

CONTEXTUAL DISCIPLESHIP MODELS AND CHURCH GROWTH IN NORTH

MBALE DIOCESE

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DECLARATION

I, MAKOBA RONALD GUDOI....., declare that this work is my own original work and it has never been submitted to any university or institution of higher learning for any award.

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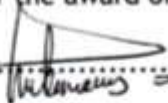
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APPROVAL

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Date:22/5/2025.....

DEDICATION

I sincerely dedicate this piece of work to my dear wife and children for the sacrifice and support that enabled me complete successfully this study may God bless you abundantly

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I extend my deep appreciation to first to God and my supervisor Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Mukeshimana for his tireless support and guidance without whom this work would not be complete. I also extend my gratitude to my colleagues who supported me morally and academically.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to analyze the impact of contextualized discipleship model on church growth in North Mbale Diocese. The study was guided by the following objectives: To establish the biblical features of a contextualized discipleship model, analyze the weaknesses of a contextualized discipleship model and to assess the involvement of the church in handling challenges associated with contextualized discipleship model in North Mbale Diocese.

The study adopted a more of a library based research and less of a descriptive survey research design employing qualitative approaches, targeting parish priests, lay readers, fellowship leaders and active Christians. This research used questionnaires, interview guides, and observation checklist to collect data from various respondents. To get quality data the researcher ensured that the instruments used were reliable. From the findings, the study established several biblical features in a contextualized discipleship Model in north Mbale Diocese. It identified many weaknesses in the discipleship model and assessed the ability of the church in handling the challenges associated with the discipleship model.

The research outcome was that the Diocese of North Mbale should give training the first priority to empower workers for quality discipleship, Christians should be aware and conscience about negative cultural practices and considering discipleship and evangelism in context as areas that can widen the scope of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

It has been universally recognized that, despite our African conditions, Africans are potentially as able as any other race, and our discipling is as desirable as anywhere else (McGauran 1967, p.45). Discipleship therefore stands as a central strategy in nurturing and guiding believers in their journey of faith.

This chapter covers the background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purposes and objective of the study, research questions, and scope of the study, justification, significance of the study, Conceptual frame work and literature review.

1.1 Background of the study

The concept of discipleship models has been extensively explored in various studies and theological interpretations. One among others is the corporate Worship for Formation of Spiritual Virtue- Discipleship Model (Aniol, 2017, p.89). This model emphasizes the importance of corporate worship in shaping spiritual virtue. Aniol argues that worship is not just an individual experience but a communal one that forms believers' character and virtue.

However, as the contextual background of North Mbale Diocese it has continued to experience immorality, actively participating in cultural festivals of circumcision, embezzlement of funds by both the Christians and active ministers and gospel is presented as superficial .For example the church has now developed a liturgy for circumcision yet during the circumcision exercise traditional and culturally initiated surgeons are the ones who perform circumcision surgery. According (O'Donovan 1996, p.112) “Christians who combine their faith with cultural practices do practice syncretism”

Another model is Missional Discipleship Model (Beard, 2015, p.34).This model focuses on discerning spiritual formation practices and goals within the mission

movement. Beard explores how discipleship can be integrated with mission to create a holistic approach to spiritual growth. A good number of our Christians in North Mbale Diocese do understand mission as going out to collect crop harvest and any other support whenever there is need the real meaning of discipleship is yet to be clear to many Christians in the Diocese.

According to (Roberts 2014, p.56) there is discipleship with Marginalized at the Center. This model prioritizes discipleship with marginalized communities, emphasizing the importance of centering their voices and experiences. Roberts argues that discipleship must be contextualized to address the unique needs of marginalized groups. However, despite the abundance of information, church leadership faces challenges in implementing contextualized discipleship models to enhance church growth.

In North Mbale Diocese the church's efforts to reach out to the people with the gospel in the community seem not to be yielding the expected results. The Diocese continue to experience significant decline in the attendance of Sunday service and serious migration of Christians to other denominations.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the implementation of various discipleship programs, such as Sunday services, evangelism, prayer meetings, and mission outreaches, North Mbale Diocese faces significant challenges, not only with the decreasing numbers of Christians, but even in retaining them for the purpose of church growth. The existing discipleship efforts have not yielded the desired outcome, leading to a notable exodus of Christians to other denominations hence stagnating church growth. There is urgent need to address challenges associated with contextualized discipleship model if church growth is to be realized.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this theological research is to analyze the weaknesses of contextualized discipleship model on Church growth in North Mbale Diocese.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To assess the biblical features of discipleship model
- To analyze the weaknesses of contextualized discipleship model for Church growth in North Mbale Diocese
- To establish the contextualized discipleship model in North Mbale Diocese.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the key features of the contextualized discipleship models?
2. What are the weaknesses of a contextualized discipleship model?
3. How is the church handling the challenges associated with contextualized discipleship model?

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this study covers both geographical, content and time scope.

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study will be carried out in North Mbale Diocese. This area covers the two Districts of Sironko and Bulambuli in Eastern Uganda. North Mbale Diocese is an area that has for long witnessed declining numbers of believers seemingly due to the contextualized discipleship approach.

1.6.2 Content Scope

The content scope covers the key features of the contextualized discipleship models, the weaknesses of a contextualized discipleship model and the role of the church in handling challenges associated with contextualized discipleship model

1.6.3 Time Scope

For the last 5 years North Mbale Diocese has witnessed a great decline in church growth seemingly due to contextualized discipleship model. This study therefore covers a period of five years as from 2019 to 2023

1.7 Justification of the study

This theological study on the contextualized discipleship model may provide valuable insights into nurturing for sustainable church growth. It aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice, through tangible methods and strategies for discipleship.

1.8 Significance of the study

This research may help church leaders in selecting and using appropriate discipleship models for Church growth and development.

This study may help researchers who are interested in carrying out further studies in the area of contextualized discipleship models and church growth in their respective areas.

The study may help in the area of Diocesan Planning and resource allocation for effective ministry in north Mbale Diocese and in any other religious institutions and communities.

1.9.0 Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

1.9.1 Conceptual framework

In this research, the independent variable is discipleship model. It represents the intervention or treatment that will be applied to the participants (Christians) in the research. The dependent variable is "Church growth." This variable measures the outcome or effect of the independent variable on the participants. It will reflect the changes in their spiritual development because of their involvement in discipleship models. The framework will be firmly rooted in biblical principles and teachings on discipleship models, spiritual and Church growth. It will draw upon passages that emphasize the importance of discipleship. In this context, there will be certain mediating variables that might influence the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. For instance, consideration of context, the level of active

engagement and participation of Christians in the discipleship groups, role of the leaders and the quality of teaching and guidance provided by the leaders.

1.9.2 Conceptual /Theoretical Framework

The theories for this topic could be based on the discipleship model theories and models Spiritual Formation Theory (Mulholland, 2001, p.45): This theory highlights the process of spiritual growth and transformation through practices of discipleship models. Small Group Theory (Tuckman, 1965, p.78): This theory outlines the stages of small group development, including forming, storming, norming, and performing Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2018, p.92): This theory explores the role of leadership in facilitating group effectiveness, including spiritual leadership and Spiritual Growth Model (Demarest, 2003, p.112): The model outlines the stages of spiritual growth, including spiritual awareness, spiritual pursuit, and spiritual maturity

1.10.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.10.1 Research Design

As defined by (Mugenda 2008, p.56), a research design offered a comprehensive description of how the study would be conducted. This study utilized a descriptive survey design, primarily employing qualitative methods to assess the relevance of contextual discipleship models in church growth within North Mbale Diocese. This design was suitable for evaluating facts, opinions, and attitudes regarding the phenomenon in situation.

