

**AN INQUIRY INTO TERTULLIAN'S THEOLOGY OF HUMAN SUFFERING AND
ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE LIFE OF CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS IN
URBAN ARCHDEACONRY, DIOCESE OF NORTHERN UGANDA (2015-2025)**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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DECLARATION

I Ayoo Dorothy humbly declare that this dissertation is my original work; it is not plagiarized and have never been submitted to any of the University/institutions for any award.

Signature: 

Dated: 26th June 2026

APPROVAL

I approve that this dissertation Title: An inquiry into Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of northern Uganda (2015-2025) is done under my supervision and now ready for submission.

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DEDICATION

I dedicated this thesis to the Almighty God whose grace, wisdom, strength and the faithfulness have sustained me throughout my academic journey. Surely, His unfailing guidance has enabled me to persist through every other challenge that I encountered especially during the course of this study and even all through my work of life to date. Notably, first I sincerely dedicate this study to my family especially my two children Lubangangeyo Gad and Rwot-olara Gideon, my father Rev. Canon Ayella O.O.L of the Diocese of Northern Uganda and all my immediate family members whose prayers, encouragement, patience and moral support provided to me motivation necessary to complete this investigation successfully. Most especially their sacrifices and unwavering confidence to see me through these academic pursuits inspired me and enabled me to remain much more committed to accomplishment this goal.

Special dedication goes to the Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Uganda Godfrey Loum who permitted me for this further study. I also sincerely dedicate this study to the leadership of Christ Church parish and the Christians of the entire parish, who endeavored to support me financially and spiritually. Above all, I dedicate this study to the entire Christians of the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda whose experiences of suffering, resilience, faith and hope inspired this study. Furthermore, with great honor, I dedicate this endeavor to Rev. Sarah Cowdel and family, former Principle AJLTC at the Diocese whose idea pointed to me much more future projects out of this study. Hence, may this work contribute meaningfully to the theological reflection and pastoral ministry within the Church and the society? Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to all the scholars, ministers and all the future researchers whose commitment to theological inquiry may continue to advance Christian understanding and their service in the contemporary contexts.

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ABSTRACT

This study has examined Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the live life of contemporary Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda specifically during the period 2015-2025. This dissertation worked out guided by three specific objectives as: to establish Tertullian's theology of human suffering. To examine the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry. In addition, to explore the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing challenges experienced by Christians in the study area. This study has only employed qualitative library-based research design. Documentary review of primary and secondary theological sources issue for data collection done and review of scholarly books, journal articles and historical documents relevant to Tertullian's theology, including Christian suffering context of post-war realities in Northern Uganda. The collected data were analyzed using thematic review based on the content analysis techniques.

The findings in particular revealed that Tertullian understood suffering as a tool for spiritual formation, formative Christian discipline and participation in the passion of Christ also including ecclesial identity and spiritual training. The study further established that Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry have continued to experience physical, social, economic, psychological and spiritual effects associated with the aftermath of the NRA/LRA war conflict. These challenges have included poverty, trauma and loss of hope, weakened social relationships, family instability and spiritual struggles. The study however, concluded that Tertullian's theology of human suffering offers significant theological resources for fostering hope, resilience, moral courage, spiritual endurance, communal unity and pastoral healing among these Christians experiencing post-war challenges. The study greatly recommends that church leaders, theologians and the pastoral caregivers should contextualize Tertullian's theological insights in a way that address contemporary realities of suffering while promoting healing, refurbishment and Christian hope within Northern Uganda. The major key words identified include Tertullian, Human Suffering, Christian Hope, Resilience, Post-War Effects, Northern Uganda and Urban Archdeaconry.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES/FIGURES	x
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS	xi
1.0 CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT	3
1.1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	3
1.1.5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	4
1.1.5.1 General Objective.....	4
1.1.5.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.1.5.3 Research Questions	4
1.1.6.0 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	5
1.1.6.1 Geographical Scope	5
1.1.6.2 Content Scope.....	5
1.1.6.3 Time Scope	5
1.1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	5
1.1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.....	6
1.1.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
1.1.10.0 RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
1.1.10.1 Introduction	8
1.1.10.2 Tertullian's Theology of human suffering	8
1.1.10.3 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda:.....	10
1.1.10.4 The potential of Tertullian's Theology of Human Suffering towards addressing post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda .	12

1.1.11.0 METHODOLOGY.....	15
1.1.11.1 Introduction	15
1.1.11.2 Research Design	15
1.1.11.3 Sample Procedures and Sampling Techniques	15
1.1.11.4 Methods of Data Collection.....	16
1.1.11.5 Data Analysis.....	17
1.1.11.6 Validity and reliability / Trustworthiness.....	17
1.1.11.7 Ethical Considerations Include	17
2.0 CHAPTER TWO.....	18
2.1.1 Tertullian’s theology of human suffering and its relationship to the contemporary Christian life	18
2.1.1.1 Introduction	18
2.1.1.2 Human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation	18
2.1.1.3 Human suffering as formative Christian discipline.....	22
2.1.1.4 Human suffering as participation in the passion of Christ.....	24
2.1.1.5 Human Suffering as Ecclesial Identity	25
2.1.1.6 Human suffering as spiritual training	29
3.0 CHAPTER THREE	32
3.1.0 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2026).....	32
3.1.1.1 Introduction.....	32
3.1.1.2 Physical effects.....	32
3.1.1.3 Social effects.....	34
3.1.1.4 Economic effects.....	42
3.1.1.5 Spiritual effects	46
4.0 CHAPTER FOUR	51
4.1.0 The potential of Tertullian’s theology of human suffering in addressing the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda	51
4.1.1.1 Introduction	51
4.1.1.2 God’s presence amidst suffering	52
4.1.1.3 Tertullian’s theology towards dealing with social fragmentation.....	56
4.1.1.4 Faithful perseverance amidst suffering.....	61
4.1.1.5 Steadfast faith amidst human suffering.....	64
4.1.1.6 Conclusion	67

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE	69
5.1.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	69
5.1.1.1 Introduction	69
5.1.1.2.0 Summary of findings.....	69
5.1.1.2.1 Tertullian's Theology of Human Suffering and its relationship to the Contemporary Christian Life	69
5.1.1.2.2 Introduction	69
5.1.1.2.3 Human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation	70
5.1.1.2.4 Human suffering as formative Christian discipline	70
5.1.1.2.5 Human suffering as participation in the passion of Christ	71
5.1.1.2.6 Human suffering as ecclesial identity.....	71
5.1.1.2.7 Human suffering as spiritual training	72
5.1.1.2.0 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025)	73
5.1.1.2.1 Introduction	73
5.1.1.2.2 Physical effects	73
5.1.1.2.3 Social effects	73
5.1.1.2.4 Economic effects	74
5.1.1.2.5 Spiritual effects	74
5.1.1.3.0 The potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda.....	75
5.1.1.3.1 Introduction	75
5.1.1.3.2 God's presence amidst suffering.....	75
5.1.1.3.3 Tertullian's theology towards dealing with social fragmentation	76
5.1.1.3.4 Faithful perseverance amidst suffering.....	76
5.1.1.3.5 Steadfast faith amidst human suffering	76
5.1.1.4. Conclusion	77
5.1.1.4.0 Recommendations	78
5.1.1.4.1 Introduction	78
5.1.1.4.2 Recommendations for Church Leaders	78
5.1.1.4.3 Recommendations for Christians	79
5.1.1.4.4 Recommendations for the theological institutions.....	80
5.1.1.4.5 Recommendations for the further researcher.....	81
Bibliography	82

APPENDICES:	91
Appendix 1. Research Work Plan	91
Appendix 2. The Research Proposed Budget	93
Appendix 3. Uganda Christian University Exemption letter	93
Appendix 4. Introduction Letter for Data Collection	96
Appendix 5. Turnitin Report	97

LIST OF TABLES/FIGURES

Table:	Page:
One: Conceptual framework:	7
Two: Sample Procedure and Sample Technique:	16
Three: Data Collection:	16
Four: Validity and Reliability/Trustworthiness:	17

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

NRA:	National Resistance army.
LRA:	Lord Resistant Army
Ch.:	Chapter
AD:	Anno Domini (Latin) “in the year of the Lord.”
CE:	Common Era
SGBV:	Sexual Gender based Violence
TIPA:	Trauma Informed Practical approach
RI:	Reconciliation Initiative
PSM:	Practical Support Mechanism
LTHCP:	Led Trauma Healing Circle Project
SGBV:	Sexual Gender based Violence
FGBV:	Faith Practice Amidst Hardship
SFF:	State Fast Faith
HIV/AIDS:	Acquired immune Deficiency Syndrome
ABS:	American Bible Society
BTSDT:	Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology
UCU:	Uganda Christian University

1.0 CHAPTER ONE

1.1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Tertullian (160-225 AD) was among the early North African Church fathers, whose writing centered during a period of persecution and socio-political instability. The negative implication perceived not as a contradiction to but as a very important part of Christian experience in witness (Eric, 1997:1-4). This is a lay down value fact that fostered discipline inward divine education of human spirit, this emphasized that suffering endured in faith strengthens the Church and glorifies God. Bittension (1956:104) dispute, “Tertullian theology of human suffering developed a strong theology of suffering that viewed misfortune and trials not as meaningless but as divine and permitted opportunity for spiritual growth, witnessing and perseverance as in Apologetics. Carrington (1957:396-399) acknowledge “the question of why God allows suffering and how believers can best respond to a universal human experience occurrence.” The above assertion shows the question of human suffering underscored in its relationship to Christian theology and that is what prompted this researcher to inquire into Tertullian’s theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in Urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025). The intention of the topic is to analyze the question of human suffering and offer a theological healing based on Tertullian’s theology of human suffering. This is to equip the contemporary church with resilience, witness and spiritual maturity rooted in Christian theology.

1.1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The context of Tertullian’s theology of human suffering dated best around late 2nd century and early 3rd century. This period is when he was living in Carthage, in the era of North Africa marked by multiple recurrent Roman persecution of Christians. In Johanness (1953:243-246) noted that “theology of human suffering there emerged primarily upon response to external persecution like legal, social, physical threats and internal theological issues regarding endurance and perseverance in Hope. The Tertullian’s writing particularly Apologeticus Quintuus Septimius-Florens Tertullian

(1917) (1917) and the *Ad Martyres* -Quintus Septimius-Florens Tertullian between 1867-1873, gave much profound construct of theological narrative particularly on human suffering especially in the case of righteousness's sake. He acknowledges it as not only inevitable but also salvific and spiritually edifying, where believers may seek to remain unwavering in any affliction. This is a suggestion that fleeing suffering signify lack of confidence into the lived life of Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. This study will help to bridge the gap and bring in more confidence to the Christians.

Commenting on the consequences of the war Owiny Dollo P'lajur (2021:46) said "If you ask an average Acholi what his fears are, he would not say Kony, but their fear is the uncertainty ahead." He said Acholi family shifted its farming system from using ox-plough and tractors for cultivations to very primitive methods of using a hand hoe, this brought in famine and poverty to Acholi region. Analytically Dollo called for offers, given to the people who can carry especially necessities for their families. He even asked press agencies to join him to endeavor pressuring advocacy concerning peace. These call needs theological approach to interpret the given psychological and pastoral demand to address Christians after experiencing the post-war effects like famine and poverty. Additionally, there emerge elements of struggling Christians in Acholi region where many of them express hope in situation that portray hardships. Therefore, there is a call to create theological framework to express forth what that actually mean.

In other words, the understanding of Tertullian's theology of human suffering is useful because it reveals evidence to the lived life experience of contemporary Christians living in the urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. This doctrine of Tertullian theology thinking about human suffering call Christians to endurance and to have patience, particularly in seeing it as of value to Christians facing trauma. The American Bible Society (ABS)(2019:1) reported that "there exist in some areas of Northern Uganda about 70 percent of the population who suffer with deep rooted and long-lasting trauma." Robert (1924:219-232) aware of that, noted that Christians can look at human suffering as an essential active Christian asset, where the survivors and

the church community can understand their endurance as meaningful and “a sacrificial offering” to God, that reframe once trauma into spiritual witness and hope, just like Tertullian tried to bring forward in his time. Soskice (2009:113-117), noted that “the teaching of Tertullian Theology on human suffering influence Christians particularly how the early Christians understood human suffering as God’s moral order and justice that humanity became fallen through sin, hence humanity was made subject to death and pain as consequence of the fall.” His view is that Tertullian’s theology played great role in determining Christians understanding of suffering as both personal and communal experience that is lacking in the contemporary society, fostering this study to bridge the gap.

1.1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The post-NRA war realities in urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda, led to widespread discouragement, spiritual fatigue and some cases of syncretistic practices as coping mechanisms by people in the area. In response, there have been pastoral interventions imposed by Church of Uganda inform of home visits, counseling and mission work among others. The interventions often focus on immediate relief that does not reflect Tertullian’s theology of human suffering. Therefore, in the urban archdeaconry, one can realize the potential of dealing with post-war realities using this theology which gap covered by this research.

1.1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to inquire into Tertullian’s theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025). This scholarly study based on Tertullian’s theology of human suffering by exploring its potential in dealing with post-NRA war challenges faced by the church in the urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. It embarks on equipping Christians in the urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda, a zone that have majority of people struggling with post-NRA war effects. The study provides a theological solution to cope with post-NRA war effects

among Christians of urban archdeaconry. In the contemporary, it offered theological insights on Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its potential in dealing with contemporary challenges faced by churches in Africa. This subsequently is a scholarly bridge contribution to the gap between ancient Christian theological thoughts and the contemporary issues in Africa.

1.1.5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.1.5.1 General Objective

To inquire into Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025).

1.1.5.2 Specific Objectives

1. To analyze Tertullian's theology of human suffering.
2. To analyze post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda.
3. To analyze the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering towards addressing post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda.

1.1.5.3 Research Questions

1. What is Tertullian's theology of human suffering?
2. What are the post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda?
3. What is the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering towards addressing post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda?

1.1.6.0 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1.6.1 Geographical Scope

This conducted dissertation is from the urban archdeaconry of Diocese of Northern Uganda focusing especially on Christ Church Parish that represented the diverse socio-economic and demographic backgrounds to the study.

1.1.6.2 Content Scope

The dissertation focus on Tertullian's theology of human suffering, derived from his major writings of *Ad Martyras*, *De Patientia*, and *Scorpiace*.

1.1.6.3 Time Scope

This study has covered the period between 2015-2025 capturing decade of post-war recovery area and transformation in the urban archdeaconry Diocese of Northern Uganda. Christ Church Parish, with one of the best-documented diocesan-level trauma and SGBV project known as Led Trauma Healing Circle project (LTHCP) for formerly abducted Mothers. There has been identification of suffering full of laments and acknowledgement, during pastoral visit where the Church leaders saw nightmares and guilt, while some of them believed that God has abandon them and some of them felt stigmatized by their neighbors.

1.1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research study is mainly significant in four different aspects like:

- ❖ **To the theological scholars:** It has contributed to contextual application of Tertullian theology and its potential to deal with human suffering.
- ❖ **To the pastoral ministry:** It equipped clergy and lay leaders with theological framework for counseling and discipleship in the contexts of human suffering.
- ❖ **In faith formation:** It helps believers to reinterpret suffering from a theological point of view and shall strengthen their resilience and hope.
- ❖ **To the missiology aspect:** It offered insights into human suffering attitudes positioned to serve ways of witnessing to the Gospel especially in challenging contexts.

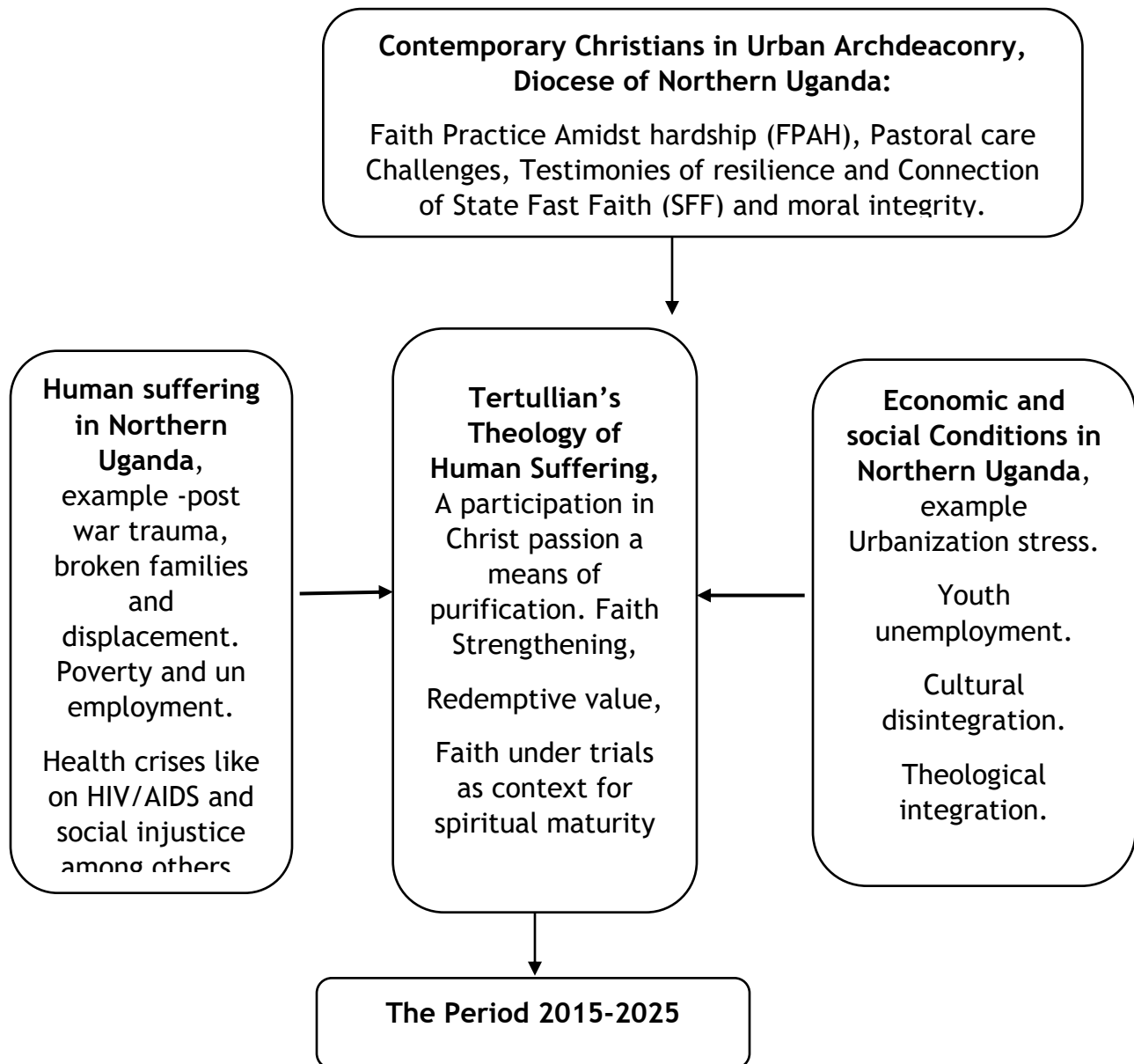
1.1.8 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

In essence, this tasked the church with dual responsibility of addressing post NRA-war effects. Largely, achieved in the course of pastoral interventions such as home visits, counseling and mission work among others. These interventions lack solid theological base covered by this study focusing on Tertullian theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025).

