essential interconnectedness of all members. Just as each part of the body has a distinct function, so do clergy and laity. When both recognize their roles in the Body, the church can better fulfill its mission to embody Christ's love and service in the world.

The doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers" is rooted in 1 Peter 2:9, where it states that believers are a "royal priesthood." This indicates that all Christians are called to participate in ministry, not just the clergy. When laity embrace this calling, they engage actively in the life of the church, fostering a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect.

The findings of the study illustrate Jesus' models servant leadership in Mark 10:42-45, where he teaches that true greatness comes from serving others. Clergy are called to lead by example, demonstrating humility and service. When clergy prioritize the spiritual well-being of laity, it

nurtures trust and strengthens the community. This reflects Jesus' teaching that "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant."

Ephesians 4:15-16 emphasizes the importance of speaking the truth in love and growing together as one body. Open communication and transparency in decision-making allow laity to feel invested in the church's mission. When laity are informed and involved, it fosters a sense of ownership and stewardship over the church's resources and direction, aligning with the biblical call to be faithful stewards (1 Peter 4:10).

Colossians 3:16 encourages believers to teach and admonish one another with wisdom. The clergy-laity relationship should be one of mutual growth; clergy provide spiritual guidance, while laity offer diverse perspectives that enrich the community. This reciprocal dynamic fosters a culture of discipleship, where both groups grow in faith together, reflecting the communal nature of the early church (Acts 2:42-47).

The relationship can face challenges such as burnout among clergy and disengagement among laity, similar to the tensions Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 regarding division. Addressing these challenges requires open dialogue and a commitment to unity in Christ. Acknowledging the pressures on clergy and encouraging laity to take an active role can revitalize this relationship, as seen in the example of Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18, where shared leadership brought about better community functioning.

The state of the clergy-laity relationship holds profound theological significance. By fostering a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and shared responsibility, the church can better reflect the teachings of Christ. Both clergy and laity, as co-laborers in God's mission (1 Corinthians 3:9), contribute to a vibrant faith community that manifests the love and grace of God in the world.

5.5.4 The effect of Positive Working Relationship between the Clergy and the Laity at St Stephen's Church

The study found out that when clergy and laity work together harmoniously, it fosters unity within the church community. Ephesians 4:3 urges believers to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” This unity enables the church to function effectively as the Body of Christ, each member contributing to the overall health and mission of the community.

The findings from the study revealed that A collaborative relationship promotes an environment of mutual support and encouragement, leading to spiritual growth for both clergy and laity. Colossians 3:16 encourages believers to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another.” This mutual teaching fosters an atmosphere where everyone grows in faith and understanding.

When clergy and laity communicate openly and work together, they can align their vision and mission. Acts 15 provides an example of early church leaders gathering to discuss important matters, resulting in a unified approach to spreading the Gospel. This shared vision empowers the church to move forward with purpose and clarity.

A positive working relationship enables more effective ministry and outreach efforts. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, Paul describes the variety of gifts within the church and emphasizes that they are all given for the common good. When clergy and laity collaborate, they can utilize their diverse gifts to serve their community and fulfill God's calling together.

Clergy can provide spiritual guidance and pastoral care, while laity can offer support and accountability. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 highlights the value of companionship: “Two are better than

one, because they have a good return for their labor.” A positive relationship fosters a sense of community, where both clergy and laity support one another in their spiritual journeys.

A church that exemplifies a positive working relationship between clergy and laity serves as a witness to the broader community. John 13:35 states, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.” This love and collaboration reflect the character of Christ, drawing others to the faith.

The effects of a positive working relationship between clergy and laity are profound, enhancing unity, spiritual growth, and effective ministry. By reflecting on biblical principles, churches can cultivate an environment where both clergy and laity thrive together, fulfilling their shared mission in Christ.

5.5.5 The effect of negative working relationship between the Clergy and the Laity at St Stephen’s Church

The findings of the study on the effects of negative relations between clergy and laity in Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda can be effectively illustrated through several biblical allusions that highlight the importance of unity, communication, and mutual respect within the church community.

The Apostle Paul’s analogy of the church as the Body of Christ is particularly relevant (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Paul emphasizes that each member has a unique role, and the health of the body depends on the harmonious functioning of all parts. When there is discord between clergy and laity, it can lead to dysfunction, just as a body suffers when one part does not work in unity with the others. The study’s findings indicate that negative relations diminish spiritual engagement

and involvement, paralleling Paul's teaching that all members should work together for the common good.