1.10.2 The area of Study

The research took place in the North Mbale Diocese, which included the Sironko and Bulambuli Districts in the Bugisu region of Eastern Uganda .This area was selected due to a noticeable decline in the number of believers, attributed to inadequate discipleship models affecting church growth.

1.10.3 The Sources of information

Information was gathered from two primary sources: Primary and Secondary. Primary data was collected directly from respondents through questionnaires, interview guides and observation checklists. Secondary data primarily consisted of library resources, including textbooks, articles, magazines, and recorded information.

1.10.4 Population of Study

According to (Ougula 2007, p.34), a population referred to a well-defined collection of individuals or objects that were the focus of the study. The research involved respondents, comprising, priests, lay readers, fellowship leaders, and active Christians.

1.10.5 Variables and indicators

The researcher will ensure that these variables and indicators align with the research questions and objectives. Data collection methods, such as surveys, interview or observation, can be used to assess and measure these variables draw meaningful conclusions about the small discipleship models in fostering church growth

1.10.6 Procedure/ Protocols for data collection

Here the researcher will follow some essential protocols and steps for data collection as follow;

The Researcher will have a research design, ethical considerations; define the sample, selection of participants. Data collection instruments, data collection process, Data analysis. Interpretation, limitations and lastly the researcher will prepare a comprehensive research report that includes an introduction, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. In addition, the researcher will present his findings with supported evidence.

The researcher followed essential protocols and steps for data collection, including: Establishing a research design, defining the sample and selecting participants, developing data collection instruments, conducting the data collection process, Analyzing and interpreting the data, Acknowledging limitations and preparing a comprehensive research report

1.10.7.0 Data Collection instruments

The instruments employed in this study included questionnaire, interview schedules, and observation checklists.

1.10.7.1 Questionnaire

Defined by (Sarantakos, 2005, p.112), a questionnaire was a list of questions designed to solicit specific responses. This method was utilized to gather quantitative data from literate respondents. The researcher developed a survey questionnaire incorporating Likert scales, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions.

1.10.7.2 Interview schedule

According to (Gurbrium, 2012, p.67), an interview was a structured conversation aimed at obtaining insights from participants. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with selected participants to explore their experiences and perceptions of contextualized discipleship model.

1.10.7.3 Observation schedule

An observation schedule served as a checklist for collecting data through continuous observation of behaviors over a specific period. The researcher observed interactions and dynamics during discipleship model meetings.

1.10.8.0 Quality/ Error Control

Validity of instruments

Validity referred to the ability of data- gathering instruments to measure what they were intended to measure (Best & Kakhn,2004,p.89).The researcher conducted a pretest of the instruments to ensure they solicited the required information.

1.10.8.1 Reliability of instruments.

Reliability indicated the consistency of the measuring instruments over time and across similar samples (Cohen et al 2007, p.56)

1.10.9 Strategy for data processing and analysis

Data analysis was a systematic process of organizing and interpreting data (Bagdon & Biken, 1992, p.76).Information collected from questionnaires, interviews, and observations underwent content analysis to identify significant themes and patterns. A qualitative approach was employed through thematic analysis, while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

1.10.10 Ethical consideration:

Research ethics involved moral principles guiding responsible research conduct (Horman, 1991, p.78).This included safeguarding participants' privacy, respecting respondents' rights, and obtaining necessary permissions from local leadership before conducting the study.

1.10.11 Anticipated methodology constraints work Plan/ Timeline

The researcher anticipated several methodological constraints, including:

Gaining access to the participants and their willingness to participate.

Time constraints associated with conducting interviews and surveys.

Coordination of various data collection methods.

Complexity in analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data.

1.11.0 LITREATURE REVIEW

1.11.1 Introduction

This literature review explores the biblical foundations of contextualized discipleship and examines various models that have been developed to address discipleship in different cultural contexts. It begins with an analysis of the scriptural basis for discipleship, emphasizing how biblical teachings support the adaptation of discipleship methods to specific cultural and social realities. The review then researches into different models of contextualized discipleship, including the incarnational model, transformational model, oral-based discipleship model, community centered model, and indigenous leadership model. Each model offers unique insights into how discipleship can be effectively practiced within diverse communities including North Mbale Diocese.

1.11.2 The biblical basis for contextualized discipleship

The concept of discipleship is rooted in Jesus' Great Commission, which commands believers to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Mathew 28:19). The Greek term "Mathetes" (disciple) signifies a learner or follower who commits to the teachings of Christ (Douglas & Tenney, 2011, p.178). Biblical dictionaries further emphasize that discipleship entails both knowledge acquisition and practical application within cultural settings (Freedman, 2000, p.231). The knowledge acquired through the word of God should be manifested in the daily lives of Christians in North Mbale Diocese in order to evaluate their journey as disciple of Christ.

This biblical foundation is crucial for North Mbale Diocese, where cultural practices and traditions influence how discipleship is understood and practiced. A contextualized approach ensures that biblical truths are not merely imported but are meaningfully integrated into the local worldview, fostering genuine spiritual transformation.

1.11.3 Understanding Contextualized Discipleship

Contextualized discipleship is an approach that seeks to make the gospel relevant to the culture and context in which it is preached. This approach recognizes that the core message of Christianity remains the same across all cultures, but the manner in which it is communicated and lived out can differ based on the local context. According to (Hiebert, 2009, p.153), contextualization involves "taking the timeless truths of Scripture and presenting them in a culturally relevant form" , for example in regions where individualism is value, discipleship may focus on personal responsibility and direct relationship with God while in collectivist societies, the emphasis may be on community and relational aspects of faith.

For example, in regions where individualism is valued, discipleship may focus on personal responsibility and a direct relationship with God, while in collectivist societies like those in North Mbale Diocese, the emphasis may be on community and relational aspects of faith. Understanding this dynamic is essential for developing effective discipleship strategies that resonate with the people of North Mbale.

1.11.4 Contextualized discipleship models

Effective discipleship requires contextualization, integrating biblical principles with lived experiences (Kostenberger & O' Brien, 2017, p.112). Discipleship is a fundamental aspect of Christian faith, focusing on spiritual growth and obedience to Christ's teachings. However, effective discipleship requires a contextualized approach that aligns with cultural, social, and historical realities. Contextualized discipleship models integrate biblical principles with the lived experiences of individuals within specific communities. This section explores different contextualized discipleship models. Referencing biblical dictionaries and scholarly sources to establish a comprehensive understanding.

1.12.0 Models of Contextualized discipleship

1.12.1 The incarnational model of discipleship

The incarnational model of discipleship is deeply rooted in the biblical concept of God becoming human through Jesus Christ. This model is inspired by John 1:14, which states, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." The verse signifies God's intentional presence among humanity, demonstrating His love and commitment to relational engagement. The incarnational approach to discipleship calls believers to embody Christ's presence by living among people, sharing in their struggles, and guiding them toward spiritual transformation through everyday interactions according to (Stott, 2006, p.119). Missionaries and local church leaders often adopt this model, engaging in relational discipleship to foster spiritual growth as by (Bosch, 2011, p.32).

Core Principles of the Incarnational Model

Just as Christ dwelt among humanity, discipleship requires believers to be physically and emotionally present in the lives of others. This means going beyond formal church settings and engaging people where they live, work, and interact daily (Frost & Hirsch, 2003,p.56).Discipleship is not just about preaching or teaching but involves building deep, meaningful relationships. By walking alongside individuals in their struggles, joys, and daily routines, disciples can model Christ's love and grace (Bosch, 2011, p.134).