1.1.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research has been grounded in the conviction that Tertullian's theology of human suffering can shape the church's response to the post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of the urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025). Furthermore, the lived life of Christians faced communal, psychological and economic pressure especially in aftermath of conflict in Uganda. Tertullian's theology of human suffering provided theological dynamic Christian experience lens of the contemporary in the urban archdeaconry of the Diocese of Northern Uganda. The dissertation slot between the year 2015-2025 and has formed the empirical field for this investigation realized. The illustrated is below:

TABLE ONE: ILLUSTRATION OF CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:



Summary of the conceptual frame work;

This research framework proposes that the dialogue between Tertullian's theology of human suffering and the life lived faith experiences of contemporary Christians in Northern Uganda can generate pastoral strategies that nurture hope, resilience and authentic discipleship. The research therefore has integrated the historical theology, contextual analysis and practical theology in order to serve the church and its mission among the suffering Communities.

1.1.10.0 RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1.10.1 Introduction

This section presents the academicians' and writers' perspective regarding the subject of the study that will be carried out. Particularly, it focuses on the specific objectives as; to analyze Tertullian theology of human suffering, analyze post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda and to analyze the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering towards addressing post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda

1.1.10.2 Tertullian's Theology of human suffering

Eric (1997:219-232;131-136) made investigation into how Tertullian conceives the relationship between human suffering and heavenly teaching in a way that God uses suffering as means by which Christians cultivate in their holiness, discipline and likeness to Christ (pp. 112-118). He argues that for Tertullian, suffering is not accidental but a participation in the divine plan that forms Christian moral character. He shows that human suffering in Tertullian's writings reflects his strong moral feeling that Christian's endurance like physical hardship, persecution, illness and poverty is a sign of faithfulness and resistance to pagan comfort. This stretches to the theological reading of suffering as not only historical facts that has helps us to see Tertullian view on human suffering but also as an instrument that God uses to train believers for spiritual formation. Eric's work is useful to this study since it provides strong interpretive framework for understanding Tertullian's nature of human person in suffering. However, does not address how African Christians today interpret suffering in light of Tertullian's theology.

Dunn (2004:85-93; 102) content that Tertullian concept has identified interpretation of human suffering and highlighted the necessary consequence of Christian identity in a hostile world." He emphasizes that Tertullian perceives suffering as part of spiritual warfare, visible mark of loyalty to God and the means through which the Christian

imitates Christ's passion. Dunn (2004:102) describe Tertullian concept of human suffering as a necessary result of Christian living in unfriendly world. He stresses that Tertullian theology of human suffering is "not an accident but a formative Christian discipline." This is one of the relevant scholarly interpretations that endeavored to put clarification how Tertullian's theology connects suffering with spiritual formation. The moral endurance is a key for this research analysis. He earlier noted on (pp. 85-93) "Tertullian reframes ordinary forms of human suffering like sickness, social rejection and poverty." They are spiritually meaningful and not only merely persecution. Therefore, Dunn expands suffering beyond martyrdom and argues much relevant to daily Christian living, because of the theology of human pain, which is not just dramatic martyrdom because it provides historical parallels that is useful for comparing early-church in North Africa with 21st century Uganda. However, he does not explore suffering experienced among contemporary African Christianity whether Tertullian's theology categories are helpful for Christians in urban areas facing insecurity, trauma, displacement and post-conflict suffering in Northern Uganda.

Lienhard (1991:19-32) noted, "Tertullian approach to human suffering is a theological scandal that must be interpreted through the cross because it shows awareness of emotional and physical burden of suffering." This interpreted human suffering as participation in Christ's own pain seeing suffering as revealing contradiction between Christian hope and Roman expectations of comfort, framing all sort of human suffering like illness, moral struggle, grief and persecution as stages of prove to Christian obedience. This provided one of the few academic articles that deal with head-on to Tertullian theology of human suffering and not just martyrdom. It also gives strong theological insights into how believers emotionally and spiritually process their suffering; this is something that is helpful for connecting ancient emotional responses with modern African pastoral realities. Lienhard stops at the theological analysis and does not apply Tertullian's insights to any contemporary community, which this study addressed.

Rankin (1995:55-66; 101-108) point out ideas that are driven by the understanding of Tertullian theology on human suffering being as "a badge of true ecclesial identity

that suffering binds Christians together in unity and distinguishes them from Roman society.” He explains that suffering purifies believers and exposes false Christians who may not avoid hardship. This has provided to this dissertation how to establish suffering as a communal and ecclesial theological category not merely individual, but then useful for understanding suffering among Christians in Northern Uganda. It is where families and parishes often share suffering. However, Rankin’s view does not deal with African communal suffering like war trauma and socio-economic instability.

Bray (2000:215-228) states that “suffering to Tertullian means God’s discipline and the means by which God purifies believers whose experience of suffering are good conditioning to their moral character. Together traits like illness, poverty and persecution interpreted as spiritual training and to him to avoiding suffering its equal resisting holiness. He provided valuable theological insight that would help interpret suffering as formative but not merely destructive, this strengthens human hope in suffering and their spiritual identity. His work is useful in developing good moral character from the traits that hinders human being. However, it does not relate to aspects like psychological trauma, war wounds and pastoral realities of African Christians, whereas, this research seeks to extend this theology of human suffering to Uganda’s post-conflict areas with needs for spiritual healing.

1.1.10.3 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda:

Alava (2022:142) states that, “there are several aspects which represent the ethnographic/cultural legacy of the post NRA-war in Northern Uganda which include normalization of violence, disruption of traditional kinship structures, deterioration of communal trust and internalization of fear which equates to silence as survival strategies.” These cultural patterns directly attributed from prolonged exposure to war effects, which had forced the area with displacement and militarization of everyday life that has redesigned social behavior and moral expectations within communities. However, for Christians in the urban archdeaconry, there is trauma as legacy from war and has generated opportunity cultural effects that manifest

emotional weakness, lack of trust and suspicion within the body of Christ, weakened fellowships which has cause difficulties in interpreting suffering theologically. However, this are legacy of understanding trauma more on how the present-day culture has influences Christians confidence interpretation especially in endurance affecting their hopes. In other words, the main idea here points to the fact that it does not just create physical pain but also changes culture. Moreover, this culture defines the way that Christians perceive and suffer from it, this then defines the exact position where this Tertullian theology outbursts rightly this work of fiction at the later chapters, and that is where this dissertation has addressed those mentioned problems.

Dolan (2009:47-63; 145-167) describes the NRA/LRA-era violence as “social torture, producing long-term trauma, family breakdown, chronic poverty and loss of identity and dignity as major effects faced by Christians in northern Uganda.” This provided to this dissertation empirical information for understanding the depth of social torture among Christians. Dolans information provided deep understanding of Christian’s torture but missed out the aspect of theological hope and resilience to Christian suffering, which this dissertation addressed.

Otunnu (2017:213) remarks that “Tertullian theology of human suffering is a trauma, economic disruption and social fragmentation which remain implanted as the social cloth of northern Ugandan communities which has been for long since the ceased off of conflicts.” He analyses and discusses political violence including war effects in Northern Uganda. In other word, his work provides this research with realities of the historical and political dimensions. Furthermore, reveals that the post-war environment affects the social, economic and political psychological wellbeing of Christians. However, he focuses mainly on political violence without relating it to Christian life that would foster hope and resilience, something addressed by this dissertation.

Lamwaka (2016:397) pointed out “the end of the armed conflict did not transform into the end of suffering because returnees had numbers of negotiated loss, grief and

shattered households.” She narrated first-hand historical narrative on the implications of war, this laying background for understanding emotional wounds, family disruption and psychosocial distress that Christians in Northern Uganda are going through. The viewpoint that she took reflects the period of the war and the aftermath, but she does not cover the long period of 2015-2025 of human suffering, something looked at in this dissertation.

Sverker (2008:82-110;213-243;289) asserts that “the post war effects like psychological and spiritual exhaustion, daily coping mechanisms, loss of hope and security are burdens on churches and families.” These indicate that if people live in a continued negotiation with memories of war, poverty, tension and death among others, they lose confidence and hope in their Christian life.” The effects of war result into long-term psychological and cultural wounds as part of the phenomena, which has continued to be relevant in the urban archdeaconry today. Furthermore, it offers to this research realistic evidence of how Northern Ugandans experience prolonged suffering is essential for contextual theology that can be of value to the contemporary society. However, he does not evaluate how Christian theology can interpret and responds to these realities.

1.1.10.4 The potential of Tertullian's Theology of Human Suffering towards addressing post NRA-war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda

Florens (1997:45-47) argues, “Tertullian’s theology of human suffering is a transformative experience that leads to personal spiritual maturity than emotional devastation.” This indicates that human suffering positively with resilience grounded in Christian confidence can be more than hopelessness. His work has helped this dissertation particularly in addressing Tertullian theology as pastoral view tool for helping communities traumatized with post war effects realities. However, it does not provide direct sociological application strategies for Christian populations affected by political and military conflicts. This necessitates contextual application for Northern Uganda that this study has address.

Elaborating on the above writer Hall (2005:113-116) said, “Tertullian interpreted human Suffering as a container through which Christian identity and their moral integrity are molded.” This has set constructive framework for trauma counselling by encouraging victims of violence to regain hope through their rediscovery of Christian identity through the theological and historical information. However, Hall does not explore the implementation of such interpretations in the contemporary post-conflict Christian communities, which require contextual translation for the Christians especially in Northern Uganda that this dissertation provides.

In regard, Salisbury (1997:78-83) highlights how “Tertullian’s teachings influenced the early Christian martyrs such as Perpetua to reinterpret pain not as tragedy but as testimony of divine strength.” His work contributes to this study by emphasizing that the pain of suffering is a testimony of divine strength. This can be useful by the Christians of urban archdeaconry to consider divine strength as a tool for overcoming post war effects. This understanding in a long run builds hope and resilience among Christians amidst post-war effects, something that this study had to consider.

Taber (1988:212-219) contends that “Tertullian’s theology of human suffering provide framework to Christian communities that can engage themselves in pursuing social healing.” The reflection of this theology of human suffering integrated Christian pastoral care with more beneficial construction of Christian community support. His argument suggests theologically that understanding the mystery of human suffering has the potential to healthy spiritual unity that can enable believers to support one another in the circumstances of suffering pain and loss. This theoretical conception has significant implications for this present study because it aligns together with Tertullian’s observation that human suffering is not personal, but then a communal concept of bond promises of confidence that nurture healing and reconciliation. However, the content of Taber on the subject above remains largely theoretical and does not engage with specific historical, cultural and post-war realities of Northern Uganda. Hence, gap that this study has address.

Mugambi (1995:38,89-103;134-138) theological dialogue to Tertullian theology point out that “The task of theology in Africa today is not so much on liberation as per it’s reconstruction because after struggle people must rebuild their lives, their communities and their hopes.” He believes that post-war conflict Christian theology in Africa should move beyond passive endurance of suffering toward constructive reconstruction with much emphasis on healing, restoration and rebuilding of broken communities. His ideas further contend that theology after violence must actively nurture hope and resilience than to sanctify suffering in itself at the end. He does not directly dialogue with Tertullian’s theology because, according to him reconstruction paradigm provides critical lens through which understanding Tertullian’s theology of suffering may be re-read. In his view, this implies that Tertullian’s theology of suffering interpretation should not be a passive resignation but then as a source of communal hope and moral resilience. This align with Mugambi’s call for healing and rebuilding after conflict dialogical approach that is particularly relevant for post-war area in Northern Uganda, where Christian hope must be translated into practices of restoration and renewal.

1.1.11.0 METHODOLOGY

1.1.11.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the dissertation methodological framework. It explains this research designed its study population, the sample techniques, data collection instruments/methods and the strategies for data analysis, the research validation and its considerations of reliability. It further tackled the issues of ethical considerations and the anticipated study limitations. The segment also provides clarification that the study is purely library-based with purpose of study design to ensure that the study is conducted systematically, objectively and with scholarly thoroughness together with valid and reliable data that contain ethical soundness to address the study objectives.

1.1.11.2 Research Design

The design of this dissertation is qualitative in nature and is entirely library-based (documentary) research. It considered the most suitable design for this study because it emphasizes the issue in question, which has to do with theological doctrines rather than the acquisition of empirical testimonies from community. It further considered the academic literature review on the post NRA-war effects of Christians as general significance of the above-mentioned theologies to the order of the literature produced. This looked into the theological evidence of what Tertullian considered as issue of human suffering. This method has ensured that the research findings be grounded in authoritative theological texts and scholarly peer-reviewed works to validate this study.

1.1.11.3 Sample Procedures and Sampling Techniques

The sample techniques are purposively used to select literature that is academically credible and relevant to the three research objectives. The sampling involves include the aspects on the table below:

TABLE TWO: SAMPLE PROCEDURES AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:	
CATEGORY	SOURCE:
Purposive sampling -Inclusive Criteria	❖ Peer-reviewed scholarly texts ❖ Theological and pastoral literature published by reputable academic publishers ❖ Works directly discussing: ✓ Tertullian theology ✓ Theology of human suffering ✓ Post-war effects in Christian communities ✓ Religious resilience in post-conflict communities.
-Exclusive Criteria	❖ Blogs, informal websites, Wikipedia ❖ Literature without clear academic or theological value

1.1.11.4 Methods of Data Collection

This dissertation has enabled and utilization documentary techniques that include the aspect illustrated below:

TABLE THREE: DATA COLLECTION METHODS:	
METHOD	PURPOSE
Library Reading	To obtain primary and secondary theological information
Digital scholarly database	To access JSTOR, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, ATLA Religion Database.
Thematic note-taking	To extract relevant quotations, concepts and arguments.
Source annotation	To identify the strengths, weaknesses, relevance and gaps in each source
The data extraction medium will be used to record author, year of publication, and major findings that are relevance to the research and the existing gap.	

1.1.11.5 Data Analysis

The study has been analysed qualitatively in content and thematic data analysis as:

- I. **Thematic coding** such as human suffering, endurance, hope, eschatology, healing and resilience identified.
- II. **Comparative theological analysis** of Tertullian's theology compared with contemporary theological literature concerning Christian suffering.
- III. **Synthesis/combination** findings merged to determine the relevance of Tertullian's theology thought to the contemporary pastoral realities.

1.1.11.6 Validity and reliability / Trustworthiness

To ensure academic credibility on this research I have considered the following principles and strategies as illustrated below:

TABLE FOUR: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY / TRUSTWORTHINESS:	
Credibility	Use of peer-reviewed sources of trusted scholars; triangulation of theological and contextual data
Transferability	Clear methodological description to enable good replication/repetition
Dependability	Systematic data extraction, consistent analytical procedures and documentation
Conformability	Objectivity citation and avoidance of personal theological bias

1.1.11.7 Ethical Considerations Include

This is a low-risk research since its library-based study focusing on Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in Urban archdeaconry, diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025). The case is for library-based research and has ethical practice including:

- ❖ Full compliance with academic honesty and anti-plagiarism standards
- ❖ Proper acknowledgement of authors in accordance with APA referencing style
- ❖ Copyright respect that is the use of library and scholarly materials legally

2.0 CHAPTER TWO

2.1.1 Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the contemporary Christian life

2.1.1.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the contemporary Christian life. It is set to explore the multidimensional aspects of Tertullian's theology of human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation, formative Christian discipline and participation in Christ suffering, ecclesial identity as spiritual training. Each is determine to examine the roots of Tertullian theology relationship with the contemporary Christian life.