In Ephesians 4:15-16, Paul encourages believers to speak the truth in love, emphasizing the necessity of open communication within the church. This scriptural principle aligns with the study's findings regarding poor communication leading to conflict escalation. When clergy and laity fail to engage in constructive dialogue, misunderstandings can arise, resulting in divisions that weaken the church. The biblical call to communicate lovingly can serve as a guiding principle for improving relations and fostering a collaborative spirit.

Jesus' teaching on servant leadership in Mark 10:42-45 offers profound insights into the dynamics of leadership within the church. Jesus contrasts worldly authority with the model of servant hood, emphasizing that true greatness comes from serving others. This principle can counteract the negative relational dynamics identified in the study. When clergy embody servant leadership, they create an environment where laity feel valued and empowered, which is essential for healthy church growth. The lack of mutual respect noted in the study can be addressed by embracing this biblical model.

Matthew 18:15-17 provides guidance on resolving conflicts within the church community. Jesus instructs believers to address grievances directly and seek reconciliation. The study highlights how unresolved conflicts contribute to declining attendance and disempowerment among laity. By adhering to the biblical mandate for reconciliation, both clergy and laity can cultivate an atmosphere of forgiveness and understanding, fostering stronger relationships and promoting growth.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Paul encourages the church to encourage one another and build each other up. This scriptural call aligns with the need for positive relations among church members. The study's findings suggest that negative interactions lead to disempowerment and disengagement. By focusing on uplifting one another, both clergy and laity can create a supportive community that encourages active participation and spiritual growth.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction.

This chapter reached conclusions regarding the objectives that directed the study findings, providing recommendations and areas for additional study.

6.2 Summary of Findings

6.2.1 The state of working relationship between the Clergy and Laity at St Stephen's Church

Kitara

The partnership between clergy and laity serves as a foundation of any faith community, significantly impacting its spiritual energy, ministry effectiveness, and general unity. When this collaboration operates successfully, it strengthens the church's capacity to minister to both its congregation and the broader community. In contrast, a troubled relationship can result in dissatisfaction, fragmentation, and reduced influence on society.

Through this examination, it has become clear that a robust clergy-laity relationship is established on collaborative respect and partnership. Each party contributes distinct viewpoints and abilities that, when unified, strengthen the church's purpose. Clergy provide spiritual direction, leadership, and pastoral support, while laity contribute vital perspectives from their backgrounds and knowledge. Understanding the mutual dependence of these functions is essential for building a strong community.

Open communication represents another fundamental component of a beneficial relationship. Honest dialogue promotes transparency and confidence, enabling both clergy and laity to

participate meaningfully in decision-making procedures. When laity feel knowledgeable and included, they are more inclined to embrace ownership of the church's purpose and participate actively in its programs. On the other hand, when communication fails, misconceptions can develop, resulting in irritation and withdrawal.

The obstacles encountered by clergy and laity - including burnout, societal changes, and varying expectations - require a proactive and cooperative strategy. By recognizing these concerns and collaborating to discover solutions, churches can develop a nurturing atmosphere that promotes spiritual development for all congregants. Leadership approaches that highlight shared duties can also reduce some of the burdens on clergy while enabling laity to assume active positions in ministry.

Additionally, a beneficial working relationship strengthens the church's capability to extend outreach and serve its wider community. A unified church becomes a compelling testimony to the principles it advocates, exhibiting love, compassion, and dedication to social justice. When clergy and laity collaborate efficiently, they establish a dynamic community that not only supports its members but also addresses the requirements of those beyond its boundaries.

To summarize, the condition of the working relationship between clergy and laity is vital for the wellness and energy of the church. By promoting collaboration, mutual respect, and transparent communication, faith communities can establish an atmosphere where both clergy and laity flourish. This partnership extends beyond merely fulfilling functions; it involves constructing a dynamic, active community that is devoted to its purpose and attentive to the requirements of its members and society. As clergy and laity manage the complexities of contemporary church life,

their dedication to developing a strong relationship will guarantee that the church remains a pertinent and influential force in society.

6.2.2 The effect of Positive Working Relationship between the Clergy and the Laity St Stephen's Church Kitara

A beneficial working relationship between clergy and laity brings transformation to any faith community. When both parties collaborate efficiently, they establish an atmosphere that promotes spiritual development, harmony, and productive ministry. This cooperation enhances the church's comprehensive mission, enabling it to address more effectively the requirements of its members and the surrounding community.

The advantages of such a relationship reach beyond the internal workings of the church. A coordinated clergy and laity can offer a persuasive testimony to the principles they maintain, showing love, compassion, and dedication to service. This collaborative attitude not only enriches the church community but also draws others to its mission, establishing a vibrant and inviting environment.

Additionally, a solid partnership develops resilience when confronting challenges. By collaborating to address difficulties—whether they emerge from cultural changes, organizational matters, or individual issues—clergy and laity can create solutions that fortify the entire community.