The incarnational model encourages adapting to the culture and needs of the people being discipled. Just as Jesus spoke in parables relevant to His audience, disciples today must communicate faith in ways that resonate with the specific context of their communities (Newbigin, 1989, p.78).Christ's incarnation was an act of humility and sacrifice. Likewise, discipleship requires selflessness, a willingness to serve others, and a commitment to meeting their physical, emotional and spiritual needs (Philippian s 2:5-8).

While the incarnational model is deeply effective, it also presents challenges such as:

Living among those in hardship can be exhausting and requires strong personal resilience and spiritual discipline. It is crucial to adapt to different cultures without compromising biblical truth. True relational discipleship takes time, and results may not be immediately visible. The incarnational model of discipleship reflects Christ's method of engaging with humanity- through presence, relationship, and self-sacrificial love. By intentionally living among people and sharing in their experiences, discipleship becomes more than instruction; it becomes a lived testimony of God's transformative power. Church leaders, missionaries and believers are called to embody Christ in their daily interactions, ensuring that faith is not just preached but also demonstrated in action.

Church leaders in North Mbale can adopt this model by engaging in relational discipleship, moving beyond formal church settings to interact with people in their daily lives

1.12.2 Transformational Model

The transformational model focuses on the holistic change of individuals and communities through discipleship. This approach is deeply rooted in Romans 12:2, which urges believers not to conform to worldly patterns but to be transformed by the renewal of their minds. Form (Wright, 2010, p.45) transformation in this context is not merely spiritual but also encompasses social, economic, and environmental dimensions

In Matthew 28:19-20, the bible provides a strong foundation for the transformational model, emphasizing holistic discipleship that affects every aspect of life. Jesus commands His followers to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything He has commanded. This directive suggests that discipleship is not limited to spiritual matters but extends to all aspects of life. Likewise (Bosch, 2011, p.134) argues, true discipleship integrates faith with daily living, ensuring that believers influence their communities positively.

One of the key aspects of the transformational model is addressing social justice issues. Jesus' ministry often involved advocating for the marginalized, healing the sick, and restoring dignity to the oppressed see (Luke 4:18-19). According to (Keller 2012, p.91), the church has a crucial role in fostering justice and advocating for the rights of the vulnerable. Christian discipleship, therefore, must include efforts to eliminate social injustices such as poverty, discrimination, and human trafficking.

Economic transformation is another vital component of the transformational model. The Bible speaks about the importance of stewardship and economic responsibility, as seen in the Parable of the Talents see (Matthew 25:14-30). Discipleship should empower individuals with economic skills, encourage ethical business practices, and promote self-sufficiency. According to (Myers, 2011, p.112), economic empowerment through discipleship involves equipping individuals with financial literacy and opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, which can lead to the economic upliftment of entire communities.

To implement the transformational model effectively, churches and Christian organizations must develop programs that address spiritual growth, social justice, economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability. Community engagement initiatives, vocational training programs, and advocacy for policy reforms are essential strategies. Agreeing to (Nussbaum, 2016, p.67), the church's role in transformation is not limited to preaching but extends to active participation in societal development. The transformational model of discipleship advocates for holistic change that encompasses spiritual renewal, social justice, economic empowerment, and environmental stewardship. Rooted in biblical teachings, this model challenges believers to integrate faith into all aspects of life. As Wright and Keller suggest, the church has a vital role in leading transformation by addressing societal needs while remaining grounded in scriptural principles. Through intentional discipleship, communities can experience lasting change, reflecting God's kingdom on earth.

The church can implement programs that address not only spiritual needs but also economic empowerment and social justice. For example, vocational training, agricultural projects, and advocacy for marginalized groups can demonstrate the practical impact of discipleship. This model ensures that faith is not compartmentalized but influences all areas of life.

1.12.3 Oral-Based Discipleship Model

In many non-literate or oral-tradition communities, storytelling and oral transmission of biblical truths serve as effective discipleship strategies. Biblical examples include Jesus' parables, which conveyed complex spiritual principles in relatable ways (Matthew 13:3-9). Oral-based discipleship is a significant approach to spreading the gospel in contexts where literacy levels are low, ensuring accessibility and engagement (Lovejoy, 2010, p.89).

Oral-based discipleship leverages the power of storytelling, drama, music, and verbal repetition to instill biblical truths (Housney, 2011, p.62). Since many oral cultures rely on communal learning and collective memory, the use of narratives aligns well with their natural modes of knowledge transmission. Lovejoy highlights that oral learners grasp theological concepts more effectively when they are communicated through stories rather than written text. This method fosters retention and enables believers to pass on scriptural knowledge within their communities according to (Willis, 2019, p.20).

Jesus extensively used parables to communicate the kingdom of God, ensuring that his teachings were memorable and accessible to his audience (Mark 4:33-34). Similarly, the apostles continued the tradition of oral teaching, as seen in Paul's exhortations to hold fast to the traditions that were spoken to them (2 Thessalonians 2:15). The early church largely depended on oral proclamation before written scripture became widely available (Ong, 1982, p.23).

In modern missionary efforts, oral-based discipleship is particularly effective in regions with low literacy rates or where printed materials are scarce (Snowden, 2016, p.18). Strategies such as chronological Bible storytelling, dramatized

scripture, and the use of audio Bibles have significantly enhanced evangelistic efforts in such communities (Steffen, 2013, p.36). Oral-based discipleship also plays a crucial role in preserving cultural integrity by adapting biblical messages in ways that resonate with indigenous storytelling traditions (Hesselgrave, 1991, p.32).

Despite its advantages, oral-based discipleship faces challenges, including the risk of distortion in transmission and the potential for doctrinal inaccuracies (Terry, 2008). To mitigate these risks, structured oral Bible schools and accountable discipleship groups help ensure fidelity to biblical truths (Lovejoy, 2010). Additionally, integrating oral methods with digital tools such as audio scripture recordings and visual storytelling enhances effectiveness (Grant, 2018, p.56)

Oral-based discipleship is a powerful and culturally relevant approach to evangelization, particularly in non-literate communities. It aligns with biblical precedents and facilitates deep engagement with scripture through storytelling and communal learning. By embracing oral transmission methods and integrating them with modern technology, discipleship efforts can be both faithful to biblical teachings and contextually appropriate for diverse cultures.

Since literacy levels vary, oral-based discipleship can enhance engagement and retention of biblical teachings. The use of local languages, drama, and music in discipleship training can make theological concepts more accessible. However, care must be taken to ensure doctrinal accuracy in oral transmission.

1.12.4 Community- centered model

The community-centered model of discipleship emphasized collective spiritual growth within a faith community. This approach fosters an environment where believers engage in mutual edification, shared worship and holistic support systems. The early Christian church provides a foundational example of this model, as seen in Acts 2:42-47. This passage illustrates a community deeply committed to the apostle's teachings, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer. The believers shared their possessions, ensuring that no one was in need, which reinforced their sense of unity and common purpose. This model aligns with the biblical call for believers to

bear one another's burdens and to grow together in faith (Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 10:24-25).

The community-centered approach to discipleship is characterized by collective accountability, which is crucial for sustained spiritual growth. According to (Guder, 1998, p.45), discipleship is most effective within a communal framework where individuals challenge, encourage and support one another in their faith journey. This accountability fosters a deeper sense of responsibility and commitment to Christian values, as individuals are consistently engaged in meaningful interactions within their faith community. Similarly, (Smith, 2014, p.14) highlights that shared spiritual practices, such as communal prayer and corporate worship, create an environment where transformation is facilitated through collective experiences and shared wisdom.