2.1.1.2 Human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation

Tertullian's theology of human suffering demonstrates that suffering is a divine tool towards the spiritual formation of believers. In this context, spiritual formation refer to a preordained and well-ordered divinely permitted process through which believer's inner life is molded to attained holiness, moral discipline, Christ likeness, perseverance and eschatological hope. This suggests that suffering is not good naturally, but then it becomes good when interpreted through the lens of faith and participation in the passion of Christ. This is evident in Tertullian (1950:17-18) while addressing Christians who were imprisoned awaiting execution. He explains, "The imprisoned Christians awaiting execution should interpret their imprisonment as divine training ground, a place where God disciplines for heavenly glory." In this respect, hardships such as imprisonment, injustice and persecution interpretation should not be as defeat but then as circumstances through which God forms the moral and the spiritual character of believers. In other words, Christians who endure trials patiently imitate Christ and prepare themselves for the reward that God promises to the faithful.

In another development, Tertullian (1994:643) addresses those who avoid persecution and insisted that "the prison work is similar to Christian service, equally the same

work that the desert did for the prophets, similarly Jesus also went to solitude to pray, so the prison is regarded as a place for discipline than punishment.” In respect to that, suffering proves the authenticity of faith to endure suffering is to imitate the passion of Christ and since the Son of God also suffered let us not be ashamed to suffer. Besides, that suffering reveals the genuineness of believer’s faith, with hardship forming moral courage and with endurance producing spiritual strength therefore, participation in suffering is conforming believers to the passion of Christ.

Commenting on Tertullian theology, Eric (1997:112-118) contends, “Suffering is not something seemingly accidental or misfortune. Because, of its nature of divinely ordained means of teaching moral and spiritual formation which is influential to Christian life.” This aspect of suffering forms Christian moral identity by aligning each believer with Christ’s obedience. Here Tertullian’s view does not glorify pain for its good, however he views it as a form of moral identity, pre-ordination by God to align believers with Christ’s likeness.

Furthermore, Eric (1997:131-136) explains, “Tertullian understood suffering within an eschatological framework that the trials faced by believers are temporary struggles that prepares ultimately for reward promised by God.” His view suggests that, through suffering Christians participate in the victory of Christ and anticipate the final judgment that reveals justice fully. This view calls upon Christians to look at suffering with perspective of eschatology full of total victory over suffering attained in the next life.

In addition, Rankin (1995:101-108) Notes that “Tertullian linked suffering with ecclesial identity and moral discipline as it should be on the willingness of believers to endure persecution to demonstrate purity of the church, that distinguished true Christians from those who compromised their faith under pressure.” In respect to that, suffering served as a powerful witness to the truth of Christianity strengthening communal life of the church. Alongside that logic, suffering is actually not merely individual endurance but then a corporate expression of church’s commitment to Christ. This is particularly the participation in the struggle between God’s kingdom

and its opposition. Moreover, various suffering faced by Christians demonstrate the kingdom of darkness opposition that of God. In respect to that, suffering functioned as a form of participation in Christ's passion and victory with spiritual triumph over evil and believer's testimony to the power of faith.

Furthermore, Dunn (2004:102) enlightens that "Tertullian theology of human suffering has connected suffering with moral discipline of the Church arguing that those who denied their faith under pressure threatened the unity and holiness of the Christian community." As a result, suffering functions both as a test of individual faithfulness and a means by which their faith is strengthen and becomes a collective identity of the Church. In this sense, suffering exposes the authenticity of believer's personal commitment to God, a confrontation of believers with the choice to endure in faith and for renouncing off their confession. This kind of moments when believers are tested reveals the reality whether their faith is actually deeply rooted and not merely pretense. This distinguishes surface adherence is obtain from genuine discipleship, portraying suffering as witnessing and imitation of the person of Christ in the truth of the gospel. This demonstrates that the Church has integrity spiritually amidst persecution.

Considering the above, Graig (1993:423) notes that "hardship provides the exert quality of a wise person who knows it's better than to be tranquil in hardship echoes in this teaching arguing that suffering produces perseverance and character plus hope." This demonstrates that Tertullian's theology of human suffering in God can be use for the good of His people. It indicates that suffering is not merely a misfortune but a divinely directed instrument that refines believers by drawing them closer to trusting God's purposes. Besides, this teaching work over time to build perseverance that mold character and cultivated hope, whereby Christians are gradually formed into deeper holiness, humility and resilient faith.

Similarly, Gaebelein (1981:167) noted, "suffering as it does not weaken faith but refines and strengthens believers to remain steadfast in Christ. This affirmed the teaching of James the Just who urged believers to consider it pure joy when facing

trials, because the test produces perseverance and maturity (James 1:2-4)”This category of test does not exposed genuineness faith only, but then cultivates deeper dependence on God where believers have to learn trusting purposes of God even amidst adversity. Accordingly, the visible expression of authentic Christian faith is in endurance with discipleship, demonstrating resilient faith that is transformative and deeply rooted in unwavering commitment to Christ. Aquinas (1947:104-521) noted that “dependence on God take the form of interrelated ontological dependence which focuses on believer’s total reliance, source on God the sustainer of all human beings for redemptive dependence by all believers in God.” This emphasizes the grace of God necessity found in Christ for the forgiveness of sin and the restoration of all believers dependence benefit. This highlights that believers should trust in God’s guidance, sovereign care and governance over all circumstances including suffering and adversity.

Accordingly, in the Urban Archdeaconry suffering takes the form of economic hardship and unemployment, poverty, psychological wounds, social stigma, HIV/AIDS and chronic illness, urban displacement and family instability after the LRA war. Therefore, Christians should be encouraged to deepen their dependence on God. This can take the form of ontological dependence, which focuses on believer’s total reliance on God’s existence and redemptive dependence. Besides, it can be in form of beneficial dependence with focus on trusting God’s guidance, sovereign care and sustenance in all life circumstances including suffering. Meanwhile, Augustine of Hippo (1991:3-5) Notes that “God you have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you, so you are the only ground and source of all being.” This establishes the ontological dependence of human existence as fulfillment entirely grounded in God and source of being. Besides, implies that human life is incomplete apart from when God reinforce and can redirect believers suffering as to their ultimate dependence on Him for existence and purpose.

2.1.1.3 Human suffering as formative Christian discipline

Tertullian's theology of human suffering demonstrates that suffering is a formative Christian discipline. Formative Christian discipline refers to a divinely permitted means of moral life that is model by spiritual formation, obtained through conditions of persecution, social exclusion plus illness and deprivation. It indicates cultivation of endurance (*patientia*), strengthens loyalty to Christ, separates Christians from worldly securities and trains believers in holiness forming moral resilience under opposition. Besides, formative Christian discipline strengthens discipline because it does not stand for punishment as structured training. It acknowledges suffering operating as spiritual and physical education building of believer's faith in testing and purification. Formative Christian discipline can be traced in Tertullian (1994:113-115) stating, "Christians who deliberately flee persecution to avoid suffering, weaken public witness of their faith. Meanwhile endurance in suffering reflects participation in Christ's own suffering and demonstrates genuine Christian commitment that is formative in them." In this regard, suffering deepens Christian's commitment to God by undressing away false securities and fostering lived life dependence on God. As a result, this strengthens their faith through perseverance and trust. In this way, trials become formative experiences through which believers are conformed more closely to Christ by cultivating steadfast devotion and authentic spiritual maturity.

Oden (1992:318-322) comments about Tertullian's theology that "the early fathers understood suffering as moral physical spiritual discipline education use for building a training ground, where believers are tested with obedience, they are strengthened in endurance and formed in Christian Character." His view suggests that, suffering is a training ground for Christian endurance and faithfulness. In addition, suffering functions as a formative discipline through which God trains believers in steadfast endurance by gradually modeling believer's habits of perseverance under trials, trust and patience. It is agreeable that endurance is not instant but cultivated through endurance characterize with repeated encounters and adversity where divine grace sustains faithful obedience.

Suffering can therefore, be a training ground for Christian endurance because it places believers within a lived process of spiritual formation in which perseverance is genuine through testing than an assumed theory. Therefore, it enables Christians to develop a resilient faith that is no longer dependent on favorable circumstances but then rooted in divine faithfulness. This way, suffering is the will of God, the one who purifies motives and adjusts Christian lived life into a Christ likeness pattern of steadfastness. Yoder (1994:96-102) contends that “a believer has to carry a cross, whereby the believer’s cross is not simply a form of suffering that comes their way, but then as suffering embraced in following a crucified Lord.” This viewpoint strongly reinforces the idea of formative discipline, because it changes suffering from being merely circumstantial to being a conscious participation in the life and mission of Christ as a formative discipline. This then provide dependence on God because it is not a passive endurance but an active one required because it possesses willingness and identification with Christ suffering.

Similarly, suffering becomes a formative space in which believers despite hardships cultivate obedience to God. This demonstrates faithfulness not because suffering originates from confession of Christ, although their response to suffering reflects how they are committed to God. Consequently, instead of viewing suffering as proof of discipleship, it is a requirement of the entire believer in persevering obedience, trust and moral as resilience amidst any unjust suffering that reveals authentic Christian formation. Disciplined obedience is a call of believers demanded by God to follow in endurance and faithfulness and mirror the crucified Christ. Henceforth, this defines discipleship as not a theory of suffering but then a response to Christ likeness. Therefore, the heart of discipleship lies not merely in suffering itself, but then in a conscious obedient conformity to Christ like life pattern amidst suffering. For that reason, in the contexts where suffering is not persecution, believers authentically embody discipleship when they respond to suffering with steadfast obedience, reflecting the character of the crucified Christ.

In light of the above, Bonhoeffer (1959:79) explains that “genuine Christian discipleship necessarily involves self-denial to death and the willingness to suffer for Christ, a demonstration to a call to Christ’s demands with a fundamental break from self-centered living and comfort-based Christianity.” This suggests that when believers face suffering they should be willing to endure by denying self to form an essential element of authentic obedience to Christ. Besides, suffering is an inevitable consequence of faithful loyalty to Christ, a form of spiritual discipline that strengthens believers’ commitment and publicly demonstrates their unwavering loyalty to the crucified Lord. This communicates to the context of Northern Uganda affirming that suffering does not disprove Christian identity; it encourages communal unity within parishes and provides framework for moral resilience and perseverance couple with restoration of dignity by framing endurance as participation in Christ.

2.1.1.4 Human suffering as participation in the passion of Christ

Tertullian’s theology of human suffering demonstrates that suffering is participation in the passion of Christ. This means that suffering is a theological and spiritual orientation whereby humankind unites with Christ’s redemptive work. This is evident in Tertullian (1994:643) who explains “believers who suffer for Christ share in His life and future reign declaring that if we suffer we shall also reign with Him in the union with Christ’s redemptive suffering, a refute teachings that discouraged martyrdom than public confession of Christ.” In this respect, suffering faced by Christians is not merely pain but a participation in Christ’s redemptive story.

Commenting on Tertullian theology, Lienhard (1991:19-32) explains that “suffering is interpreted through the scandal of the cross, especially in participation through suffering; illness, grief, moral struggle, persecution which intern is transformed when seen as participation in Christ’s own pain.” This suggest that Tertullian theology expands suffering beyond martyrdom to include; poverty, social rejection, illness, moral temptation and emotional distress. In the context of Northern Uganda, suffering is experience by many people primarily not because of explicit allegiance to Christ, but because of the lasting effects of the Lord’s Resistance Army insurgency

(LRA) that widely spread realities effects like poverty and psychosocial trauma. Therefore, Christians have interpreted suffering inform of a sitting room for Christians to deepened obedience and reliance on God. This endurance in hardship becomes a life lived participation in the suffering of Christ's, not merely consequence of persecution.

This participation in Christ's suffering can take in the first place suffering in the course of identification with Christ's innocent suffering whereby they do just as Christ suffered unjustly. There is where many people in Northern Uganda suffered violence and loss beyond their control. This tells us that when believers interpret their pain through the lens of Christ's unjust suffering, they enter into a shared experience of redemptive endurance. Secondly, through obedient perseverance amidst suffering is participating in Christ's passion reflecting that believers should remain faithful to God despite hardship. This suffering becomes an interplanetary zone where obedience is deepened meanwhile, this echoes Christ's own obedience in suffering as Adeyemo (2006:3272) noted that "This type of obedience can only be learned through experience and obedience, as Christ also endured the temptation, trials, persecution, suffering and death on the cross." It was such sense that Christ made perfect. This obedience qualified him as the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:8-9). Therefore, this does not qualify martyrdom but faithful endurance, which mirrors Christ's posture toward suffering. In the third place, suffering with hope for future restoration and redemption, hold onto eschatological hope while trusting that their present suffering will be transformed into future glory where they will have real life of eternity because it will be a time that they will be set free from the present suffering of hard time on earth.

2.1.1.5 Human Suffering as Ecclesial Identity

Tertullian's theology of human suffering demonstrates ecclesial identity; it refers to collective self-understanding of Church as a distinct community whose identity formed the authenticity through suffering. This is evident in Tertullian (1972:50) that "endurance of Christians under persecution distinguishes the Church from pagan

society and reinforces its communal identity, depicting suffering as public witness to Christ demonstrating loyalty of believers under trials.” This suggests that genuine Christianity manifests under trials. However, Christians faced with trials should be loyal to God because their loyalty becomes a public witness to Christ.

Commenting on Tertullian’s theology, Rankin (1995:101-108) observed, “Suffering in Tertullian’s thought functions as an ecclesial boundary marker that distinguishes faithful believers from merely nominal Christians. Especially within hostile pagan society, persecution exposes the authenticity of Christian commitment. Enduring the trials demonstrate genuine loyalty to Christ, although those who avoid suffering reveal the instability of their faith.” This suggests that suffering acts as a visible line that separates authentic Christians from those whose faith is insincere. In Tertullian time the hostile environment of pagan persecution, serve as test to the depth of sincerity commitment of Christians to Christ. Therefore, enduring trials genuinely demonstrated loyalty, obedience and steadfastness confirming their real position in the true Church. However, those who avoid suffering and end-up compromising their faith under pressure reveal unstable faith that lacks true spiritual grounding. Christians face economic struggles, moral temptations and social pressures that help to reveal the authenticity of Christian life In the Urban Archdeaconry where in everyday trials they remain faithful in their integrity have perseverance and demonstrate true discipleship. Meanwhile, those who conform to worldly patterns reflect being weakened with a insincere commitment to Christ.

Additionally, Rankin (1995:121-128) comments, “Christian unity under suffering demonstrate how communal trials cultivate distinctive Church identity enduring suffering that forms the Church’s moral and theological character. This is because individual trials are interpreted collectively within believer’s community.” In that, respect suffering strengthens Church’s communal witness in society especially in the Urban Archdeaconry where believers can be united under their current suffering when they understand that hardship is something they all contribute to as one body, but not as an isolated personal problem. To ensure concrete unity they are strengthen over

three different ways: beginning with, their collective interpretation of suffering, whereby instead of treating challenges like economic stress, sickness, violence, discrimination and social breakdown as something meaningless. They should read them as an experience that deepens faith when interpreted within believer's community understanding of communal participation. Next is in light to, their shared support and united community activity like caring for those affected, prayer networks, visits to the sick, assistance to struggling households and protection of vulnerable members. Lastly, having common worship and witness especially when the church gathers regularly for services and have small groups of youth fellowship/prayer meetings. At this point believers can experience one identity that transcends social divisions of ethnic, class and of neighborhood barriers within the city. Consequently, underneath suffering unity becomes a practical activity done by believers to remain emotionally and even spiritually linked not disconnected.

In respect to the above, the experiences of suffering force believers to determine whether their pain will produce division or foster deeper harmony, especially through reconciliation much more than vengeance. It strengthens communal bonds and open possibilities for dialogue, forgiveness and restored relationships, without which the believers stop to be distinctive people whose ecclesiology echoes Tertullian's theology. Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry faced trials like economic hardship, unemployment couple in the midst of high cost of living, social pressures from secular and materialistic urban cultures and moral challenges including exposure to corruption, substance abuse and even sexual immorality. Their loyalty to God amidst these suffering is a public witness to Christ. Furthermore, believers also encounter spiritual struggles such as weakened communal fellowship, limited pastoral care due to busy urban lifestyles and tension of maintaining Christian identity amidst religious pluralism in the competing worldviews. Christians, have to be loyal to God amidst this suffering cultivating practice of steadfastness faith that remains rooted in obedience, trust and hope despite difficult circumstances. In Northern Uganda, loyalty to God today expressed unwavering commitment to Christ even when economic hardship, insecurity and social instability create pressure to compromise one's faith. The aspect

to be adapted includes rejecting corruption, injustice and unethical survival strategies, while instead choosing integrity, honesty and righteousness as witness to the transforming power of the gospel.

Additionally, the aspect of loyalty should be demonstrated through resilient prayer, dependence on God to strength and activate participation amidst Christian fellowship suffering. In other word, believers are to respond to suffering without despair but embodying Christ likeness endurance. This should include love and perseverance toward others, forgiveness especially in situations marked by pain and brokenness. The loyalty must take the form of faithful obedience to God and spiritual endurance, especially where suffering is often not a direct result of loyalty to Christ that must reflect trust in God's providence and a commitment to live a life that is according to His will regardless of circumstances. This is where those who remain faithful under trials reveal the genuineness of their faith upon authentic Christian identity. Besides, the internal interconnection strengthens the community of Christian by cultivating spiritual unity among believers. Accordingly, the Church itself formed through suffering by recognizing participation of their members in suffering, creating an ecclesial identity that is inseparable from moral courage, faithfulness and public witness.