In the end, the wellness of the clergy-laity relationship is essential for the church's vitality. By emphasizing communication, mutual respect, and shared accountability, faith communities can utilize the varied talents and perspectives of all their members. This collaborative method not only improves the church's effectiveness but also satisfies its purpose to serve as a source of hope and

transformation in society. In achieving this, clergy and laity together can establish a dynamic and involved community that embodies the core of their shared mission.

6.2.3 The effect of negative working relationship between the Clergy and the Laity at St Stephen's Church Kitara

A detrimental working relationship between clergy and laity can produce extensive and damaging consequences on the existence of a faith community. When communication deteriorates and confidence diminishes, it results in misunderstandings, disputes, and absence of unity. This malfunction can establish an atmosphere of dissatisfaction, where members feel underappreciated and disconnected, ultimately obstructing the church's mission.

This type of strained relationship can suppress spiritual development, as laity may feel hesitant to engage actively in ministry or contribute their talents. When the clergy are viewed as remote or inaccessible, it additionally isolates the congregation, creating a culture of quietness rather than cooperation. This separation not only impacts the spirit of church members but can also jeopardize the success of outreach initiatives and community involvement.

Furthermore, a detrimental relationship can result in heightened departure among both clergy and laity. When individuals feel neglected or unrecognized, they are more prone to pursue satisfaction elsewhere, causing a depletion of ability, experience, and organizational wisdom. This pattern of disconnection can maintain instability within the church, making it challenging to sustain consistency in leadership and activities.

In the end, the adverse consequences of a broken clergy-laity relationship emphasize the significance of encouraging open communication, mutual respect, and shared objectives. Confronting the fundamental causes of disagreement is crucial for restoring confidence and

cooperation. When clergy and laity collaborate effectively, they can establish a vibrant and healthy church community that prospers on shared mission and vision. Acknowledging and addressing the dynamics of their relationship is not merely advantageous—it is essential for the church to accomplish its function as a transformative influence in society.

6.3 Conclusion

These biblical references highlight the essential principles that can direct clergy and laity in addressing negative relations and promoting a healthy church atmosphere. By accepting unity, productive communication, servant leadership, conflict resolution, and mutual support, the church can improve its development and vitality. Incorporating these biblical teachings into the church's culture can establish a solid foundation for developing positive relationships that ultimately result in a more involved and flourishing congregation.

The study's findings emphasize the essential function that beneficial clergy-laity relationships serve in the comprehensive wellness and development of the church. Biblical principles confirm the significance of unity, productive communication, and servant leadership, which are crucial for developing a supportive and engaged church community. When clergy and laity collaborate harmoniously, they improve spiritual involvement and outreach, thereby establishing a welcoming environment that draws new members and reinforces existing relationships.

On the other hand, the adverse consequences of tense relations are significant. Reduced participation in worship and community service not only impacts the spiritual experiences of congregants but also restricts the church's influence in the wider community. Inadequate communication can intensify conflicts, resulting in a culture of disconnection and bitterness.

Weakening of lay leaders further worsens these problems, as it inhibits initiative and reduces the variety of leadership essential for a vibrant church.

The findings additionally show that as negative relations continue, churches face experiencing a declining pattern of membership and attendance. The longer these tensions remain unresolved, the more difficult it becomes to rebuild confidence and cooperation between clergy and laity. The church's energy is fundamentally connected to the relationships developed within its community; therefore, addressing the root issues becomes crucial for sustainable development.

6.4 Recommendations

According to the findings, several recommendations can be proposed to improve clergy-laity relations and encourage church growth:

Churches should emphasize establishing channels for transparent dialogue between clergy and laity. Consistent forums, workshops, and feedback meetings can enable discussions about concerns, suggestions, and concepts. Promoting transparency in decision-making will assist in developing confidence and ensuring that all perspectives are acknowledged.

Offering training in conflict resolution for both clergy and laity can provide members with the abilities required to handle disagreements constructively. Workshops that concentrate on biblical principles of reconciliation can create an atmosphere where conflicts are perceived as opportunities for development rather than divisive matters.

Clergy should actively work to strengthen lay members by acknowledging their talents and including them in leadership positions. Creating mentorship programs that connect clergy with lay leaders can improve abilities, promote initiative, and foster a sense of ownership among congregants.

Creating collaborative ministry projects that demand cooperation between clergy and laity can reinforce relationships and encourage teamwork. This could encompass outreach programs, community service activities, and joint planning for worship services, enabling both groups to pursue shared objectives.