Beyond spiritual benefits, this model also has significant social implications. The early church's practice of sharing resources (Acts 2:44-45) serves as a model for modern Christian communities, emphasizing economic justice and social solidarity. As Koinonia Fellowship Theory suggests, Christian discipleship is not merely an individual pursuit but a collective endeavor that seeks to address both spiritual and material needs within a community (Volf, 1998.p.17). In contemporary faith communities, this principle can manifest in various ways, including social outreach programs, financial assistance, and mentorship initiatives aimed at nurturing both spiritual and social well-being.

Moreover, the communal model reinforces the role of the church as a transformative agent within society. Research indicates that faith communities that emphasize collective discipleship often exhibit higher levels of social cohesion and civic engagement (Putnam & Campbell, 2010, p.78). When individuals participate actively in their faith communities, they develop a sense of belonging that extends beyond the church and into the broader society. This reinforces the holistic nature of discipleship, which involves not only spiritual formation but also active participation in addressing societal issues such as poverty, injustice, and inequality.

Given the communal nature of African societies, this model is highly effective. Small group fellowships, village Bible studies, and communal prayer gatherings can strengthen discipleship. The church can also promote shared economic initiatives, reflecting the early church's practice of meeting material needs.

1.12.5 Indigenous Discipleship Model

This model of empowering local leaders to disciple their communities ensures sustainability and cultural relevance. Paul's approach in appointing elders in different churches as cited in (Titus 1:5) illustrates this model, emphasizing the necessity of locally rooted leadership in the growth and stability of Christian communities. Indigenous leadership, as defined by (Hiebert, 1994, p.67), allows discipleship to be deeply rooted in cultural contexts while maintaining biblical integrity. This approach is essential for fostering spiritual and social transformation within communities while respecting their unique cultural frameworks.

Though indigenous leadership model is based on the principle that effective discipleship must emerge from within a given cultural context rather than being imposed externally. According to (Kraft, 2005), he presents that contextualization is vital for the transmission of the gospel in a way that is both faithful to Scripture and meaningful to the local audience. By developing leaders from within the community, churches can ensure that the teachings of Christ resonate with the people's lived experiences, values, and traditions.

Furthermore, this model promotes sustainability in ministry efforts. For (Shaw, 2010, p.89) argues that externally imposed leadership structures often struggle with long-term effectiveness because they lack cultural resonance and local ownership. Indigenous leaders, on the other hand, understand the sociocultural dynamics of their communities, enabling them to address spiritual and practical needs more effectively. For example, in African church contexts, indigenous leadership has played a significant role in fostering grassroots evangelism and community development (Bediako, 1995).

Biblically, the model of indigenous leadership can be seen in the early church. Paul uses this approach to appointing elders in every town (Titus 1:5) aligns with the principle of empowering local leaders who have a deep understanding of their communities. This ensured that the new Christian communities remained doctrinally sound and spiritually strong, even in Paul's absence.

Similarly, in the Old Testament, Jethro's advice to Moses (Exodus 18:21) emphasized the importance of appointing capable men from among the people to serve as leaders, ensuring effective governance and administration. Moreover, indigenous leadership contributes to resilience in the face of persecution or external pressures. When church leadership is locally grounded, it is less vulnerable to disruptions caused by external forces (Walls, 2002, p.56). This has been evident in various historical and contemporary contexts where indigenous Christian movements have thrived despite opposition, as local leaders have the capacity to adapt and sustain their communities.

North Mbale Diocese should undertake training local pastors, lay readers, and fellowship leaders ensures that discipleship is led by those who understand the cultural aspects. This reduces dependency on external missionaries and fosters long-term church growth.

1.13.0 Conclusion

Contextualized discipleship models are essential for ensuring that Christian faith remains relevant and transformative in diverse cultural settings. For North Mbale Diocese, integrating biblical principles with local realities through incarnational, transformational, oral-based, community-centered, and indigenous leadership approaches can foster deeper spiritual growth. The church must prioritize training, cultural sensitivity, and holistic ministry to effectively disciple believers within their unique context. By doing so, North Mbale Diocese can experience sustainable church growth rooted in biblical truth and cultural relevance.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FEATURES OF THE CONTEXTUALIZED DISCIPLESHIP MODELS

2.0 Introduction

Despite the biblical and theoretical frameworks for contextualized discipleship outlined in Chapters One, this chapter explores biblical features of contextualized discipleship with particular attention to their relevance for church growth in North Mbale Diocese. With examining how Jesus' ministry, the early church, and the apostle Paul adapted their teachings to different audiences while remaining faithful to scripture. By understanding obedience to Christ's teachings, relational discipleship, servant leadership, mentorship, and the role of the Holy Spirit, this study highlights the necessity of culturally sensitive yet biblically sound discipleship models. This study specifically investigates how obedience to Christ's teachings, relational discipleship, servant leadership, and other biblical principles can be contextualized to address the unique challenges facing North Mbale Diocese.

2.1 Obedience to Christ's teaching

This is one of the key feature in a contextualized discipleship, as obedience is a fundamental aspect of Christian faith that emphasizes spiritual growth. The Obedience to Christ's teachings lead to the formation of mature believers who can, in turn, disciple others (Willard, 2006, p.34). The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) underscores the necessity of making disciples in all nations, highlighting the importance of teaching believers to obey everything Christ commanded. However, effective discipleship requires a contextualized approach that aligns with cultural, social and historical realities (Heibert, 2009, p.67). A contextualized discipleship models integrate biblical principles with the lived experiences of individuals within specific communities, ensuring that faith is both relevant and transformative.

Also while Matthew 28:20 commends teaching obedience to Christ's words, the Jerusalem council (Acts 15) shows this doesn't require cultural uniformity. In North

Mbale Diocese, this could mean integrating discipleship with traditional community gatherings rather than relying solely on Sunday services.

2.2 Relationship

Another biblical feature is the demonstration of relational approach. Jesus provided the primary framework for discipleship, demonstrating a relational, immersive, and transformational approach. His calling of the twelve disciples (Mark 3:13-14) highlights the importance of relational discipleship, where learning occurs through close personal interaction (Wilkins, 2010, p.89). Jesus taught through parables (Matthew 13:10-17), real-life experiences, and direct instruction, ensuring that His message resonated with diverse audiences (Wright, 2006 p.45). Furthermore, He contextualized His teachings to Jewish audiences while preparing His disciples for global mission work (John 4:1-4 2).

Jesus' investment in the Twelve demonstrates that transformation occurs through sustained relationships .For in North Mbale Diocese's clan based society, this suggests the structuring discipleship around family units rather than individual classes. The Lay readers and priests can find time for the clan organized meeting and even the family gathering to disciple the people through their context which can draw many more to church.

2.3 Servant leadership

The other feature is the servant leadership a significant aspect of Jesus' discipleship model. In John 13 12- 17, He washed the feet of His disciples, modeling humility and service. This principle underscores that discipleship is not just about knowledge but also about character formation and active service (Wilkins, 2010, P.102). By living among His disciples and engaging in their daily lives, Jesus demonstrated the incarnational nature of discipleship -entering into the lives of followers to transform them holistically.

The Early Church and Community-Oriented Discipleship The early church adopted a communal model of discipleship, emphasizing fellowship, prayer, and scriptural

teaching. Acts 2:42-47 describes how the first Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, broke bread together, and supported one another in faith and material needs. This communal aspect reflects the necessity of integrating discipleship into the fabric of daily life rather than isolating it within formal religious structures (Hirsch, 2016, P.27).