In Northern Uganda Christian suffering is not only something that Christians live on but forms their identity. The endurance can function as an identity in about three ways: In the first place, endurance as loyalty to Christ where believers learn that remaining faithful during hardship is a public testimony. In addition, when they suffer endurance, they say to themselves that Christ is still Lord even when life is difficult. In another way, endurance is a moral and theological formation especially when suffering trains believers as members of the church to develop into Christ likeness character with patience, humility, forgiveness integrity and perseverance since trials interprets better together than individually. Lastly, endurance is community building especially when people see their fellows enduring faithfully they also gain hope. Therefore, shared hope forms Christian's identity making congregation recognizable

even in situation that are unstable in the urban environment. Hence, endurance is not passive. The active faithfulness continued through prayer, worship, serves and maintenance of Christian values even while suffering persists.

2.1.1.6 Human suffering as spiritual training

Tertullian's theology points to human suffering as a spiritual training. This means that God allows various trials to form believer's moral and spiritual capacities. Tertullian (1994:644) observes that "Suffering possesses an exemplary participation in Christ's; they must follow the pattern of Jesus suffering as Savior and as not a sign of defeat but then an opportunity for Christians to demonstrate loyalty to Christ through perseverance." This suggests that Tertullian's theology ecclesial identity and spiritual formation functions as a mark of authentic Christian identity that distinguishes true believers from those of nominal adherents within a hostile society. As a result, interpretation of suffering as participation in Christ presents persecution not merely as an external pressure but then a theological test that reveals genuine loyalty to God that strengthens communal moral and integrity of the Church. Besides, suffering here is looked at as Active witness since Tertullian theology advances for the idea that suffering is not passive endurance but an active form of witness, where the believer's perseverance becomes a visible testimony to the truth of the Gospel. In this sense, suffering embodies redemptive significance and mirrors Christ's own sacrificial path and transforms trials into opportunities for proclaiming faith, reinforcing believer's dependence on God not interpreting hardship as divine abandonment. This suggests that suffering trains Christians in loyalty to God because believers learn to remain faithful to Christ in hardship while they embark on interpreting trials as opportunities to persevere but not evidence that God has failed them.

Commenting on Tertullian's theology, Bray (2000:215-228) perceived Tertullian to mean that human suffering is "part of the believer's spiritual training in which hardships like poverty, illness and persecution serve as instruments through which God refines Christian character. It's whereby resisting suffering is unwillingness that demonstrates limited submission into the process of transformation as a discipline of

Christian.” His argument presents that human suffering are training ground where God refines Christian character. The hardships such as poverty, illness and persecution serve as instruments that redesign believer from the inside. So, any resistance to suffering reveal unwillingness to submit to God’s transforming work. Meanwhile endurance shows willingness to be disciplined by God in a manner help to nurture suffering as resilience and endurance. This is where one can learn to keep trusting God whenever life does not improve quickly. The development of Christ likeness character is developed with qualities like patience, humility, self-control and integrity because moral courage develops by staying faithful to Christ even when it costs the believer psychology, socially and materially. It also refined faith and submission to God by learning to accept God’s refining process instead of giving up and blaming God. Lastly, disciplined spiritual life of prayer strengthens, worship and encourage Bible study that maintains dependence on God during trials.

The above, helps to explain why the church in the Urban Archdeaconry should not only manage suffering, but also should disciple believers to endure, remain faithful and allow suffering to refine their character. In respect to that, suffering becomes an educational tool through which believers grow in holiness and participate more deeply in the life of Christ. Besides, suffering trains Christians in spiritual discipline, a way through which God shapes moral and spiritual character of believers. In essence enduring trials such as persecution or hardship enable Christians to grow in holiness and demonstrate faithful commitment to Christ. Adding to that, both perspectives suggest that spiritual growth frequently emerges through experiences of hardship and discipline. Besides, spiritual struggles and challenges within the church context often function as formative experiences through which believers grow in faith and commitment. In essence, this stand resonates with Tertullian’s theology in interpreting suffering as a spiritual discipline that form Christian character and prepares believers for faithful discipleship.

In the Urban Archdeaconry believers who endure unemployment, rent, food pressure, sickness, family conflict and persecution encounter threats like; harassment, stigma

for faith, insecurity in neighborhoods. In that they are training them self to trust God in prayer, while keeping themselves growing in worship/fellowship, forgiving instead of retaliation, serving others despite their own struggles and publicly maintaining Christian standards showing loyalty to Christ through endurance. Many believers experience correctly the kinds of hardships Bray mentions like economic instability, health challenges, violence/threats, social stigma and family pressure. Therefore, as believers face this realities, suffering function as a spiritual training in daily ways. Poverty/insecurity also trains believers to have patience and trust in God. The believers learn to rely on God for provision, also learn how to manage hardship responsibly and continue being well relief immediately. This illness further trains believers to endurance and also have hope because the sickness challenge believers to remain steadfast through prayer, worship and hope in God's sustaining presence. Experience similar to persecution train believers in loyalty, especially where they face harassment, discrimination and fear for standing-up for Christ hence, they are pushed to choose faithfulness over compromise.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE

3.1.0 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2026)

3.1.1.1 Introduction

This section focuses on post-war effects faced by Christians of Urban Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2026). Particularly, it discusses the physical, spiritual, social and economic effects. These can be traced in the entire community, with emphasis on Christians. The understanding of these dimensions is essential in the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of contemporary Christians in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of northern Uganda (2015-2025)

3.1.1.2 Physical effects

In the Urban Archdeaconry Diocese of Northern Uganda, physical effects of war are realities experience which refer to bodily, tangible and material consequences experienced by individuals and communities as a result of armed conflict and social disruption. These include loss of life, injuries, destruction of property, displacement and deprivation of people of their basic needs like shelter, food and healthcare services. These effects are extended beyond immediate bodily harm to long-term disabilities which are visible scars, including the collapse of livelihoods and infrastructure (Adam2009:83). These are realities that directly threaten human survival and dignity and the empirical observable enable them distinguished from the psychological and spiritual dimensions which are fluctuating though they often overlap. Dolan (2009:145-167) conceptualizes these realities as part of what he terms them as "physical suffering that extends beyond immediate violence into prolonged bodily deterioration that caused poverty, neglect and limited access to medical care." This suggests that physical suffering can lead to prolonged poverty and it limit access to resources like medical care education among others. Besides, the body becomes a site where these memories of war have continuously been experienced.

However, physical suffering also contributes greatly to psychological distress because bodily pain is intertwined with psychological trauma. This suggests that survivors of war often manifest trauma through physical symptoms like persistent pain, fatigue and stress-related illnesses. Therefore, these effects can be observed during spiritual activities such as prayers, fasting and worship. Thus, it weakens spiritual discipline and cause physical exhaustion that leads to illness that hinders active participation in prayer, fasting and worship life.

Lamwaka (2016:397) observes that “even after the war in Northern Uganda many returnees continued to experience drained bodies and exhausted lives, physical effects intensified stigma and marginalization within Christian communities.” This suggests that this experience continues particularly among Christians who suffered through sexual violence and there are those who endured prolonged captivity as effect on their body. Besides, the conditions have resulted in long term physical vulnerability poverty, economic reduction, poor health and unemployment among others. Therefore, physical effects are not merely historical remnants of war but represent a continuity of life lived reality that forms everyday life in the Urban Archdeaconry. Furthermore, individuals suffering from war-related conditions and especially survivors of sexual violence and those living with HIV/AIDS are often faced with rejection and social distancing. Besides, within Church settings such stigma weakens the spiritual discipline of fellowship because of individual isolation that eventually weakens communal identity of believers.

The post-NRA war effects have generated profound implications on the lived life of Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry. For instance, Sverker (2008:82-110) notes that “physical suffering has led to reduced productivity and dependency among believers, argues that chronic illness, disability and bodily weakness significantly limit individuals” this demonstrate the reduction of physical ability to engage in productive activities by Christians, thus its physical factors that affect household survival and further reduce individual participation in church ministries, communal work and

service. As a result, to that many believers experience sense of inadequacy and diminished contribution within the body of Christ.

Considering the above, the American Bible Society (2019:1) reports that “large percentage of people in Northern Ugandans continue to suffer from trauma-related conditions many of which manifest physically.” This indicates that there are theological tension among Christians who persistently struggle to reconcile bodily suffering with beliefs in divine healing and restoration. As a result, the believers experience spiritual discouragement and end up questioning God’s presence in their physical pain.

Historically, Tertullian addressed the question of God’s presence amidst physical pain a case in point, Tertullian (1959:193-224) emphasizes that “Christian suffering and physical bodily endurance possess meaning because patience strengthens believers faith and witness amid suffering.” This physical suffering is a means that demonstrate steadfast faith and loyalty of believers tested in Christ through endearing suffering and commitment to God. Besides, physically this bodily pain is a form of participation in the sufferings of Christ because Christ also suffered. Christians should faithfully endure pain and shares symbolically Christ’s redemptive path. Thus, suffering is connected to growth spiritual with holiness and eternal hope which is not meaningless but of value. This is a great lesson to Christians of the urban archdeaconry that suffering is not viewed as abandonment by God. However, its identification should be on the aspect of physical pain that strengthen patience and deepen faith which encourage perseverance in Christ. Therefore, believers are called to endure hardships with hope, trusting that God remains present even amidst suffering.

3.1.1.3 Social effects

Social effects refer to disruptions in relationships, communal structures and patterns of social interaction among Christians. This took the form of stigmatization and family system breakdown, erosion of trust, weakened Christian bonds and reconfiguration of social identity within the Church.

In the Urban Archdeaconry social effects of war among Christians are made up of deep disruptions to the interpersonal relationships, communal life and Christian fellowship emerged during and after the war conflict. These effects weakened the social life that traditionally sustained the Church and Christian community life. In accordance to Alava (2022:142) “prolonged exposure to conflict in Northern Uganda led to the normalization of violence, fragmentation of kinship systems and internalization of fear as survival strategy.” This suggests that normalization of violence and fear within Christian Communities demonstrate that many Christians in Urban Archdeaconry gradually became accustomed to violence as part of ordinary life because of continuous war experiences. This has been caused by displacement and constant insecurity that caused fear to dominate social relationships. As a result, the hospitable Christians life were open communally unity whereby withdrawal became suspicious and emotionally defensive, hence causing fear that replacing trust, thereby weakening communal unity and Christian fellowship within the Church. This disruptive fragmentation hinders traditional family and kinship networks that previously provided emotional, spiritual and economic support to Christians. This was where families separated in camps; many parents lost their children through abduction and death. However, communal care systems were also weakened. Similarly, the Church as well depended heavily on strong family structures and communal participation. Therefore, it also experienced social instability because they were the very foundation of Christian community life that had been fractured.

Similarly, Otunnu (2017:213) argues that “post-war realities in Northern Uganda who were survivors continue to experience social fragmentation.” This is true because in the Church many Christians struggled to rebuild trust, fellowship and unity for years. This effect of displacement especially trauma and loss which cause fear, resentment, poverty and psychological wounds that weakened active participation in communal worship and Christian relationships. The Church consequently has been destabilized socially in several ways, especially of family structures that led to breakdown. Here, many Christian homes were destroyed through death, displacement and abductions. Hence, families form the foundation of church life and this weakened church stability

leading to loss of trust among Christians, causing betrayal fear and survival pressures resulting suspicion among community members. Furthermore, this reduced Church participation because Christians living in internally displaced persons' camps often lost consistent access to organized worship by failing to join bible study groups, choir practice and fellowship meetings. This led to trauma and isolation of many believers who are suffered psychological trauma that affect them in social interaction and communal worship. Hence, these weaken their moral and spiritual accountability. Additionally communal systems are the one that guide discipline, mentorship of Christian formation which was all disrupted.

However, Christian social activities were affected by the challenging factors including interruption to Church fellowships and prayer meetings, youth conferences and choir ministries, marriage celebrations and family gatherings, limited evangelistic outreaches and crusades, disrupted Catechism classes and discipleship programs, funeral and communal support ministries and Sunday school activities for children disrupted. This was due to the displacement into camps that made the insecurity to cause limited movement and much more reduced regular interaction of church community. The Church became fragmented through various aspects like separation of congregations because of displacement into different camps, emergence of ethnic and survival based divisions, decline in collective worship and communal identity, competition over scarce humanitarian resources, spiritual discouragement that caused some believers to withdraw from active church life and loss of clergy and church leaders through death, displacement due to insecurity. This fragmentation has greatly weakened the visible unity and communal witness of the Church in the Urban Archdeaconry, diocese of Northern Uganda.

The effects of the NRA war on the social life of the church have been greatly noted by several scholars. For instance, Dolan (2009:179-181) argues that "the prolonged conflict in Northern Uganda systematically erode social relations, family structures and communal trust through displacement, insecurity and militarization of everyday life." This led to the destruction of community relationships because the prolonged

war conditions forced people into internally displaced persons' camps where normal patterns of communal interaction were interrupted. These are Christians who once depended on extended family systems, neighborhood support and church fellowship became socially disconnected. As a result, it weakened communal unity that had traditionally sustained both society and life of the church. Besides, the long-term war effects weakened Church as a result of trauma in the social life because fear, violence and displacement produced long-term emotional and communal trauma. Therefore, several numbers of Christians struggled to participate actively in worship, fellowship, reconciliation and mutual support ministries. As a result, the community of the Church therefore experienced weakened unity and reduced social unity.

In addition, Finnstrom (2008:94-96) observes that “war in Northern Uganda transformed everyday social life by generating fear, uncertainty and disruption of communal and cultural institutions among the Acholi people.” This suggests that the disruption of everyday Christian Interaction was ordinary on social and religious practices like communal worship, marriage ceremonies, youth gatherings and family visitation. Christians could no longer freely interact with each other because of insecurity and displacement due to restricted movement and social participation. Besides, weakens cultural and religious identity, a mean through which Acholi people experienced crisis of communal identity during the war. Meanwhile, Christian faith and Acholi communal life are closely interconnected with destruction to cultural institutions indirectly weakened church centered social structures and the collective Christian identity.

Branch (2011:122-124) contends that “displace camps in Northern Uganda undermined social organization and weakened local authority structure that transform patterns of communal interaction.” This led to collapse of traditional and Church Leadership structures because that displacement has disrupted traditional systems of leadership and social accountability that would helped regulate lost and influence communities with scattered survival became of the primary concern. Besides, fragmentation of Christian lived life community. This suggests that camp life created overcrowding,

dependency, poverty and social tension. These conditions therefore weakened fellowship, trust and cooperation among Christians thereby fragmenting social unity of the Church in Northern Uganda.

Allen and Vlassenroot (2010:15-18) notes that “the Lord’s Resistance Army conflict that are generated out of profound social fragmentation and fear that weaken communal institutions across Northern Uganda.” This demonstrates erosion of social trust and unity because the prolonged violence creates suspicion, fear and mistrust among community members. Whereby, Christians who once lived in strong communal relationships became socially divided due to survival pressures, trauma and insecurity. This alone weakened Church congregation’s unity and communal fellowship. Besides, this weakens church and community institutions like churches, the schools and community groups struggled to function effectively during the conflict. As a result, many church activities declined because of displacement, insecurity and poverty that reduced participation in worship, ministry and communal support systems. This is where the community struggle with mistrust, identity crises and weakened collective belonging. Besides, there exists long term impact of violence with factor of displacement. Hence, social effects are not merely relational disruptions only but then represent deep life change depending on the social ability that transform community function and sustain identity in the aftermath of conflict. Additionally, the LRA war led to breakdown of family structure. Boyden (2003:343-345) explains, “Armed conflict that deeply affects children’s emotional development, moral formation and family relationships.” This suggests that violence interrupts normal childhood socialization because children are exposed to fear, displacement and instability instead of parental care and communal nurturing. Besides, the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda, many children experienced abduction, orphan and prolonged separation from parents which weakened the structures responsible for teaching Christian discipline responsibility and Christian morality. Furthermore, emphasizes that the collapse of family protection systems forces children to assume adulthood responsibilities prematurely, especially in child-headed households. Therefore, such experiences negatively affect emotional security and

moral development because children lack mature guidance and support. This wealth the post-war realities that it generate family fragmentation and contributes to long-term social instability and weakens the continuity of Christian values within communities since faith formation ordinarily depends on stable family relationships and especially on the intergenerational mentorship.

Paul II (1981:36-39) describes the family as “domestic church because it is the first environment where Christian exercise their faith, prayer and gain moral values taught and practiced.” This indicates that parents have divine responsibility to nurture spiritual lives of their children through instruction, discipline and personal example. Alongside, there is stability of both Church and society that depend heavily on strong Christian families and faithfully transmit to the religious values for the future generations. Additionally, Paul II (1981:42-45) further explains, “Family structures are weaken by the experiences of moral confusion and spiritual decline” this indicates that children lost their primary qualities in the context for learning forgiveness, obedience, responsibility and love. Besides, those families are threatened by the disintegration caused by war leading to social instability that cause continuity of Christian identity and weakens moral foundation of the Church. This insight affects Christian faith formation within households yet it’s greatly important for understanding how LRA war has affected not only social life in Northern Uganda.

Lee (1985:212-215) argues that “family is the primary organization of Christian education because children in it learn largely faith through observation, imitation and daily interaction within the home.” This suggests that Christian belief is not only communicated but primarily by parents who communicate it to them.” These beliefs are not only through verbal teaching but even with practical examples of compassion, worship, discipline and even moral behaviors. In this home is the foundational environment of religious identity with values formed before church institutions are reinforced. This further demonstrates weakened family relationships that are negatively affected by continuity of Christian discipleship. Furthermore, this fragmented households are reduce by opportunities that have consistent spiritual

mentorship. Besides, contexts of war effects like displacement and poverty and parental absence often creates gaps especially in moral instruction and emotional support. Consequently, this weakens contribution by believers into religious commitment among children and youth reason that Christian formation depends greatly on stable relational environments within families.