Offering opportunities for spiritual development that include both clergy and laity, such as Bible study groups and prayer gatherings, can strengthen relationships and improve the overall spiritual atmosphere of the church. When both groups develop together in faith, it builds a sense of belonging and community.

Churches should perform regular evaluations of clergy-laity relations and church wellness. Surveys, focus groups, and interviews can offer valuable perspectives into the dynamics within the congregation and identify areas for enhancement.

Highlighting the teachings of Scripture concerning community, service, and leadership can function as a directing framework for clergy and laity. Sermons, discussions, and study materials should strengthen the significance of unity and cooperation within the body of Christ.

6.5 Areas for Further Research

While this study provides valuable insights, there remain several areas for further research that could enhance understanding of clergy-laity relations and their impact on church growth:

Conducting longitudinal studies that track changes in clergy-laity relations over time could provide a more comprehensive view of how these dynamics evolve and their long-term effects on church growth.

Research comparing different denominations or cultural contexts could yield insights into how varying theological perspectives influence clergy-laity relations and church effectiveness.

Further research could examine how external factors, such as societal changes, economic conditions, and technological advancements, influence clergy-laity dynamics and church growth.

Investigating the perspectives of younger congregants regarding clergy-laity relations can shed light on how to engage the next generation effectively and address their unique challenges and needs within the church.

Evaluating the effectiveness of specific conflict resolution strategies employed in churches could provide valuable guidance for fostering healthier relationships and improving overall church dynamics.

Exploring the relationship between clergy mental health and their interactions with laity could help identify factors contributing to negative relations and offer solutions for clergy well-being.

With the rise of social media and digital communication, studying how these tools affect clergy-laity relations and community engagement would provide valuable insights into modern church dynamics.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide for the Key Informants (Head of laity and the Clergy)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Twebaze Elly, a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of Master of Divinity. I am conducting a study on, “the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy on the growth of a church: a case of St. Stephen Parish”. This should not take much of your time, and you can choose to stop the interview at any time, or to skip any questions if you like. Your responses are confidential, and your name will not be written down. I will use the information that you provide specifically for study purposes.

Section A: Introductions

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Occupation/ Position
5. Period spent working in that position

Section B: How effective is the working relationship between the clergy and laity in Stephen's

Kitara Church of Uganda

6. How satisfied are laity with their involvement and the support they receive from clergy?
7. What specific roles do the clergy and laity play in the church?
8. To what extent do clergy feel supported by laity in their ministry?

Section C: How have positive interactions between the clergy and laity contributed to recent church growth?

9. Can you identify any specific programs or activities that have benefited from strong clergy-laity relationships?
10. What are the key benefits of a positive clergy-laity relationship in enhancing church growth?

Section D: The effects of negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church

11. Have you ever experienced conflict between the clergy and laity and how has it affected church growth?
12. What are the most common issues or conflicts that arise between the clergy and laity?
13. How do negative relationships between clergy and laity affect the church's overall growth and community engagement?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix II: Focus Group Discussion Guide

With the selected laity (Christians of the church)

Good morning/afternoon, I am Twebaze Elly, a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU) pursuing a degree of Master of Divinity. I am conducting a study on, “the influence of the relationship between the laity and clergy on the growth of a church: a case of St. Stephen Parish”. The information given will be used only for academic purposes and will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.

I will ask you a series of questions. There are no right or wrong answers. I only want to learn what you think. If I ask a question that you would prefer not to discuss, you do not need to discuss that topic. If you find the discussion topic uncomfortable, you are welcome to withdraw from the discussion at any time. I will be recording this discussion so that we can be sure to have your opinion in your own words when I analyse the information later. OK, let’s get started.

Section A: Introductions

1. Gender (*don't ask, just observe*)
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. Place of residence
5. Period spent as a member of St. Stephen Parish

Section B: How effective is the working relationship between the clergy and laity in St. Stephen’s Kitara Church of Uganda

1. How have you seen the clergy and laity working together?
2. What specific roles do you think the clergy and laity play?

3. How effective is the collaboration between the clergy and laity in implementing church programs?

Section C: The effects of positive relations between laity and clergy on the growth of the church

4. Can you provide an example where positive relationships between the clergy and laity led to noticeable growth in the church?
5. How does a strong relationship between clergy and laity impact your personal involvement in church activities?
6. What benefits have you observed from positive interactions between the clergy and laity in terms of church growth?

Section D: The effects of negative relations between the laity and clergy on the growth of the church

7. Have you experienced or observed any situations where conflicts between the clergy and laity affected the church's growth?
8. What challenges do you see arising from negative interactions between the clergy and laity?
9. How do you think unresolved issues or disagreements between the clergy and laity impact the church's ability to grow?

Thank you for your cooperation