Moreover, the early church demonstrated a contextualized approach to discipleship as the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) addressed cultural and theological issues regarding the converts, setting a precedent for cultural flexibility in discipleship while maintaining biblical truth (Witherington, 2007,p.69). This example is particularly relevant for contemporary mission work as it highlights the balance between doctrinal fidelity and cultural sensitivity.

Jesus' foot washing models leadership that resonates with Bagisu values of humility which if maximized by the church leadership of keeping humble and demonstrating Christ's humility the rejection of the gospel will be minimized and the current hierarchical structures might be reimagined to emphasize elders (Baseza) serving rather than commanding hence leading to church growth in North Mbale Diocese

2.4 Mentorship

Mentorship is another biblical feature of contextualized discipleship, for Paul through his letters, emphasizes mentorship, doctrinal soundness, and adaptability. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs Timothy to entrust teachings to reliable individuals who can teach others, highlighting the importance of spiritual multiplication. This mentoring approach aligns with Jesus' relational model and demonstrates how discipleship is an ongoing process across generations (Fee & Stuart, 2014, P.78).

Paul also adapted his methods based on cultural contexts. In 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23, he states that he became "all things to all people" to win some to Christ. This principle supports the idea that effective discipleship should consider the cultural background and world view of the target audience without compromising the Gospel (Stott, 2018, p.21).

Paul's Instruction to Timothy emphasizes reproducible discipleship, in North Mbale, this can address leadership shortages by training local catechists through apprenticeship rather than formal seminary which at the end carry positive impact on the church.

2.5 Scripture knowledge

Scripture as foundation is a key biblical feature in a contextualized discipleship .In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul underscores that all Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. A contextualized discipleship model must prioritize the Bible as the ultimate authority while ensuring that teachings are presented in ways that resonate with the audience's context (Piper, 2011, p.56).

Jesus' use of Scripture in His discipleship efforts (Luke 24:27) exemplified the necessity of grounding discipleship in the Word of God. He frequently quoted the Old Testament to explain His mission and to guide His followers, reinforcing the idea that Scripture remains the primary tool for disciple-making. To counter attack the heretic teaching in North Mbale Diocese sways away the Christians the church through her leaderships should appreciate this biblical feature to have an effective contextualized discipleship

2.6 The fruit of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a feature that can't be foreseen as in Discipleship the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in the discipleship process. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as the Helper who would teach and remind believers of His teachings (John 14:26). The Spirit empowers disciples, guiding them in truth and enabling them to live out their faith authentically (Acts 1: 8).

A contextualized discipleship mode must recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming individuals and communities. Rather than relying solely on human methods, effective discipleship involves prayer, spiritual discernment, and dependence on the Spirit's guidance (Chan, 2010, p. 91). The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in discipleship, guiding, believers into the truth a thing which the church

in north Mbale diocese ought to depend on in order to realize results of Christian's spiritual and church growth

2.7 Integration

Cultural adaptation is the other feature, in the contextualization of discipleship it ensures that biblical teachings remain relevant across different cultural settings. Paul's approach in Athens (Acts 17:16-34), While the message of the Gospel remains unchanged, the methods of communicating it should align with the audience's cultural framework (Hiebert, 2009). For instance, oral cultures may benefit from storytelling-based discipleship, while literate societies may engage more with written and analytical approaches.

Paul's missionary journeys demonstrate effective contextualization. In Athens he referenced Greek philosophy to connect with his audience, showing an awareness of their cultural background while presenting the Gospel truth. This approach serves as a model for contemporary missionaries and church leaders seeking to disciple people from diverse backgrounds (Moreau, 2018, p.134).

The church and her leadership in north Mbale should embrace this idea of adapting the cultural aspects that are not contrary to biblical teaching like one of supporting those who lose their dear ones and taking such good cultural aspects within the church ministry will blossom the church in north Mbale.

2.8 Conclusion

Biblical discipleship is a holistic process that encompasses obedience, relational, mentoring, servant leadership, community engagement, scriptural foundation, reliance on the Holy Spirit and cultural adaptation. Contextualized discipleship models, following biblical principles, ensure that the Gospel message is effectively communicated and lived out in different cultural settings. By reimagining discipleship through these features applied to local cultural frameworks the Diocese could address both spiritual formation and membership retention. The following chapter will examine practical challenges in implementing such.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHALLENGES OF A CONTEXTUALIZED DISCIPLESHIP MODEL

3.0 Introduction

While Chapter Two identified biblical features like obedience and servant leadership however, this chapter reveals the critical challenges hindering effective contextualized discipleship in North Mbale Diocese, where despite various programs like the Sunday services, evangelism campaigns, and prayer meetings, church growth remains stagnant with an alarming exodus of believers to other denominations. While chapter two established biblical principles for contextualization, this analysis reveals how theological tensions, cultural syncretism, and socioeconomic factors specifically undermine discipleship efforts in North Mbale Diocese.

3.1 Theological tensions

One of the most significant challenges in contextualize discipleship is theological tension. When the gospel is contextualized, it is essential to ensure that the message remains biblically faithful. According to (Goheen, 2014, p.56) cautions, Contextualization must never compromise the gospel's core message but should aim to make it understandable within the particular cultural setting. However, there are times when cultural practices conflict with biblical teachings. For example, practices such as polygamy, ancestor worship, or other syncretistic beliefs may be prevalent in some cultures but are not in line with Christian teachings.

The church must engage with these practices carefully, offering biblical teaching on issues such as the sanctity of marriage, idolatry, and the exclusivity of Christ. At the same time, it must be sensitive to the cultural context and approach these issues with respect and understanding. Churches must ensure that the gospel's truth is communicated without causing unnecessary offense, yet still challenge cultural practices that contradict biblical values.

However, the field observations reveal specific conflicts within North Mbale Diocese on the ancestral Veneration vs Christ's mediation many believers struggle to reconcile traditional reverence for ancestors with Hebrews 9:15 teaching on Christ as sole mediator (Anderson, 2018, p.112). Some churches' complete rejection of ancestral remembrance has driven members to African independent churches that permit syncretic practices. The second issue is polygamous families in church leadership the church in north Mbale still has elders practicing polygamy despite 1 Timothy 3:2's standards. This creates doctrinal inconsistency that discourages young educated Christians. The last one is initiation rites (Imbalu) and christian identity the Bagisu circumcision ritual, while biblically neutral, often involves pre-Christian oaths that conflict with 2 Corinthians 6:14-17. The churches in north Mbale lack consensus on how to contextualize discipleships for initiates.

3.2 Cultural Relativism and Syncretism

Another challenge is the danger of syncretism, where cultural beliefs and practices are blended with Christian teachings, diluting the message of the gospel. Syncretism can occur when local customs are so deeply embedded in the lives of believers that they are difficult to separate from Christianity. As (Bosch, 1991, p.45) explains, "Syncretism is the danger of confusing cultural expression with the essence of the gospel". As (Anderson 2018) argues, syncretism is a major threat to the purity of the Christian faith because it alters the nature of salvation, the understanding of God, and the Christian way of life. Contextualized discipleship can unintentionally pave the way for this form of syncretism, as local customs are incorporated into Christian practices without sufficient biblical discernment.

For example, in some African and Asian contexts, certain African and Hindu ritual may be incorporated into Christian worship, such as the offering of food or prayers to deities before meals (Baker, 2019, p.78). Such practices can lead to confusion about the nature of God and undermine the biblical teaching of Christ's sufficiency for salvation. This poses a challenge for the church because it must discern which cultural elements are compatible with the gospel and which ones are not. For instance, in some cultures, community rituals or spiritual practices are central to

the daily life of individuals. The church must carefully navigate these practices to prevent the assimilation of non-Christian elements into the faith. The challenge is to embrace the good cultural aspects of a society, such as hospitality or respect for elders, while rejecting those practices that oppose biblical teachings.