Accordingly, Thompson (1995:47-52) explains, “Christian qualities as first cultivated within family relationships, in the home that provides the earliest context for learning prayer, forgiveness, hospitality and mutual care.” This suggests that spiritual formation is not intellectually taught but is nurtured through daily practices and relational experiences within the household. For that reason, families play central role in nurturing spiritual identity and moral maturity of Christians. Similarly, Thompson (1995:53-56) put emphasizes, “when family relationships are broken by conflict, there come suffering instability individuals often struggle with trust, belonging and spiritual confidence.” This indicates weaken family bonds that affect believer perception of God, on community and personal identity. This insight helps to explain why Christians continue to face spiritual and emotional challenges even after the end of physical violence. These come due to the structure that normally nurture deeply damaged faith during conflict. The breakdown of traditional social structures create vacuum in moral guidance exposing individuals to alternative value systems that may conflict with Christian teaching. This breakdown of Christian identity makes believers to struggle for maintaining moral integrity in the environment and end up forming instability and series of competing influences. The result of this social effect fosters the present Church to struggle for internal unity, relational healing and authentic life of the community.

Historically, Tertullian (1931:50-51) emphasizes, “Suffering as not merely individual but communal and ecclesial in nature. Those Christian suffering creates unity among believers and strengthens identity of the Church through mutual endurance and public witness.” This suggests, suffering as unites of Christians that are more deeply simply in support to one another spiritually and also materially amidst hardship. This

theology is famously noted as for the perseverance of suffering Christians whose testimony attracts other to the faith than destroying the community. Therefore, this demonstrates that suffering is to be understood not simply as a private pain, but then subsequently as an experience capable of determining within the Church the communal identity, unity and spiritual resilience of believers.

Therefore this understanding suggests that suffering has the potential to strengthen communal bonds than destroying them. The theology presents suffering as a shared journey through which believers develop mutual care, perseverance and commitment to God. In the context of this study, that interpretation is significant because the post-NRA-war realities in Northern Uganda reveal a kind of different experience. This is because instead of strengthening relationships, this kind of suffering in many cases produced mistrust, fear, social fragmentation, revenge, suspicion and exclusion between the families and the communities. Such kind of prolonged experiences including poverty, violence, displacement and trauma and are the one that weakened communal unity and end up affecting the spiritual and social life of Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Northern Uganda.

A case in point is findings identified in the preceding chapter three revealed that many Christians struggled with domestic conflict because of the broken relationships, loss of communal trust and divisions within which both church and community structures are affected after the war. Therefore, some families became isolated due to trauma and economic hardship while others developed attitudes of mistrust because of memories associated with violence and displacement. Consequently, demonstrates a gap between Tertullian's theological ideal of suffering as a unifying force and the life lived experiences of Christians in Northern Uganda where suffering often contribute to fragmentation than unity. As a result, Tertullian's theology must be critically considered as appropriate within Northern Ugandan context because, it's not only simply affirming suffering, but then reinterpreting suffering as a call to have communal healing, reconciliation and restoration of relationships. This theology provides the foundation for encouraging Christians to rebuild their broken

relationships through mutual support, forgiveness and shared Christian identity. In this way, the Church can transform suffering from division into an opportunity for healing, unity and spiritual renewal among the affected communities.

3.1.1.4 Economic effects

There are several economic effects that emerged after the LRA war. This includes unemployment, loss of property, low productivity and dependence on subsistence means of survival. These have largely affected the Christian life of the church in Urban Archdeaconry in the context of the post-NRA war, that end up affecting income, employment, poverty, low production systems and overall economic instability. Many families lost cattle, land, homes, gardens and businesses. Meanwhile others remained unemployed and dependent on relief aid for survival. This economic hardship weakened the financial stability of churches, reduced participation in ministry activities, increased dependency syndrome and has affected Christian witness as well as the spiritual growth within the church community. Additionally, several scholars specifically demonstrate how these economic effects influenced church life and Christian communities in Northern Uganda which include: Ward (2001:203-205) argues that “conflict in Northern Uganda destroyed social and economic systems that previously sustained communal and religious life, affected the church because such poverty, insecurity in addition to displacement that disrupted Christian fellowship and development. This demonstrates that the existence of poverty reduced participation in church activities because while in displacement and on economic hardship many people are forced into survival-oriented living where obtaining food, shelter and safety became the primary concern. As a result, church attendance especially categories of youth ministry. Consequently, Christian conferences and parish development activities declined because believers were overwhelmed by economic suffering and insecurity. Furthermore, Ward (2001:206-208) noted that “economic instability weakened church institutions such as schools, health ministries and church-sponsored community programs suffered because the local economy collapsed during the conflict.” This suggests, church could no longer sustain many of its social

ministries effectively since communities lacked resources, teachers fled insecurity and infrastructure was destroyed. The economic decline therefore weakened the church's social witness in society, its structures that sustained Christian fellowship, education, discipleship and community responsibility. These economic hardships disrupted regular church attendance because people prioritized survival, food searching plus displacement struggles over communal worship. Alongside, Churches lost their capacity to maintain schools, evangelistic outreach and welfare ministries because the local economy had collapsed.

Considering the above, Nannyonjo (2009:241-246) explains that “war in Northern Uganda increased poverty and unemployment leading to destruction of infrastructure, leaving communities economically vulnerable for many years. The prolonged conflict led to reduced productive labor especially among youth and displaced families.” This poverty increased dependency among church members, limiting self-reliance and reducing active participation in church development projects. Besides, church's mission expanded into relief and rehabilitation work because believers faced severe economic suffering after the reality of the war. This affects church life because many Christians became dependent on aid and church assistance instead of participating actively in self-supporting economic and ministry activities. It became a burden to the Churches caring for vulnerable households, widows and orphans. Consequently, the destruction of infrastructure weakened Christian social ministry, limit church ability to conduct outreach and ministry, community development plus Christian education and pastoral visitation because of poor communication, movement and economic exchange broken down.

Theologically, a healthy economy leads to a healthy Church whereby human stability dignity required for human family stability, stewardship and generosity contribution to the mission of the Church. Therefore, God does not glorify laziness, exploitation and destructive poverty; however, God blesses productive labor and a responsible stewardship that is flourishing for His people. The foundations are basically biblical in three dimensions of: First as work and productivity of God's design. According to

Wenham (1987:67-69) noted that “in Genesis 2:15, the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” This suggests that humanity was placed in Eden for responsible stewardship and productive labor. Besides, work as part of God’s original design for humanity before the fall of man. This possesses dignity and theological value. This explains that work in the Garden of Eden was not punishment, but a divine vocation entrusted to humanity for sustaining creation and human flourishing. This supports the theological argument that a healthy economy and productive labor are essential for sustaining human life, families and religious communities including the church. Therefore, signifies economical productivity that enables Christians to sustain families and support ministry that does not destroy economy or weakens human dignity and also communal responsibility. Secondly, economical supports ministry stability as Bruce (1988:108-110) noted, “Acts 4:34-35 shows that the early church shared their resources and there was no needy person among them.” This demonstrates that a healthy Christian requires a community that is stable economically. Besides, church functions are fully effective when believers possess resources to support one another. This explains that the early church practiced of economic sharing was in order to preserve unity, care for the poor and strengthen Christian fellowship within the believing community. Therefore, this is the evidence of transformed Christian life and practical love among believers; it demonstrates economic stability and communal support which are important for the sustaining ministry, social care and church unity. Thirdly, poverty hinders spiritual and Church growth just as Longman (2006:519-521) explains, “Proverbs 30:8-9 warns against both extreme wealth and severe poverty because each can negatively affect moral and spiritual life.” This suggests that poverty may tempt individuals toward theft, desperation and social disorder thereby weakening moral and spiritual integrity. As a result, this supports theological argument that economic suffering can affect church life because persistent poverty creates instability within families and communities of faith. Therefore, it warns against extreme poverty because it may tempt people toward desperation and moral compromise.

Persistent economic suffering can weaken social ethics and communal trust. This is where Churches struggle with poverty finding it difficult to sustain evangelism, education and discipleship. Accordingly, Calvin (2005:2,4) argues, “Act 2 and 4 said labor and stewardship are sacred responsibilities given by God, while Wealth should not be abused selfishly but shared for the common good and support for the need and for God’s work.” This demonstrates that a healthy economy enables Christians to glorify God through stewardship whereby it foster generosity worth and there is care for the needy which foster Church development. Alongside, economic destruction weakens Christians and church’s ability to fulfill God’s mission in society.

Additionally, Gustavo (1983:174-176) argues that “poverty is not only economic suffering, but then it’s also a denial of human dignity whereby the church must therefore participate in restoring justice, livelihood and hope among oppressed communities.” This demonstrates that in any case the church cannot ignore economic suffering because holistic salvation includes restoration of human life and dignity, social dignity and communal well-being. Besides, in the post-war zone like Northern Uganda economic healing becomes an essential aspect necessary for Christian mission and pastoral care because communities continue to suffer from unemployment, poverty, displacement and destruction of livelihoods caused by prolonged war conflict.

Similarly, Lesslie (1989: 222-227) emphasizes that “the gospel addresses whole the dimension of human life including social and economic realities.” This indicates that the church should not only focus on spiritual salvation and it should not encourage neglecting economic suffering. But then it should also address realities of cultural, social and economic structures that continue to oppress the communities. Besides, economic empowerment and social restoration of livelihood, meanwhile rebuilding communal trust are important expression of Christian as witness necessary in post-conflict communities like in the Urban Archdeaconry Diocese of Northern Uganda, where the gospel seeks transformation of the whole person and the society.

Historically, Tertullian (1950:17-18) argues that “patience strengthens believers to endure suffering, poverty and hardship while maintaining hope in God’s justice and future restoration.” This indicates that Christian endurance is not passive resignation to suffering, but then a faithful perseverance that sustains human dignity amidst deprivation and oppression. It therefore foster understanding of suffering as the reality of testing Christian faith while forming their spiritual resilience and dependence upon God.

Meanwhile, considering all the above, in relation to the economic effects of war in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda, Tertullian’s theology helps Christians understand that material deprivation caused by war conflict should not destroy hope, faith and communal responsibility. Although, communities affected by war continue to experience poverty, unemployment, destruction of property and economic instability. This is where the church is called to accompany communities through compassion, spiritual encouragement and practical economic support. Therefore, Tertullian’s theology of patience complements the idea of liberation theology by emphasizing that Christian faith must remain active amidst suffering while the church participates in restoring justice, dignity and hope among economically devastated communities.

3.1.1.5 Spiritual effects

The post-LRA-war realities in Northern Uganda contain description to spiritual effects such as spiritual doubt, weakened faith, theological confusion, syncretism, loss of hope and struggles in maintaining consistent Christian devotion. It has been observed by the American Bible Society (2019:1) reports that “significantly demonstrate the proportion of people in Northern Uganda live with deep rooted trauma, which affects not only psychological well-being but also spiritual perception leading some people to question God’s presence and goodness.” This suggests that the effects of war deeply affected the spiritual life of Christians. This is clearly evidence in form of decline commitment to prayer; reduce trust in God’s protection. These are the cause’s of fear-driven spirituality, emotional distance from church activities and feelings of

abandonment by God during prolonged suffering. This is where many believers struggled to understand why God allowed violence, death, displacement, abduction and destruction to continue for many years despite continuous prayer and church involvement. Therefore, suffering is not only physical and emotional burden but then further include spiritual crisis that challenged deeper sense of Christian faith identity.

Accordingly, Sverker (2008:213-243) notes that “prolonged violence produced spiritual uncertainty especially among Christian communities for the reason that people continuously searched meaning amidst circumstance of suffering and insecurity.” This indicates that individuals who are facing continuous hardship over and over again lose motivation to engage in prayer, bible study and participation in church activity. This prolonged conflict weakens spiritual discipline since survival gradually becomes more urgent than devotional commitment. Furthermore, many Christians in displace camps spent much energy in searching for food, protection, security and medicine than on maintaining consistent spiritual practices. These realities of physical effects include exhaustion, emotional trauma; hopelessness and fear that contribute greatly to reduced Christian participation in worship and fellowship. Because of this, some Christians began questioning themselves whether prayer is still effective after witnessing but have continuous suffering like killings, abductions and destruction despite years of faithful religious commitment. Therefore, spiritual effects led not only to emotional pain but also to declining confidence in personal and communal Christian devotion.

Dolan (2009:201-205) argues that “prolonged violence damaged not only social and psychological structures but also the spiritual worldview of affected communities.” This suggest that the destruction of family structures, communal identity and moral order created spiritual instability whereby many people struggled to maintain hope in God’s justice and providence. This further emphasis that displacement into camps became spaces of despair where fear and dependency weakened spiritual confidence and religious stability. This indicates that war effects disrupted spiritual environment necessary for healthy Christian growth, communal worship and moral formation.

Similarly, many Christians in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda experienced theological confusion, weakened faith and struggles in maintaining spiritual commitment because the realities of violence appeared to challenge their understanding of God's protection and care.

Similarly, Adam (2011:122-124) explains that "the prolonged conflict in Northern Uganda created deep crises of meaning among survivors because suffering appeared endless and unresolved." This suggests that many communities interpreted suffering through both Christian and traditional spiritual categories as they attempted to explain violence, death, curses and misfortune. This indicates that war conditions pushed believers into theological uncertainty; it's upon this that Christianity sometimes appeared insufficient to answer existential questions about suffering and survival without proper contextual theology.

Consequently, spiritual effects represent crisis meaning of faith among believers in Urban Archdeaconry Diocese of Northern Uganda. Therefore, many Christians struggled to interpret suffering within the framework of Christian theology which is limited from contextual realities. This is where several believers experienced theological confusion and weakened faith because of prolonged suffering that challenged their traditional understandings of God as just, loving, protective and sovereign. Therefore, some Christians find it difficult to reconcile their painful lived experiences with biblical teachings concerning true divine care and protection. This led to fear, doubt, spiritual instability and uncertainty in their journey of faith.

Additionally, in Northern Uganda war has contributed to emergence of syncretistic practices which are coping mechanisms in the face of persistent suffering. This fosters some Christians to have alternative spiritual resources like ancestral consultations and engagement into traditional rituals use as protective charms and indigenous cleansing ceremonies in search of healing, protection and meaning. Therefore, reflect Christians struggle for adequate theological explanations within Christianity which leads to belief systems blending.

According to Sverker(2006: 203-208) explanation, “spiritual interpretations of suffering remained central within Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Ugandan communities, where Christianity and traditional systems operates simultaneously especially during and after the conflict.” This indicates that many Christian communities are interpreted with such violence spiritual causation frameworks connected to evil spirits, curses, ancestral displeasure and witchcraft. In conjunction with Christian have intense explanations concerning sin but suffering is a divine punishment and spiritual testing. Furthermore, the existence of both traditional and Christian interpretations of suffering contributes to growth of syncretistic religious responses among the affected Christians. This is because are hunting for healings, protection and meaning from multiple spiritual systems simultaneously. Therefore, this does not only affect and destroyed physical and social structures only but also create deep spiritual dilemmas that affect Christian identity and the stability of doctrine within the affected communities.

Additionally, Okello and Hovil (2007:28-33) detected that “failure to address life lived suffering is because of traditional theological explanations, where individuals adopt crossbreed coping strategies that combine both Christian practices with indigenous beliefs.” This suggests that insufficient theological framework to interpret suffering became a visible insufficiency. This indicates that believers who choose both Christians and indigenous beliefs end up being confused and require careful teaching adaptation for a spirit lead believer. The spiritual effects of war theologically cannot merely be understood by faith struggling believers because those spiritual blending create confusion for Christian faith and demonstrate urgent need for careful biblical teaching, pastoral counseling, discipleship and Spirit-led theological guidance. On the contrary, spiritual effects reduced confidence in believers and it become a source of limited answers and support. This is because at the time of war and displacement period many Christians concentrated heavily on humanitarian assistance as food distribution and shelter support with much need for trauma response and emergency care. These study interventions is necessary because it require deeper theological

engagement concerning suffering, trauma and divine presence though sometimes limited due to believers sin.

Historically, Tertullian (1956:15-17) explains, “Temptations and trials test as firmness of faith truth preserved through steadfastness in Christ and obedience to divine teaching.” This indicates that spiritual crises and suffering weaken believers especially when arose fear and confusion that dominate their lives. Besides, steadfast faith in God enables Christians to endure spiritual uncertainty without abandoning Christian truth. However, this provides understanding of suffering as spiritual battle in which believers are called to remain faithful despite external pressures, fear and theological confusion.

Considering all the above, this teaching remains relevant to contemporary Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda because many believers continue to struggle with realities war as spiritual fear, trauma, syncretism and theological uncertainty resulting from the legacy of the LRA war. Therefore, Tertullian’s theology encourages Christians to remain grounded in biblical teaching, communal worship and perseverance in faith despite experiences of suffering and spiritual instability. This thought further challenges the church to provide spiritual guidance, pastoral counseling and theological discipleship that can be capable of strengthening believers whose faith was weakened by prolonged violence and displacement.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR

4.1.0 The potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda

4.1.1.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, this study has identified several post-NRA war effects which are faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. These effects comprise of physical suffering, social fragmentation and psychological trauma, economic hardships, fear, loss of hope, mistrust, weakened communal relationships, spiritual discouragement, family instability and weakened Christian fellowship. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that although armed conflict formally ended but the effects continued forming social, spiritual and economic life of Christians within the Urban Archdeaconry. It has also been established that prolonged suffering among Christians has generated theological questions concerning God's presence amidst suffering, the meaning of endurance, the challenge of maintaining steadfast faith and the reconstruction of broken communal relationships after violence. Therefore, since then, Christians in Northern Uganda has continued to experience various forms of suffering including bodily weakness, poverty, illnesses that are trauma-related, unemployment, social exclusion and weakened communal solidarity. As a result, this reality has demonstrated that post-war suffering is not merely historical, but it has continually affected the contemporary Christian life within the Urban Archdeaconry.