Bosch's warning about syncretism finds concrete expression in North Mbale's worship patterns as some Christians tend to combine Christian prayer with traditional offering to mountains during circumcision and in the crises and some prayer groups have adopted prayer style like that of traditional divinations to describe prophetic ministry dangerously blurring biblical concepts and yet total rejection of cultural forms proves counterproductive

3.3 Social and Economic Inequality

The church faces the challenge of social and economic inequality in many regions where contextualized discipleship is needed, there are significant social and economic disparities. The church must address these issues while also promoting spiritual growth. In some cases, discipleship might emphasize personal salvation and spiritual transformation, but it should not neglect the social and economic realities that people face. As such, the church must offer holistic discipleship that includes addressing issues of justice, poverty, and inequality

The church's role is to provide both spiritual and practical support to those in need. This might involve community development initiatives, social justice advocacy, and providing resources to help individuals improve their economic situation. According to Colossians 1:28, discipleship should aim to "present everyone fully mature in Christ, which includes addressing both spiritual and material needs.

The North Mbale diocese's discipleship struggles cannot be divorced from these realities as often pastors and Christians prioritize survival over discipleship commitments. This is witnessed with the migration of unemployed youth to Kampala for work disrupts discipleship continuity so a call for holistic maturity remains unfulfilled when discipleship ignores these tangible needs.

3.4 Identity and cultural preservation

In some contexts, particularly among indigenous communities, there may be concerns about cultural identity. People may fear that embracing Christianity through contextualized discipleship will result in the loss of their unique cultural heritage. The church must help people see that the gospel does not require abandoning their cultural identity but invites them to live out their faith within their own cultural context.

The role of the church here is to be a facilitator of transformation rather than cultural eradication. According to (Anderson, 2014, p.37), "The church must empower individuals to retain their cultural identities while following Christ". This requires the church to be a safe space where cultural expression is celebrated, as long as it does not conflict with the teachings of Scripture. Through this, discipleship becomes a process of redemption, where culture is transformed, not erased.

This challenge is evident in north Mbale between dilates within as those whose language is not used feels uncomfortable like Anderson suggests the church in north Mbale should take on the role to disciples her believers with cultural cautiousness.

3.5 Maintaining Biblical Authority

There is the challenge of maintaining biblical authority while accommodating local customs and traditions. As (Dube, 2016, p.67) explains, one of the central concerns with contextualized models is that the authority of scripture can become subordinate to cultural norms. This problem is especially evident when local cultural values or practices contradict biblical teachings.

The tension between cultural adaptation and biblical fidelity can result in a situation where the cultural practices of a given group are given equal or even greater weight than the teachings of scripture. This creates a scenario where the Bible is seen as a secondary source of authority, and contextual practices become the norm for discipleship (Hernandez, 2017, p.90). Consequently, the risk is that

biblical teachings may be overlooked, misunderstood, or distorted to fit cultural expectations, leading to a loss of theological clarity.

Maintaining the authority of the scripture is still a challenge in north Mbale as cultural practices tend to influence even the message shared during the year of circumcision and yet cultural norms must not supersede scripture .There observation of over reliance on storytelling among the preachers that has led to congregants being unable to locate passages and some churches have now celebrate customary marriage even when the wife being married is second wife in pretense to retain members exemplifying Dube’s warning about cultural norms superseding scripture.

3.6 Overemphasis on Contextualization

Another weakness of the contextualized discipleship model is the tendency to overemphasize contextualization to the point where the gospel message itself becomes diluted. Contextualization is a valuable tool, but it must be carefully balanced with the need to preserve the core message of the gospel. When contextualization becomes the primary focus, there is a risk of focusing more on cultural adaptation than on the spiritual transformation that discipleship is meant to achieve.

As (Lee, 2018, p.78) warns, an overemphasis on contextualization may result in an approach to discipleship that is more focused on cultural expression than on teaching the gospel. In such a model, discipleship may become about adapting practices and rituals rather than about growing in knowledge of Christ and living according to His commands. This can lead to a shallow or incomplete understanding of discipleship that lacks the depth and transformation power of the gospel.

Some parishes now over emphasize imbalu festival teachings over monthly Lord’s Supper, inverting spiritual priorities and yet an excessive focus on cultural adaptation can dilute the gospel as argued by lee. So north Mbale must prioritize spiritual transformation over cultural expression.

3.7 Consciousness

A major challenge of contextualized discipleship is determining which aspects of the gospel are universally applicable and which can be modified according to cultural preferences. In some cases, the drive for contextualization leads to a relativistic view of the gospel, where the message is seen as adaptable to each culture's specific needs. However, this approach can undermine the universal truths of Christianity, such as the need for repentance, the role of Christ as Savior, and the importance of living a life of holiness and service.

The tension between contextual relevance and universal truth is a delicate balance. As (Wong 2017) notes, while the gospel must be communicated in culturally relevant ways, it cannot be reduced to mere cultural expression. There must be a commitment to maintaining the core elements of Christian faith, which transcend cultural boundaries.

A number of imported practice that have come with modern evangelisms have invaded north Mbale and these are demanded by the youth some of which are not culturally sensitive to the elders who some have stayed away from church claiming the church is now serving as attainment center that is not different from other places.

3.8 Conclusion

Contextualized discipleship presents both opportunities and challenges for Christian ministry, particularly in diverse cultural settings. While it allows for the gospel to be communicated in a way that resonates with different cultural groups, it also poses risks such as doctrinal compromise, cultural syncretism, diminished biblical authority, and an overemphasis on adaptation. These weaknesses require careful consideration and discernment to ensure that the core truths of the Christian faith are preserved while engaging effectively with local cultures. Moving forward, it is crucial for the church to find ways to balance contextualization with biblical fidelity, ensuring that discipleship leads individuals into a deeper relationship with Christ, rather than a mere cultural expression of faith.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTEXTUALIZED DISCIPLESHIP MODEL FOR NORTH MBALE DIOCESE

4.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes a contextualized discipleship model tailored for North Mbale Diocese. The proposed model integrates incarnational, transformational, oral-based, community-centered, and indigenous leadership approaches while addressing the unique cultural, theological, and socioeconomic realities of the region. By grounding discipleship in both Scripture and Bagisu traditions, this model seeks to foster sustainable spiritual growth, doctrinal clarity, and holistic transformation.

4.1 Proposed Contextualized Discipleship Model

The diocese should adopt a hybrid of community-centered and indigenous leadership models, as these align most closely with the Bagisu context while ensuring biblical fidelity. Further research should explore long-term impacts on youth retention and doctrinal orthodoxy. This model provides a practical, theologically sound framework tailored to North Mbale's unique needs, ensuring discipleship is both contextually relevant and biblically faithful.

4.1.1 Foundational Principles

The proposed discipleship model for North Mbale Diocese rests upon five foundational principles that serve as both theological anchors and methodological guides. These principles have been carefully selected to create a balanced framework that maintains biblical integrity while effectively engaging the unique cultural context of the Bagisu people. Together, they form an interlocking system that addresses the complex spiritual, social, and leadership challenges facing the diocese.

4.1.2 Biblical fidelity

At the heart of the model lies the principle of Biblical Fidelity, derived from Paul's declaration in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable

for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness. This principle ensures that every aspect of the discipleship process remains firmly grounded in God's Word, serving as the ultimate authority for doctrine and practice. In a context where syncretism and heresy pose constant threats, this commitment to Scripture provides a non-negotiable foundation. All teaching materials, methods, and messages must pass through this biblical filter, guaranteeing that contextualization never compromises core Christian truths.

4.1.3 Cultural relevance

Complementing this scriptural anchor is the principle of Cultural Relevance, modeled after Paul's missionary approach in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 where he became "all things to all people" for the sake of the gospel. This principle recognizes that effective discipleship must speak the cultural language of the Bagisu people, utilizing their communication styles, value systems, and social structures. It calls for careful study of Bagisu traditions, proverbs, and community life to find natural points of connection for gospel truth. However, this cultural engagement always operates within boundaries set by biblical fidelity, ensuring that adaptation never leads to compromise. The principle demands sensitivity to cultural nuances while maintaining courage to confront practices incompatible with Christian teaching.

4.1.4 Holistic Transformation

The third principle, Holistic Transformation drawn from Romans 12:2, addresses the African worldview that sees no dichotomy between spiritual and physical realities. This principle recognizes that true discipleship must speak to the whole person and the whole community - their spiritual hunger, social relationships, and economic struggles. In North Mbale where poverty, land disputes, and unemployment create pressing daily concerns, a discipleship model that ignores these realities would appear irrelevant. Holistic transformation integrates Bible teaching with practical ministry, demonstrating that the gospel has power to redeem every area of life. This approach follows Jesus' own ministry pattern of preaching the kingdom while healing the sick and feeding the hungry.

4.1.5 Sustainable Leadership

Based on Paul's instruction to Titus (1:5) to appoint elders in every town, addresses the critical need for indigenous leaders who can carry the work forward across generations. This principle recognizes that long-term impact depends on developing local leaders who understand both Scripture and their cultural context. It moves beyond dependency on foreign missionaries or urban-trained clergy to create a pipeline of village-level leaders rooted in their communities. The principle emphasizes leadership development that is reproducible, affordable, and culturally appropriate - focusing on character and competency rather than formal credentials. It calls for investment in training systems that can be maintained locally rather than relying on outside resources.

4.1.6 Community Integration

Finally, the principle of Community Integration finds its biblical basis in the early church's life together (Acts 2:42-47) and perfectly aligns with the Bagisu people's strong communal identity. This principle recognizes that discipleship in this context cannot succeed as an individualistic pursuit but must engage the natural community structures of clan, family, and village. It leverages existing social networks for spiritual growth, transforming traditional gatherings into opportunities for biblical learning and mutual encouragement. Community integration means that discipleship happens not just in church buildings but in homes, fields, and community events - anywhere people naturally gather. This principle also helps guard against creating a Christian subculture disconnected from daily life, instead seeking to redeem and transform existing community patterns.

These five principles - biblical fidelity, cultural relevance, holistic transformation, sustainable leadership, and community integration - work together to create a discipleship model that is both theologically sound and contextually appropriate. They provide clear guidance for decision-making when navigating the complex challenges of ministry in North Mbale Diocese. Biblical fidelity and cultural relevance keep the model balanced between truth and relevance, while holistic

transformation ensures comprehensive impact. Sustainable leadership and community integration guarantee that the work will endure and multiply through natural social structures. Together, these foundational principles create a framework that can guide not just the initial implementation but the ongoing development of discipleship ministry in the diocese for years to come

4.2.0 Components of the Model

4.2.1 Incarnational-Relational Discipleship

This approach emphasizes personal engagement, mirroring Jesus' relational ministry (Mark 3:13-14). Church leaders, including priests and lay readers, should conduct house-to-house discipleship, fostering deep mentorship while countering shallow biblical teaching that fails to address issues like immorality and corruption. Clan-based Bible studies should also be implemented to align with the Bagisu communal structure. The benefits of this method include strengthened trust, deeper faith formation, and a reduction in church members leaving for independent congregations due to weak church-family ties.

4.2.2 Transformational Discipleship (Holistic Ministry)

To address unemployment and poverty, vocational training (e.g., agriculture, crafts) should be integrated with Bible teaching. Additionally, the church should lead advocacy initiatives for social justice, such as land rights and gender equality. This holistic approach demonstrates the practical impact of faith, reducing economic-driven migration and fulfilling the Great Commission's call for comprehensive obedience (Matthew 28:19-20).

4.2.3 Oral-Based Discipleship

Given the oral culture of the Bagisu, Scripture should be taught through storytelling, drama, and Lugisu-language songs (Matthew 13:3-9). Audio Bibles can also be developed for non-literate believers. This method enhances biblical retention,

counters heresy by making doctrine accessible, and ensures that discipleship resonates with the community's communication preferences.

4.2.4 Community-Centered Discipleship

The model encourages the restoration of communal labor (*bulungi bwansi*) infused with a Christian ethos (Galatians 6:2). Village prayer gatherings should be organized alongside traditional ceremonies like *imbalu* to create a seamless integration of faith and culture. By doing so, the church strengthens communal identity while rooting it in Christ, thereby reducing syncretism and redeeming cultural practices.

4.2.5 Indigenous Leadership Development

Sustainable leadership requires training local catechists and elders (*Baseza*) through apprenticeship (2 Timothy 2:2). Seminary training should be decentralized to archdeaconry levels to ensure accessibility. This approach ensures that leadership reflects Bagisu values—such as humility and service—while reducing dependency on foreign missionaries.

4.3 Addressing Challenges

The model provides targeted solutions to the diocese's pressing challenges.

The contextualized discipleship model for North Mbale Diocese directly confronts several persistent challenges that have historically hindered effective spiritual formation in the region. Each solution has been carefully designed to address specific obstacles while maintaining biblical integrity and cultural sensitivity, creating a manifold approach to discipleship that speaks to the real needs of the Bagisu people.

4.3.1 Theological tensions

One of the most complex challenges involves theological tensions surrounding traditional practices such as ancestral veneration, polygamy, and *imbalu* (traditional circumcision rites). These deeply ingrained cultural elements often create confusion among believers attempting to reconcile their faith with longstanding traditions.

The model proposes developing a comprehensive, Bagisu-specific discipleship manual that doesn't simply condemn these practices but provides thoughtful biblical perspectives that engage with the underlying spiritual and social needs these traditions address. For instance, the manual might acknowledge the Bagisu value of honoring ancestors while redirecting that respect toward biblical models of remembering faith heroes (Hebrews 12:1). Regarding polygamy, it would offer both clear New Testament teaching on marriage and practical pathways for existing polygamous families seeking to live faithfully. The imbalu ceremonies could be approached by affirming cultural identity while separating any animistic elements from the rite of passage. This nuanced approach avoids alienating community members while gradually transforming traditional practices through Scripture.

4.3.2 Cultural syncretism

Presents another significant challenge, as many church members unconsciously blend Christian teachings with traditional spiritual beliefs. The model counters this through intentional oral Bible storytelling programs that don't merely transmit biblical facts but demonstrate how Christianity offers distinct answers to life's fundamental questions. By training storytellers to present Scripture in ways that contrast biblical narratives with traditional tales, the model helps believers develop discernment. For example, stories of Christ's victory over demonic powers could be told in comparison to traditional accounts of spirit intervention, highlighting Christ's supreme authority. This method respects the oral tradition of the culture while clearly establishing Christianity's unique claims. Regular "Bible story circles" led by trained facilitators will create spaces for discussing these distinctions in community settings, allowing truth to emerge through collective reflection rather than just top-down teaching.