Therefore, this chapter analyses the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Northern Uganda. It proceeds from the assumption that Tertullian's theology of human suffering provides major important theological insights through which the contemporary Church can respond to human pain together with social brokenness and trauma. Even though Tertullian wrote his theology within the historical context of persecution in the time of early Church, but his theological

reflections concerning suffering as pertain to perseverance, communal endurance, steadfast faith and spiritual identity is more relevant for contemporary Christian communities who are experiencing suffering and instability.

4.1.1.2 God's presence amidst suffering

It has been established that Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda continued to experience physical suffering, poverty, trauma plus fear, sickness, spiritual discouragement, unemployment, displacement and social instability were lingering effects of the post-NRA war. These realities have generated theological tension among believers who struggle to reconcile persistent human suffering with their faith in God's love, providence and goodness. This is where Christians continued to ask whether God is truly present amidst prolonged suffering of pain and uncertainty.

Historically, Tertullian theology of human suffering addressed relationship between suffering and God's presence; this he did by teaching that suffering does not indicate divine abandonment. It provides a context through which believers are strengthened to obtain divine grace by their participation in Christ's life. The understanding in the fallen world on suffering by Tertullian suffering is part of Christian existence. Whereby, God remains spiritually active amidst hardship by strengthening believers through hope, patience and in endurance. This is evidenced in Tertullian (1959:193-224) emphasizes, "Christian suffering and bodily endurance that possess spiritual meaning foster patience and strengthens believers in faith to witness amidst suffering." This indicates that suffering is a evidence of God's continuing work in the life of believers than proof of divine absence. This teaching demonstrates that suffering is not a meaningless pain but then a formative spiritually experience whereby God strengthens believers in perseverance and Christian maturity. Besides, patience is a divine desirable quality that is cultivated in the course of hardship. In this understanding, believers who endure suffering faithfully demonstrate that God's grace continues to sustain them even amidst pain. Thus, suffering functions as spiritual process through which believers are formed into deeper faith, holiness and

obedience to God. This, bodily suffering possesses theological significance because it connects believers with Christ's own suffering. It fosters theology believed that Christ Himself suffered physically therefore, believers should also endure bodily pain faithfully as a means that symbolically demonstrate participation in Christ's redemptive experience.

However, suffering becomes a means through which Christians experience spiritual communion with Christ than separation from Him. This interpretation reassures believers that God remains present amidst human pain because Christ Himself entered human suffering through incarnation and crucifixion. Correspondingly, Tertullian (1994:643-644) teaches that "believers who endure suffering faithfully share in Christ's life and future reign and demonstrates that suffering is not divine rejection but a participation in Christ's suffering and future victory." This suggests that suffering should be understood within an eschatological framework. This present suffering as temporary and that it prepares believers for eternal glory with Christ. Therefore, this informs Christians that they should not interpret suffering only from the perspective of earthly pain but then from the perspective of eternal hope.

The presence of God remains because suffering is directed toward future redemption and participation in divine glory. Besides, Christian identity with suffering strengthens Christian's loyalty to Christ. This is where faithful endurance amidst suffering publicly demonstrates Tertullian theology as genuine for believer's commitment to God. In this respect, suffering functions as visible testimony of faithfulness and reveal trust in God even during adversity. In the intervening time, suffering becomes a means by which Christian identity deepened publicly expression inside hostile circumstances.

Commenting on Tertullian's theology, Osborn (1997:131-136) explains, "Tertullian theology and interpreted suffering as temporary eschatological framework that prepare believers for eternal fellowship with God." This suggests that Tertullian did not glorify suffering itself, but viewed suffering as spiritually meaningful because it strengthened Christian hope and dependence on God. Furthermore, it indicates that

God's presence is surely revealed through sustaining believers amidst suffering than removing suffering immediately. Similarly, Rankin (1995:101-108) explains that "suffering in Tertullian's theology strengthened ecclesial identity and communal solidarity among believer." This suggests that Christians who endured suffering together developed stronger communal faith and deeper spiritual commitment to Christ." Besides, God's presence amidst suffering is not merely individual but communal because suffering strengthens unity and spiritual resilience of the believers and that of the Church.

Furthermore, Oden (1992:318-322) observes that "early Church fathers interpreted suffering as spiritual formation through which believers learned obedience, trust and perseverance in divine providence." This indicates that suffering functions as spiritual discipline than as meaningless punishment. This is where believers learn to be obedience with trust and perseverance during hardship. Equally, Augustine (1991:3-5) noted that "humanity ultimately finds rest in God, since all human existence depends upon Him." This put forward how suffering believers are redirected toward deeper dependence on God and on the renewed of their commitment spiritually.

Additionally, Moltmann (1974:247) argues that "God suffers with humanity through the crucified Christ; therefore human suffering is never experienced outside the presence of God." This suggests that suffering does not separate believers from God because God Himself entered human suffering through Christ's crucifixion. It demonstrates divine solidarity whereby God identify with suffering humanity and doesn't remain at a distant from human pain, a significant that suffering should not be interpreted as abandonment by God. Besides, Christian hope amidst suffering is rooted in the belief that God understands human pain experientially through Christ. However, believers faced with trauma, sickness and poverty can remain steadfast, because God participates in their suffering, offers sustaining grace amidst hardship.

Similarly, Gutierrez (1988:92) explains that "suffering of innocent people raises questions about God, yet faith discovers God's presence precisely within human pain and struggle." This suggests that God's presence is revealed through spiritual

endurance, communal support and hope amidst hardship. This is where suffering communities like Christians in Urban Archdeaconry can continue trusting God despite prolonged pain because divine grace remains active amidst human suffering. Besides, the suffering creates theological uncertainty simply because believers struggle to understand why pain exists. This faith enables Christians to encounter God amidst suffering than outside suffering.

Barth (1956:186) argues that “the grace of God remains sufficient even amidst deepest suffering; God does not abandon His covenant people.” This suggests that endurance amidst suffering is possible because divine grace continuously sustains believers spiritually. More to the point, Christians facing prolonged trauma and discouragement persevere because God remains faithful to them amidst suffering. Together with the above, suffering does not cancel God’s faithfulness toward believers and God because their covenant relationship remains intact even during hardship and uncertainty. This supports understanding of Tertullian’s theology of human suffering, that it cannot separate believers from divine presence.

Considering all the above, Christians continue to experience weakness, poverty, trauma-related illnesses, unemployment, displacement, family instability and spiritual discouragement. Consequently, believers experience hopelessness due to prolonged experience of suffering that appears contradicting to their expectations of divine healing and protection. This makes some of them to question God’s presence especially when they continue to experience economic hardship and trauma despite prayer and commitment. Tertullian’s theology therefore provides important pastoral and theological guidance within this context; it teaches suffering as not automatically interpreted divine abandonment. This is because suffering can become a context through which believers experience God’s sustaining grace, whereby they develop perseverance together with deeper spiritual dependence on Him. As a result, Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry can reinterpret suffering not merely as meaningless pain but then as an opportunity for spiritual growth, that foster Christian maturity and renewed trust in God’s providence. An example is that believers

suffering from trauma-related pain, chronic illness and poverty can draw encouragement from Tertullian's theology by understanding that Christ Himself experienced suffering physically and emotionally. Therefore, this interpretation reassures Christians that God is not at a distant from human suffering because Christ Himself participated fully in human pain through His incarnation and crucifixion. Similarly, Christians who face family and social instability, discouragement and unemployment interpret suffering within the framework of hope and perseverance more than that of despair and hopelessness.

4.1.1.3 Tertullian's theology towards dealing with social fragmentation

This study established that prolonged war experiences weakened communal relationships, because normalization of fear and mistrust disrupted family structures and weakened Christian fellowship and also produced social isolation among believers. This indicate that many Christians continued to experience broken communal identity, suspicion, stigma fear and weakened interpersonal trust even after the formal end of armed conflict. However, the Church in Northern Uganda continues to struggle with challenges of reconciliation, communal restoration and rebuilding Christian unity after prolonged violence and displacement.

Historically, Tertullian understood suffering as a communal experience which is capable of strengthening Christian identity and ecclesial unity whereby, the Church is a divinely constituted community whose unity is transcended through social Christian fellowship that is sustained through shared faith, common discipline and collective hope in Christ. This perspective is particularly relevant in the contexts that characterized social fragmentation because it demonstrates how Christian identity can foster unity in adversity. This is evident in Tertullian (1950:46) who states that "we are the Christian body knitted together by a common religious profession in Christ Jesus, a unity of discipline, bond of common hope." This suggest that the Church derives its unity not from ethnicity, political affiliation, family background and social status, but derived its unity from common Christian commitment to Christ who presents the Church as spiritual body united through faith, discipline and

eschatological expectation. This is a unity of discipline that highlights the importance of Christian practices shared in sustaining communal unity most especially where the believers remained connected through prayer, worship, moral accountability and mutual care despite external persecution.

As a result, Christian community became a practical response to social fragmentation with phrase “bond of a common hope” which reveals that eschatological expectation functioned as a unifying force within the early Church. This is where Christians endure suffering together because they anticipate the same future inheritance in Christ and their hope strengthened unity within hardship and uncertainty. Adding onto the above, Roberts and Donaldson (1950:47) noted, “Tertullian *Apology* 39 observation of non-Christians concerning believers with phrase; see, they say, how they love one another” This suggest that the statement is the reflection of a visible communal unity and mutual care that characterized early Christian community. Therefore, for Tertullian, Christian fellowship was not merely a private spiritual association but then a public demonstration of transformed relationships grounded in faith in Christ. That is an observable love among believers who distinguished the Church from the surrounding pagan society and also revealed the practical implications of the gospel within communal life.

Furthermore, the above statement demonstrates that Christians love served as visible mark of ecclesial identity within the early Church. That is where Tertullian has presented mutual affection of believers as evidence of a transformed community whose relationships were fashioned by commitment to Christ and a concern for one another. The statement indicates that Christian love functioned as a public witness that strengthened ecclesial identity through mutual care, harmony and communal responsibility. That is where Tertullian theology portrays Christian fellowship as a visible manifestation of the transforming power of the gospel within the believing community. Accordingly, mutual love became a practical means through which Christians can be in position to resist social fragmentation and cultivate unity amidst external hostility. In addition, the communal unity of believers possessed evangelistic

significance because even the outsiders observed the practical expressions of Christian love, generosity and mutual support among them. On behalf of Tertullian, the moral character of the Christian community functioned as an apologetic witness that commends the truth of Christian faith before a wider society. As a result, Christian fellowship does not only strengthen internal unity but also attract attention to the essential credibility and authenticity of the gospel message.

As a matter of building upon the theological implication of Tertullian theology, it has emphasis on Christian unity and mutual love whereby suffering may be understood as a force that reinforces communal identity than destroying it. This unity strengthens believer's bonds as ecclesial unit in trials and it's also deepened. This Christian suffering is an intelligence that does not produce isolation but encourage mutual support in unity and perseverance within the believing community. The believer's endurance amidst suffering publicly demonstrates authentic Christian faith and also strengthens Church's witness to the society. As a result, the context of suffering reveals the moral and spiritual integrity of Christian community.

Equally, Tertullian (1959:193-224) teaches that "suffering is preserves with patience amidst communal unity, while cultivating forgiveness, humility and self-control among believers."This indicates that Christians who endure hardship patiently do not produce conflict with revenge and division within the community of the Church. This patience becomes a good spiritual quality necessary for preserving social relationships amidst suffering. These hardships can easily produce anger couple with mistrust and division among believers, but this is only when suffering is not approached spiritually in order for Christians to endure pain without destroying communal relationships. This significantly contribute to spiritual maturity, work toward reconciliation and social stability within Christian communities. This suffering is the context for communal healing especially when believers respond with forgiveness and mutual care than revenge and hostility. This is where humility and endurance is imitated by Christian with patience. This is a called for respond to suffering in a way that strengthen relationships and preserve unity within the Church. This interpretation is relevant

particularly in the post-war societies with unresolved pain that frequently generates mistrust, fear and social fragmentation.

Commenting on Tertullian's theology, Rankin (1995:121-128) explains, "Tertullian theology of suffering functioned as an ecclesial boundary marker that strengthened communal identity among Christians." This demonstrates that believers can endure suffering together and develop stronger unity and moral commitment that distinguished authentic Christian fellowship from superficial religious identity. This communal endurance actually strengthened both social character and theology of the Church. Likewise, Osborn (1997:112-118) comments, "Tertullian theology of human suffering is interpreted as moral and spiritual formation of communal unity, a point where believers developed resilience and deeper dependence on God." This suffering strengthened Christian fellowship where believers learned to rely on one another during hardship spiritually. Here suffering becomes a source of communal reconstruction more than fragmentation. Additionally, Oden (1992:318-322) observes that "early Church fathers viewed suffering as spiritual discipline with communal obedience and unity is strengthened amid Christians." This suggests that, Oden's interpretation of Tertullian's theology supports emphasizing that suffering creates opportunities for mutual care. The communal supports are best for spiritual growth within the Church community.

Considering the above, Bonhoeffer (1959:79) explains that "authentic Christian discipleship involves communal participation in suffering and mutual responsibility among believers." This suggests that Christian communities become spiritually authentic when believers carry one another's burdens amid hardship. The suffering strengthens communal relationships especially when it is approached with Christian love, sacrifice and forgiveness to one another. Meanwhile, Volf (1996:124) explains that "reconciliation requires embracing former enemies without denying the reality of suffering and injustice." This suggests that communities who are healing from fragmentation require forgiveness and restoration of relationships rather than revenge and isolation. This is because reconciliation does not ignore suffering but transforms

relationships through grace and forgiveness. This Christian communities recovering from conflict intentionally must rebuild trust and communal identity because believers in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda are called to overcome mistrust and division through mutual support, reconciliation and shared Christian identity. A scholar Bonhoeffer (1954:21) states that “a Christian needs another Christian who speaks God’s Word to him because Christian life is communal than individualistic.” This suggests that believers need encouragement, fellowship and mutual spiritual support in order that they remain faithful in suffering. This aligns with Tertullian’s theology that suffering should strengthen communal bonds than to destroy them. Besides, fragmented communities can only heal through restored Christian fellowship and spiritual solidarity. As a result, communal worship, prayer and pastoral care become important tools for rebuilding broken relationships after war. Furthermore, Tutu (1999:35) argues that “without forgiveness there is no future, because with social fragmentation.” This suggests that communities affected by violence cannot experience healing especially if bitterness, revenge and resentment continue to dominate social relationships. It emphasizes that forgiveness is necessary for rebuilding peaceful coexistence after suffering. Alongside, reconciliation also restores human dignity and communal trust among divided communities. Hence, Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda are called to embrace forgiveness as a path toward communal restoration and Christian unity.

Therefore, Tertullian’s theology offers important pastoral and theological guidance within this context because it teaches that suffering should strengthen communal unity than to destroy relationships. This therefore can enable Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry to reinterpret suffering as a shared Christian experience that calls believers toward reconciliation, forgiveness and restoration of communal bonds. Thus, the theology encourages believers to rebuild Christian fellowship through communal prayers, worship, pastoral care and mutual support for the suffering members of the Church. An example is that believers who continue to experience trauma, fear and mistrust after war can be encouraged to participate actively in Christian fellowship and communal healing activities than remaining socially isolated.

This are fostered through prayer groups, reconciliation meetings, pastoral counseling and practical support for vulnerable households. This is where the Church can restore broken relationships and rebuild communal trust among believers.

Furthermore, Tertullian's theology of ecclesial identity is particularly relevant within Northern Uganda where social fragmentation weakened communal belonging among Christians. His theology teaches that the Church becomes authentically visible when believers endure suffering together while maintaining unity, faithfulness and mutual support. This perspective challenges Christians to overcome ethnic, economic and social divisions by recognizing themselves as one spiritual body united in Christ despite shared suffering. Similarly, emphasis on patience and forgiveness by Tertullian provides important theological foundations for reconciliation within post-war Christian communities. This is where Christians are encouraged to reject hostility, revenge and bitterness by embracing humility, forgiveness and communal healing. However, suffering becomes an opportunity for restoring Christian relationships and strengthening communal resilience within the Church.

4.1.1.4 Faithful perseverance amidst suffering

It has been established that Christians of Urban Archdeaconry have continued to experience prolonged illness, poverty, unemployment, trauma-related with fear, displacement, emotional pain and social instability as lingering effects of the NRA-war. These prolonged hardships have challenged the ability of many believers to persevere faithfully amidst suffering; many Christians continue participating in worship, prayer and communal fellowship. Meanwhile, having struggle hopelessness, discouragement and spiritual exhaustion because of persistent suffering years without visible restoration. Therefore, this is needed for faithful perseverance amid suffering to remains as concern and significant theological viewpoint within the Urban Archdeaconry.

Historically, faithful perseverance is understood in Tertullian's theology that suffering is an essential characteristic of authentic Christian discipleship, not a meaningless

punishment but then a spiritual process which believers developed from it obedience, endurance and steadfast commitment to Christ. This is a condition necessary by faithful Christians who are expecting to endure suffering patiently while remain loyal to God amid hardship. This has been seen evident in Tertullian (1959:17-19) noted that “the prison does not injure Christian, but it emphasizes that physical suffering cannot destroy a believer’s spiritual relationship with God.” This suggests that Christians suffering is through the perspective of eternal realities than temporary circumstances because it reveals that perseverance is sustained by spiritual security in Christ than by favorable external conditions because it actually presents faithful perseverance as an active expression of obedience, hope and trust in God’s promises. As a result, perseverance is not a passive resignation but then it is an active spiritual endurance that is rooted in faith and hope. Equally, Tertullian (1959:193-224) argues that “patience and endurance are necessary virtues because it tests spiritual discipline and Christian obedience and they become spiritually strengthened.” This suggests that faithful perseverance requires spiritual discipline amidst suffering, through prayer, patience, worship and trust in God during hardship. It is a gradual process of spiritual formation through which Christians develop resilience amidst suffering with continued dependence upon divine grace. Besides, perseverance reflects imitation of Christ’s own endurance amidst suffering, as a perfect model of faithful obedience because Christ endured suffering faithfully even unto death. This demonstrates commitment of believers to remain in God in through perseverance despite suffering and adversity; it express practically continued worship, obedience and steadfast trust in God amidst hardship.

Commenting on Tertullian theology, Osborn (1997:131-136) explains that “Tertullian understood suffering in the context through which Christian faith was purified and strengthened.” This suggests that perseverance amidst suffering revealed authentic Christian identity because believers who endured hardship faithfully demonstrated deeper trust in God that can strengthen than destroy Christian commitment. Equally, Rankin (1995:101-108) explains that “Tertullian connected perseverance with Christian integrity and communal witness.” This suggests that believers who endured

suffering faithfully strengthened both their personal spirituality and ecclesial identity. Besides, perseverance is an indication of unwavering commitment to Christ amidst adversity. Furthermore, Cyprian (1958:447-450) teaches that “suffering tests the strength of faith and reveals the perseverance of true believers in God.” This suggests that produces spiritual maturity because believers learn deeper dependence on God amid trials.

Additionally, Wright (2008:192-208) argues that “Christian hope is rooted in God’s promise of future restoration, more than escape from suffering.” This suggests that believers persevere amidst hardship because they trust in God’s future redemption and resurrection hope. Besides, this supports Tertullian’s theology by emphasizing that faithful perseverance is sustained through eschatological hope and confidence in God’s promises. Likewise, Cone (2011:151-160) explains that “the cross of Christ reveals God’s unity with those who are oppressed and the suffering communities.” This suggests that, divine presence accompanies suffering communities and enables believers to persevere amidst oppression and hardship. Besides, believers who are suffering are not abandoned because Christ Himself suffered unjustly and entered fully into human pain. Furthermore, Moltmann (1974:25-40) explains that “Christian hope transforms the meaning of suffering because the believers trust in God’s future restoration and victory.” This suggests that suffering should not produce despair because of hope in God’s promises that strengthens perseverance amidst hardship. Furthermore, this demonstrates that faithful endurance is also sustained through confidence in God’s future redemption.

Therefore, Tertullian’s theology provides important pastoral and theological guidance within this context because it teaches that faithful perseverance is strengthened through endurance amidst suffering than being destroyed by hardship. Even so, Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry can now reinterpret suffering as an opportunity for believer’s spiritual growth, dependence upon God and deeper Christian commitment. This theology encourages believers to remain faithful even when suffering appears prolonged and unresolved. An example is that, believers

experiencing trauma-related illnesses, poverty and unemployment are therefore able to draw encouragement from Tertullian's theology by understanding that Christian perseverance is sustained through hope in God's future restoration than immediate earthly comfort. Consequently, Christians struggling with fear and discouragement can also remain steadfast because suffering does not signify divine abandonment, but it can also strengthen spiritual maturity and dependence upon God. Furthermore, Tertullian's theology also encourages the Church in Northern Uganda to strengthen suffering believers through pastoral care, communal worship, prayer meetings, Bible study fellowships and testimonies of endurance. This can then be done through communal encouragement and spiritual support whereby the Church can help Christians persevere faithfully amidst prolonged hardship. Adding to the above, Tertullian theology also challenges believers to reject hopelessness, spiritual withdrawal and despair by cultivating trust, patience and endurance while in God's promises. Consequently, faithful perseverance becomes both a personal spiritual responsibility and a communal Christian practice through which believers strengthen one another amidst suffering.

4.1.1.5 Steadfast faith amidst human suffering

It has been established that several Christians in Urban Archdeaconry continue to struggle with spiritual discouragement, doubt, fear, hopelessness and weakened commitment to Christian practices due to the prolonged effects of the NRA/LRA war. Even though many believers continue participating in prayer and worship, but the persistent suffering has challenged stability of faith among Christians. Therefore, there is need for steadfast faith amidst prolonged hardships.

Historically, Tertullian's theology perceived steadfast faith amidst suffering as evidence of authentic Christian commitment and spiritual maturity. This suggests that genuine Christian faith is tested and strengthened through hardships because suffering reveals the depth of believers' trust in God. This is evident in Tertullian (1950:55), who argues that "the blood of Christians is seed, a conviction that suffering ultimately contributes to growth than destruction of the Church." This suggests that steadfast

faith serves as a public witness because faithful endurance of suffering Christians inspires others to investigate more and embrace faith of Christians. Besides, the potential of God is that he uses faithful witness amidst suffering to advance His kingdom and strengthen the Church. Consequently, this is not merely an individual endurance but participation with steadfast faith amidst suffering in God's redemptive purposes through hope, witness and unwavering trust in Christ.

In consideration of the above, hope in eternal salvation is obtained from steadfast faith sustained through hope when believers remain faithful amidst suffering. This is when Christian faith is rooted in the promise of eternal life than temporary earthly comfort. As a result, believers who trust in God's future restoration and eternal reward, and suffer with forces limited or cannot destroy their faith. This demonstrates steadfast faiths dependence on eschatological hope and on confidence in God's promises. Besides, to remove surface dependence on worldly security, instated suffering purifies and strengthens faith. Here suffering is understood as spiritual testing whereby believers learn deeper to have dependence on God. As a result, when Christians continue trusting God despite fear, hardship and doubt instated steadfast faith develops. This indicates that endurance amidst adversity foster mature with comfort.

Similarly, Tertullian (1959:193-224) argues, "Need for patience and steadfastness as necessary qualities for believers since suffering tests Christian obedience and spiritual commitment." This suggests that perseverance amidst suffering requires steadfast faith and spiritual discipline. It indicates that believers who remain faithful amidst hardship cultivate spiritual resilience through prayer, patience and trust in God. Henceforth, steadfast faith is then strengthened gradually especially through continued dependence on divine grace amidst suffering. Alongside this, steadfast faith reflects imitation of Christ's obedience amidst suffering and it's the perfect example of faithful endurance because even Christ remained obedient to God through His suffering and death. Therefore, Christians are to demonstrate steadfast faith especially when they remain loyal to God despite pain and hardship. This emphasizes

that it's expressed practically through worship, perseverance and moral obedience amidst suffering.

Commenting on Tertullian's theology, Osborn (1997:131-136) explains that "Tertullian viewed suffering as a context in which Christian faith was refined and are strengthened." This suggests that steadfastness is an evidence of genuine Christian identity because faithful endurance revealed deep trust in God amidst adversity. Besides, that can strengthen than destroy Christian faith. Similarly, Rankin (1995:101-108) explains that "Tertullian theology has connected steadfast faith with Christian integrity and communal witness." Consequently, believers who remained faithful amidst suffering strengthened both personal spirituality and ecclesial identity. Besides, faithful endurance reflects commitment to Christ above worldly security. Furthermore, Moltmann (1974:25-40) argues that "Christian hope enables believers to endure contradicting suffering faithfully because of their hope in God's future transforms the meaning of the present suffering." This indicates that God's promises point believers to future restoration and renewal whereby suffering should not produce hopelessness. Besides, eschatological hope is obtained through steadfast faith that is sustained throughout expectation in God's future victory.

Additionally, Volf (1996:117-125) explains, "suffering Christians are requires to perseverance, participate in reconciliation and refusal to surrender to bitterness and despair." This suggests that, believer's should respond to hardship considering that suffering is a factor that can destroy faith and also deepen spiritual maturity depending on a believers respond. In addition, steadfast faith emerges only through faithful endurance and trust in God amidst painful experiences. Similarly, Gutierrez (1988:168-175) argues that "suffering communities must embrace rooted faith amidst suffering in hope, couple with spiritual resilience and trust in God's liberating presence." This suffering does not remove God's presence but the reveals the need for humanity's deeper dependence on divine grace. This is because communities continue to encounter God amidst hardship. In conjunction with, steadfast faith, there should be endurance amidst all the war effect realities like poverty, injustice, oppression and

prolonged suffering. As a result, Christians ought to remain spiritually committed even amidst prolonged hardship.

Similarly, Cyprian (1958:447-450) teaches that “trials strengthen spiritual commitment and prepare Christians for eternal fellowship with God; believers should remain steadfast in faith during suffering.” This suggests that both theologians should emphasize more on endurance, patience and unwavering loyalty to Christ amidst suffering. Lastly, Augustine (1991:3) states that “human beings cannot find lasting peace throughout the world as a security because our hearts are restless until they rest in God true fulfillment only found in God.” This demonstrates how hardship exposes limitations of earthly security; therefore, this redirects believers to deeper their faith and spiritual commitment. Besides, this indicates that steadfast faith grows through dependence on God divine grace.

Looking at all the above discussion, Tertullian’s theology of human suffering possesses significant potential for addressing the need for steadfast faith amidst suffering faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. This theology teaches us that suffering can strengthen faith, deepen dependence on God and cultivate spiritual maturity more especially among believers. More still, Tertullian theology encourages Christians to remain faithful amidst hardship through hope in God’s future restoration and eternal promises. Additionally, Tertullian’s theology provides important theological foundations for spiritual resilience, perseverance and communal encouragement amidst prolonged suffering something that remains highly relevant in strengthening steadfast faith among Christians in the post-war Northern Uganda.

4.1.1.6 Conclusion

As pertain to this chapter, it examined the relevance of Tertullian's theology of suffering addressing contemporary challenges associated with social fragmentation, faithful perseverance, steadfast faith and God's presence amidst suffering. This chapter reveals findings that Tertullian theology of human suffering gave

understanding that suffering is not a meaningless punishment but a spiritual reality that is transformative for believers to develop Christian maturity, ecclesial unity and unwavering commitment to Christ. The research established that Tertullian theology view Church as faith unity community with discipline and hope. It provide theological framework for overcoming social fragmentation. This writings demonstrate patience and perseverance as factors that enable Christians to endure suffering faithfully as they remain rooted in God's promises. However, believers testify to the reality of divine grace amidst adversity since steadfast faith enables them to have public witness. Considerably, this theology remains relevant for contemporary Christian communities because of their experience in the realities of social conflict, persecution, poverty and various forms of suffering which emphasis communal unity, eschatological hope, perseverance and divine faithfulness. This has offered transformative valuable theological resources for fostering resilience and spirituality. On the other hand, this theology of human suffering continues to provide meaningful framework for understanding Christian faith that is able to sustain individuals and communities amidst human suffering despite the fact that it strengthen Church's witness within society.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE

5.1.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents blend of the major findings for this study to attention logically and theologically putting forward general summary of findings from the study, conclusions and recommendations upon the entire study, it has combined both the contextual findings and theological reflections which have been identified and developed in the preceding chapters. The research has set out examination into Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to the life of the contemporary Christians in Urban archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025). Therefore, this chapter presents the summary of findings that is structured around the three directly related research objectives as examining Tertullian's theology of human suffering and its relationship to contemporary Christian life, exploring the post-NRA war effects experienced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry of the Diocese of Northern Uganda, and assessing the potential of Tertullian's theology in addressing these post-conflict realities. It has further developed theological conclusions and also offered recommendations for ecclesial practice, theological education and for future research.

5.1.1.2.0 Summary of findings

5.1.1.2.1 Tertullian's Theology of Human Suffering and its relationship to the Contemporary Christian Life

5.1.1.2.2 Introduction

This research has recognized the understanding of Tertullian theology of human suffering as not merely an inevitable human experience, which is theologically significant as reality within God's redemptive purposes. The research identified five interconnected theological dimensions of Tertullian's theology of human suffering which incorporates the following: human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation, human suffering as formative Christian discipline, plus human suffering as

participation in the passion of Christ together with human suffering as ecclesial identity and spiritual training.

5.1.1.2.3 Human suffering as a tool for spiritual formation

This research has brought into being Tertullian theology perceived opinion on human suffering as instrument used by God to accomplish spiritual formation of believers and that which conform believer's character to Christ likeness. This thoughtful opinion on human suffering distinguish with evidence divine abandonment and the meaningless affliction of human suffering to Tertullian theological interpretation on human suffering as a divinely permitted process that cultivates perseverance, dependence on God with moral integrity plus eschatological hope. Tertullian's theology emphasize that suffering functioned as divine education, a means through which believers are purified and strengthened in faith. This is where Tertullian theology acknowledges that adversity exposed the authenticity of Christian commitment that foster spiritual maturity as a means of training believers to rely more fully upon God's sustaining grace. As a result, suffering is not viewed merely as an unfortunate human experience but then an essential aspect of God's redemptive work, especially in determining faithful Disciples of Christ who embody good qualities of patience, steadfastness and hope in anticipation of the eternal communion with God.

5.1.1.2.4 Human suffering as formative Christian discipline

This research work is a demonstration that qualifies Tertullian theology of human suffering as understanding that figure out formative Christian discipline throughout believer's life trained in steadfast love, obedience and faithful discipleship. This is an indication that human suffering is divinely ordained and a means that cultivates unwavering commitment during hardship to Christ; it is primarily never viewed as punishment in nature, but then a spiritual endurance with self-denial that provide moral courage. This theological reflection of Tertullian's theology on human suffering served as a spiritual exercise that disciplined believers in the direction of greater compliance to Christ. This theology maintain that faithful endurance to hardship refined Christian character and nurtured good qualities that are necessary for

authentic discipleship and to strengthened moral conviction. This view enables believers to be discipline and prepared to persevere in faithfulness, this demonstrate their loyalty to Christ regardless of all the external circumstances. As a result, suffering engaged Christians with formative role in life, this is done by contributing to their spiritual growth that foster development of mature Christian identity.

5.1.1.2.5 Human suffering as participation in the passion of Christ

This research has recognized and identified Tertullian's theology in interpreting human suffering as participation in the passion of Christ. This is whereby believers identify with the suffering of Christ's, the obedience and the final victory throughout faithful endurance amidst adversity. This thoughtful opinion is established through faithfulness amidst Christians, who symbolically share in the redemptive work of Christ's, this journey transformation of human suffering from a meaningless experience of pain into an expression of communion sharing with the crucified and risen Lord. Tertullian theology help to maintained participation in the suffering with Christ's as representative of God and the essential dimension of Christian discipleship. This study argued that enduring suffering faithfully by believers signifies imitation of Christ's obedience and sacrificial love. This is where believers bear witness to the transformative power of the gospel, the kind of participation is not understood as contributing to Christ's redemptive work but the a demonstration to the real union with Christ through steadfast faith. As a result, human suffering is both an expression for identification with Christ and a source of hope that is grounded in the assurance of sharing in Christ final victory and eternal glory.

5.1.1.2.6 Human suffering as ecclesial identity

These theological findings per Tertullian theology regarding human suffering have revealed significant spot of ecclesial identity that has enabled a framework for determining Church's communal life that foster distinguish authentic Christian commitment from nominal faith. Tertullian's theology, brought to board the Church as a non-natural community that is established throughout faithful endurance amidst suffering. This theological vision looked at communal experiences of adversity as a

means to strengthen communal unity and for deepening mutual responsibility among believers. This reinforce Church's public witness within the society, it is where suffering functioned as a visible testimony to the authenticity of Christian faith. It also demonstrates unwavering commitment of believers' to Christ despite opposition and hardship. As a result, this demonstrate that ecclesial identity is not merely institutional but then profoundly rooted in the collective community's participation in faithful perseverance and witness to the gospel. The communal unity is an experience that often strengthens suffering, because it reinforced collective witness and cultivated mutual responsibility among believers as members of one unity in the body of Christ.

5.1.1.2.7 Human suffering as spiritual training

This research found out that Tertullian theology of human suffering understood suffering as a process of spiritual training from the first to last bit of it. It demonstrates that God refines believers' character and prepares them to live faithfully as Christian. This theology presents human suffering as important resources use for spiritual development, it emphasis that the resource equips believers with qualities that are necessary for perseverance in Christian journey. The theology further emphasized that hardship serve as a means for cultivating patience, humility, self-control plus moral integrity and much more greater dependence on the divine grace. Therefore, through the faithful endurance of suffering, it's a means by which Christians undergo spiritual refinement that strengthens discipleship and prepares them for eternal fellowship with God. As a result, Tertullian regarded suffering not as a contradiction of God's love but as part of God's providential work of sanctification, through which believers mature in faith and steadfast devotion to Christ.

5.1.1.2.0 Post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025)

5.1.1.2.1 Introduction

The findings indicated that the NRA-war is a left out consequences of war to the life of the church in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. These can be categorized in form of physical, social, economic and spiritual effects like; the overall capacity of believers to experience holistic development that is flourishing within their Christian life and witness and are as elaborated in the findings below

5.1.1.2.2 Physical effects

It was revealed that Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry continues to experience physical effects that include; chronic illness, bodily weakness which cause trauma-related health conditions and also limited access to adequate healthcare services. These physical challenges greatly are found to have foster undermining individual productivity and cause diminish participation in church ministries. This has also contributed to the feelings of dependency and social marginalization among the affected believers. The study further established that persistent bodily suffering has also created theological tensions especially regarding divine healing and restoration.

5.1.1.2.3 Social effects

Under this, the study has established that the post-war realities have contributed significantly to social fragmentation to Christian communities through disrupted family structures that cause mistrust, weakened interpersonal relationships and also cause stigma which lead to erosion of communal support systems. These challenging experiences including displacement, prolonged insecurity, trauma and social exclusion have negatively affected social unity. This has resulted into diminished fellowship and reduced communal participation among believers. The findings indicate that social consequence does not only threaten relational foundation of Christian communities. However, it also challenges Church's vocation especially in reconciling community.

Therefore, it highlights the urgent need for intentional ministries of healing, reconciliation and social restoration.

5.1.1.2.4 Economic effects

It was demonstrated that economic hardship has remains one of the most pervasive post-war effects that is affecting Christians within the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. Most especially are manifesting through poverty, unemployment, loss of livelihoods, financial insecurity and limited economic opportunities. This economic challenge led to increased household vulnerability, restricting access to essential resources and generates psychosocial stress that negatively impacts both family stability and their active engagement in church life. Furthermore, the study has established that the prolonged economic human suffering has often exposed believers to ethical compromises and survival-based decisions that challenge their Christian values and hence underscoring the necessity for churches to integrate economic empowerment initiatives within their pastoral and mission responses.

5.1.1.2.5 Spiritual effects

The study established that the post-NRA war environment generated profound spiritual effects among Christians mostly including spiritual exhaustion, weakened faith, diminished hope, theological confusion and struggles especially concerning the perceived presence and the activeness of God amidst their prolonged suffering. Therefore, these persistent experiences encountered of trauma and adversities are found to have contributed to the reduction of their participation in spiritual disciplines like prayer, worship, fellowships and ministry involvement. This has therefore affected believers' spiritual liveliness and resilience. Similarly, the findings also further revealed that suffering also help Christians deepen their dependence on God and strengthened their faith and commitments.

5.1.1.3.0 The potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda

5.1.1.3.1 Introduction

These findings established that Tertullian's theology of human suffering has the potential to deal much more with post NRA-war effects faced by Christians in the urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda in particular. Specifically, Tertullian's theology emphasis much more on God's presence amidst suffering plus social fragmentation, ecclesial unit together with faithful perseverance amidst suffering and more over steadfast faith amidst human suffering. The findings have identified four major themes that emerged from the analysis as: God's presence amidst suffering, Tertullian's theology towards dealing with social fragmentation, faithful perseverance amidst suffering and steadfast faith amidst human suffering. All of these themes demonstrate the pastoral and theological relevance of Tertullian's thought within the post-conflict Christian contexts of the Urban Archdeaconry as indicated in the findings below.

5.1.1.3.2 God's presence amidst suffering

It was established that there is continual presence of God amidst human suffering, by emphasizing that adversity does not signify divine abandonment. But then it provides an opportunity for believers to experience God's sustaining grace and faithfulness. These findings additional revealed the theological perspective which offers significant pastoral worth to Christians in Northern Uganda, who have especially continued to struggle with trauma, loss and uncertainty that arises from the realities of the post-war. This enabled the Christians to reinterpret suffering within broader context of God's providential care and redemptive purposes. Henceforth, the assurance of God's presence amidst suffering serves as a vital source of spiritual consolation, hope and also emotional resilience for believers who are navigating prolonged experiences of hardship.

5.1.1.3.3 Tertullian's theology towards dealing with social fragmentation

Here the findings demonstrate that Tertullian's theology of suffering addresses social fragmentation by fostering ecclesial solidarity, mutual support, forgiveness and communal identity among believers. This act of shared experiences on human suffering are found to have potential of strengthening collective responsibility within Christian community and encourage practices of reconciliation that contribute to restoration of broken relationships that were resulting from post-war divisions. The study established that within the Urban Archdeaconry, Tertullian's theology emphasis communal endurance and thus provides a theological basis for rebuilding trust, promoting social unity that foster enhancing Church's ministry of reconciliation in post-conflict settings.

5.1.1.3.4 Faithful perseverance amidst suffering

The research establish the understanding of Tertullian theology of human suffering as faithful perseverance amidst suffering, it demonstrate that suffering is an essential characteristic of authentic Christian discipleship. This is where believers remain steadfast in commitment despite hardship to Christ. The findings finding revealed theological emphasis that encourages Christians who face post-war challenges to interpret their suffering not a reason for hopelessness and for spiritual withdrawal but then as an opportunity to cultivate hope, endurance and unwavering trust for the final purposes of God. This point of view provides for the contemporary believers healthy theological framework that promote resilience and strengthens their capacity to sustain faithful witness amidst the ongoing hardships.

5.1.1.3.5 Steadfast faith amidst human suffering

These research findings revealed Tertullian's theology of human suffering that it encourages believers to maintain steadfast faith amidst suffering, with their faith grounded on hope in the sovereignty of God. The victory Of Christ over suffering is best for anticipation of eschatological reinstatement of believers. This established enduring faith that enable Christians to navigate experiences of physical pain, together with economic hardship couple with social disruption and spiritual struggles

without relinquishing their commitment to God. As a result, the understanding of this theological opinion totally offers practical pastoral implications for Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. This reinforces spiritual stability while deepening believer's dependence on God and nurturing endurance with confidence that suffering does not eventually cancel out God's redemptive purposes for His people.

5.1.1.4. Conclusion

This research has investigated the potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. The theology established understanding per Tertullian theology of human suffering as not merely a regrettable reality of human existence. It demonstrated that the theology is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship and faithful witness. The theology further reflected human suffering and possesses transformative spiritual significance that provides believers with much more spiritual maturity opportunities. The theology achieves to foster worth on steadfastness and perseverance as an authentic testimony to the Christian faith that deepen communion with Christ. The theology further emphasizes that human suffering must be approach within God's framework of redemptive purposes that strengthen the commitment of believer's to God and reinforce hope grounded into the promise of eternal life.

This theology has established a frame work which is more than interpreting human suffering as evidence of divine abandonment. As a result, this theology of Tertullian theology presents a context of learning for Christians in the contemporary Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda. This research therefore presents Tertullian's theology of human suffering as a remarkable relevant theology that can remains beyond its historical context. The theological insights provide essential interpretive framework throughout which the contemporary Christians be capable of understand suffering within God's redemptive purposes which foster hope and resilience couple with perseverance and then communal unity amidst adversity.

Accordingly, this theology of Tertullian's offers very important pastoral and theological resources for churches to minister within the post-conflict communities. The theology enables arising of the theological themes of hope, endurance, faithfulness and communal unity to offer spiritual insights for dealing with suffering.

5.1.1.4.0 Recommendations

5.1.1.4.1 Introduction

With reference to the major findings, the study offers the following recommendations for the church leaders, Christians and the theological institutions. This research also demonstrated the need for further research, presented below

5.1.1.4.2 Recommendations for Church Leaders

Within the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda, Church leaders should intentionally integrate Tertullian's theology of human suffering into their pastoral care and preaching couple with discipleship program and counseling ministries. The understanding of Tertullian's theology on suffering is for spiritual formation, faithful witness and participation in Christ's sufferings. This provides valuable theological framework through which believers may subsequently interpret adversity within God's redemptive purposes than as evidence of divine abandonment. Therefore, since the findings revealed that many Christians continue to struggle with trauma, theological confusion, spiritual exhaustion and diminished hope. The church leaders should provide biblically grounded teaching and also contextually sensitive teaching that nurtures perseverance, eschatological hope and build trust in God's sustaining grace. This emphasis that Tertullian's theology of human suffering provided an essential framework that should be foster by leaders in the Urban Archdeaconry, with much emphasis on steadfast endurance amidst suffering, a very important pastoral resources that strengthen believers' resilience in the period of hardship.

As a result, leaders of the Church should further establish trauma-informed pastoral ministries which must including group support system, reconciliation initiatives, counseling services and healing ministries. These ministries should serve in addressing physical, emotional, social and spiritual consequences of the post-war experiences.

Additionally, Tertullian's theology also emphasis much on ecclesial unity, this is where church leadership should foster communal support systems. They should further encourage mutual care plus collective responsibility between believers. These church leaders should also promote reconciliation ministries together with social unity which should encourage peaceful coexistence plus forgiveness and furthermore restoration of fractured relationships. The theology of Tertullian places the community of the Church identity that it's formed by faithful endurance and mutual support amidst suffering. Likewise, churches are to make the first move on economic empowerment programs that which must including vocational training, savings initiatives and livelihood support activities. Following this comportment will be an authentic way of responding holistically to both spiritual and material dimensions of human suffering.

5.1.1.4.3 Recommendations for Christians

Human suffering in context of Christians who are experiencing various forms of suffering is encouraged to interpret their suffering experiences theological with framework that recognizes suffering as a context intended for deeper dependence on God, faithful witness and for spiritual growth. Findings of this research indicate that Tertullian's theology of human suffering provides believers suffering as a resource use for understanding suffering as part of Christian discipleship but not merely something that is as purposeless adversity. This initiative calls believers to actively participate in Christian prayers with worship plus fellowship and mutual support systems within the Church. It should also be done by recognizing the communal life that provides essential encouragement for resilience during periods of hardship. Christians should also endeavor to maintain their engagement with spiritual disciplines to strengthen their faith and to foster hope amidst the ongoing challenges amongst them.

Equally, Christians are to cultivate attitudes that embrace forgiveness, reconciliation and perseverance in response to social wounds that result from the realities of post-war. This context of endurance and extending of grace to others are only done by embodying Christ-likeness. This perspective enables the believers to contribute meaningfully to healing of relationships which are fractured and also rebuild healthy

Christian communities. Furthermore, Christians must seek much more appropriate pastoral and psychosocial support especially when they are confronted with emotional distress, trauma and spiritual struggles which are associated with suffering. In other word Christians have to acknowledge with understanding the values of stewardship and personal responsibility expression over suffering to enhance one's spiritual and emotional well-being than to have an indication of weak faith.

5.1.1.4.4 Recommendations for the theological institutions

Theological institutions are required to strengthen their curriculum to be related to the theology of human suffering that should be initiated by integrating Tertullian's theological understanding with the reflections of pastoral theology and the contextual theology that should also include trauma-informed ministry. This research has qualified Tertullian's theology for providing enduring theological insights that equip the future church leaders for effective ministry and to be effective leaders within post-conflict contexts characterized by various forms of human suffering. The universities, institutions, seminaries and theological colleges should intentionally incorporate these patristic theology research findings particularly for Tertullian's understanding of human suffering as spiritual formation, faithful witness and ecclesial identity as well as participation in the suffering of Christ's. This engagement can enable students to learn and appreciate the continuing relevance of early Christian theological traditions in addressing the contemporary pastoral challenges.

The theological education should further integrate African experiences of suffering the effect of conflict with resilience and reconciliation within theological education. This ensures that ministerial formation remains contextually responsive and relevant. This framework comes within reach ground for the graduates to engage faithfully with the realities that confront Christian communities, hence effective for ministry work in areas affected by the prolonged hardship. Besides, theological education should also encourage interdisciplinary researches such that involve theology of peace building, community development and of psychology that facilitate comprehensive responses to human suffering. The understanding of Tertullian's theology provides significant

theological resources that are necessary for understanding suffering within God's redemptive purposes. This contributes holistically both in pastoral care and ecclesial engagement with the contemporary society.

5.1.1.4.5 Recommendations for the further researcher

This research paid attention to the topic “The potential of Tertullian's theology of human suffering in addressing the post-NRA war effects faced by Christians in the Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda (2015-2025).” On the other hand, below are future areas that may be considered for more research:

- ❖ An investigation into Tertullian's theology relevance for perseverance and eschatological hope especially in addressing contemporary Christian communities 'experiences of human suffering.
- ❖ An investigation into the relevance of Tertullian's theological understanding of perseverance and Christian hope in addressing contemporary experiences of Church and society in human suffering.
- ❖ A comparative study of Tertullian's theology of human suffering and New Testament perspectives on suffering within post-conflict African contexts.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1. Research Work Plan

These parts describe how the work schedule for this research will be done as illustrated below:

TABLE FIVE: RESEARCH WORK PLAN:			
DURATION/ PERIOD	ACTIVITY:	OUTPUT	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
2 weeks	Topic refinement and approval	Topic Approval	Researcher and Supervisor
5 Weeks	Writing of Section one	Completing of Section one	Researcher
7 Weeks	Writing of section Two: Literature Review	Completing of Section two	Researcher
4 Weeks	Writing of Section Three (Methodology)	Completing of Section Three	Researcher
4 Weeks	Defending of Proposal and Approval	Proposal Approved	Researcher, Supervisor and UCU Research Committee
7 Weeks	Full Document analysis	Organized Research Evidence	Researcher and Supervisor
6 Weeks	Data Analysis	Thematic Findings	Researcher
5 Weeks	Writing of Section Four	Completing Section Four	Researcher
4 Weeks	Writing of Section Five	Completing of	Researcher

		Section Five	
3 Weeks	Editing, Formatting and plagiarism checking	Producing of Final Clean Dissertation	Researcher Supervisor
3 Weeks	Final Printing and Submission	Submitting of Three bound copies.	
The Total estimated duration is 10-12 Months(1Year)			

Appendix 2. The Research Proposed Budget

These parts consist of the tentative estimated cost for the research detail as illustrated below:

TABLE SIX: THE RESEARCH PROPOSED BUDGET:				
S/N	ITEM	QUALITY/DURATION	UNIT COST	TOTAL COST
01	Internet bundles	12 months	30,000-x8	240,000-
02	Stationery (books, highlighters, pens)	Lamp sum	80,000-	80,000-
03	Library subscription / access	Lamp sum	100,000-	100,000-
04	Books / PDF purchase	Lamp sum	350,000-	250,000-
05	Printing and photocopying drafts	500 Pages	500x300-	150,000-
06	Plagiarism and editing	Lamp sum	80,000-	80,000-
07	Prove Reading	Lamp sum	200,000-	200,000-
08	Final thesis printing & binding	5 copies	80,000x5	400,000-
09	Contingency	Lump sum	1126,000-	126,000-
Estimated Total Budget= <u>1,626,000-</u>				

Appendix 3. Uganda Christian University Exemption letter



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

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Office of the Vice Chancellor
Research Ethics Committee UG-026



9th February, 2026

DOROTHY AYOO
Uganda Christian University
P. O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda.
+256 773 027714

UG-REC-026 EXEMPTION NOTICE

To: Ayoo Dorothy; Principal Investigator

Re: UCUREC Application titled: *An Inquiry into Tertullian Theology of Human suffering and its Relationship to the life of Contemporary Christians in Urban Archdeaconry, Diocese of Northern Uganda.*

Application Number: UCUREC-2026-2075

Version: 1.0

Type: ☐ Exemption Request
☐ Protocol Amendment
☐ Letter of Amendment (LOA)
☐ Continuing Review
☐ Material Transfer Agreement
☐ Other, Specify: Initial Review

I am pleased to inform you that the UG-REC-026; UCUREC exempted the above referenced application.

Exemption of the research is for the period from 9th February, 2026, to 9th February, 2027.

This research is considered minimal risk category since there is no humans-involved in research.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:



Research and Ethics

P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda, Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill
Tel: +256 (0) 312 350 885 Fax: +256 (0) 4142 90 800 Email: rec@ucu.ac.ug Web: www.ucu.ac.ug
UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America



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Office of the Vice Chancellor
Research Ethics Committee UG-026



1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC exemption number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems during study or other must be submitted to the UCUREC for notification. New information that becomes available which could change the status of the study; i.e. involving members of the research team, guardians, or any unexpected occurrence must be communicated to UCUREC.
4. Regulations require review of an exempted study not less than once per 12-month period. Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 9th February, 2027 in order to continue the study beyond the exempted period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point any change in approach to data collection must be communicated.
5. You are required to get clearance from Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) before proceeding for data collection.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by UG-REC _026:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Research Proposal	English	1.0	2025-14-12
2.	Request for REC exemption	English	1.0	2025- 14-12

Signed and Stamped

Prof. Peter Waiswa
UCUREC Chairperson,
pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug



Research and Ethics

P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda, Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill
Tel: +256 (0) 312 350 885 Fax: +256 (0) 4142 90 800 Email: rec@ucu.ac.ug Web: www.ucu.ac.ug
UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America

Appendix 4. Introduction Letter for Data Collection



15th March 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION

This letter serves to introduce to you AYOO DOROTHY a student of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity pursuing a Master of Divinity/ Master of Arts in Theology/ Master of Arts in Theology and Development/Master of Arts in Theology and Health care Management/ Bachelors of Divinity.

His/her is carrying out a research as a partial requirement for him/her to be awarded the degree he/she is pursuing. So kindly avail him or the required information for building his/her research work.

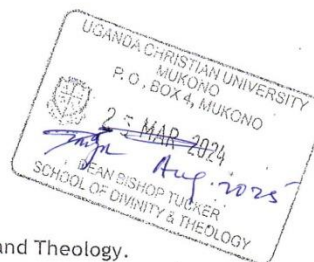
Counting on your cooperation and thank you in advance

Yours faithfully

Rev. Prof. Elly Kansime

Research coordinator, Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.

ekansime@ucu.ac.ug, 0772621182



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P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda (East Africa), Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill, Tel: 088 60 62 888

Appendix 5. Turnitin Report



Page 2 of 115 - Integrity Overview

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-  **4 Cited and Quoted** 0%
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