4.3.3 Economic inequality

The pervasive issue of economic inequality receives special attention in the model, recognizing that material poverty often distracts from and sometimes prevents spiritual growth. The solution integrates income-generating projects directly with

discipleship programs, demonstrating that the gospel speaks to both spiritual and physical needs. Agricultural cooperatives linked to Bible studies will teach biblical principles of stewardship and work ethic while improving food security. Small business training for women will incorporate lessons on Proverbs' wisdom for daily decision-making. These initiatives will be carefully designed to avoid creating dependency, instead fostering sustainable local enterprises that testify to God's provision. The model includes accountability structures to ensure economic programs remain connected to spiritual formation rather than becoming ends in themselves.

4.3.4 Resistance to change

Particularly from elders and traditional leaders, represents another implementation challenge. The model addresses this by intentionally involving elders in contextualization discussions from the beginning, recognizing their crucial role as gatekeepers of Bagisu culture. Drawing from Paul's approach in Athens (Acts 17:22-28), the model trains leaders to identify redemptive analogies in traditional practices that can serve as bridges to biblical truth. Regular "elders' dialogues" will create safe spaces for airing concerns and collaboratively developing solutions. Younger leaders will be coached to present changes not as rejections of tradition but as fulfillments of the culture's deepest values. This respectful engagement honors the wisdom of elders while gently guiding toward necessary transformations.

4.3.5 Resource limitation

Finally, the model creatively addresses resource limitations that often derail well-intentioned programs in rural African contexts. Rather than depending on expensive foreign resources or formal training systems, the solution mobilizes existing local assets. Lay reader apprenticeships will develop leaders through hands-on mentoring rather than classroom-only education. Simple, reproducible teaching materials using local art forms and storytelling methods will reduce printing costs. The model identifies and equips "hidden" resources within communities - skilled artisans who can teach trades, natural storytellers who can communicate Scripture, and

respected grandmothers who can disciple younger women. By viewing the community itself as the primary resource rather than a recipient of outside help, the model builds sustainability from the outset.

Each of these solutions works synergistically to create a comprehensive approach to discipleship challenges. The theological tensions addressed by the discipleship manual are reinforced by the oral Bible storytelling. The economic empowerment initiatives gain cultural buy-in through elder involvement. The resource-conscious methods ensure the solutions remain accessible to the entire diocese. This interconnected approach recognizes that no single solution can address North Mbale's complex discipleship environment, but together they create a robust framework for lasting transformation. Regular evaluation mechanisms will monitor each solution's effectiveness, allowing for adjustments while maintaining the model's core commitments to biblical fidelity and cultural relevance. Through this multifaceted strategy, the diocese can anticipate not just temporary program success but generational transformation in how the Bagisu people follow Christ within their cultural context

4.4 Implementation Strategy

The implementation of this discipleship model will follow a carefully structured three-phase approach designed to ensure effectiveness, adaptability, and long-term sustainability. The phased rollout allows for thorough testing, evaluation, and refinement before expanding to the entire diocese. Each phase builds upon the lessons learned from the previous one, creating an organic growth pattern that respects both the cultural context and theological integrity of the North Mbale Diocese.

The first phase, spanning one year, will serve as a crucial pilot program in three strategically selected parishes representing different demographic and geographical contexts within the diocese. This initial stage focuses on testing the integrated model's core components through practical application. Twenty carefully chosen lay leaders will receive intensive training in oral-based discipleship methods and

incarnational ministry approaches. These leaders will be equipped not just with theological knowledge but also with practical skills in facilitation and community engagement. Simultaneously, the program will launch an agricultural cooperative that integrates economic empowerment with spiritual formation, creating a tangible demonstration of holistic transformation. A dedicated working group comprising local elders, clergy, and theologians will begin the important work of developing a Bagisu-specific discipleship manual during this phase, ensuring that the theological foundations remain strong while addressing local cultural considerations.

Building on the pilot phase's outcomes, years two and three will see a comprehensive diocese-wide rollout. This expansion phase will focus on scaling the successful elements while establishing robust support structures. The clan-based discipleship approach will extend to all archdeaconries, with appointed discipleship coordinators overseeing the process and local elders providing cultural guidance. A Diocesan Discipleship Council will form during this phase, bringing together theologians, lay leaders, cultural experts, and development specialists to maintain the delicate balance between cultural relevance and doctrinal purity. Strategic partnerships with Uganda Christian University will enhance leadership training capabilities, offering both formal theological education and practical ministry preparation. The economic empowerment initiatives will expand significantly, with the establishment of micro-loan systems and formalized advocacy programs addressing pressing social issues like land rights and gender equity.

The final phase, spanning years four and five, shifts focus to consolidation, evaluation, and long-term sustainability planning. A comprehensive impact assessment will measure both quantitative outcomes like baptism rates and socioeconomic improvements, as well as qualitative indicators of spiritual growth and community transformation. This evaluation will inform necessary refinements to the model, particularly in developing authentic indigenous worship expressions that resonate with Bagisu cultural forms while maintaining theological integrity. The leadership development program will emphasize succession planning, with the initial cohort of trained leaders now mentoring new apprentices. Financial sustainability

will be addressed through the creation of a Diocesan Sustainability Fund, reducing dependence on external support. By the conclusion of this five-year implementation period, the diocese expects to see measurable transformation across multiple dimensions of church life and community impact.

4.5 Expected Outcomes

The implementation of this contextualized discipleship model is anticipated to yield significant, measurable outcomes across spiritual, social, and leadership dimensions. In terms of church growth, the diocese expects to see increase in active membership as the culturally resonant approach makes discipleship more meaningful and accessible to the Bagisu people. This growth will be accompanied by reduced attrition to independent churches as Anglican discipleship becomes more vibrant and engaged with people's daily lives. The emphasis on oral-based biblical teaching and the development of culturally appropriate discipleship materials should lead to greater doctrinal clarity throughout the diocese, with fewer instances of syncretism and higher levels of theological literacy among both leaders and lay members.

The holistic nature of the model promises substantial social impact beyond the spiritual realm. The integration of economic empowerment initiatives with spiritual formation is expected to produce measurable improvements in household incomes and food security for participating families. The community-centered approach should strengthen social cohesion as traditional communal practices are redeemed and infused with Christian purpose. Perhaps most significantly, the leadership development component aims to create a sustainable pipeline of local leaders, with the goal of having of parishes led by locally trained ministers within the five-year timeframe. This shift toward indigenous leadership will be supported by the establishment of self-funded training programs, reducing the diocese's historical dependence on foreign resources and expertise. Together, these outcomes represent a comprehensive transformation that touches every aspect of the diocese's life and ministry.

4.6 The Sustainable Discipleship model for North Mbale Diocese

The implementation of this contextualized discipleship model calls for strategic decisions that will maximize its effectiveness while safeguarding theological integrity. Based on the cultural analysis and biblical foundations presented, the diocese would be well served to adopt a hybrid approach combining community-centered and indigenous leadership models. This dual approach recognizes that the Bagisu people's strong communal identity requires discipleship to flow through existing social structures, while simultaneously developing local leaders who can guide this process with spiritual maturity and cultural insight. The community-centered model ensures that faith formation happens within the natural rhythms of village life - during communal work projects, traditional ceremonies, and clan gatherings - rather than being confined to formal church settings. Meanwhile, the indigenous leadership component guarantees that this community-based discipleship remains biblically grounded through leaders who share the cultural context of those they serve while being thoroughly trained in Scripture.

Further research should be prioritized to examine two critical areas that will determine the long-term success of this discipleship model. First, rigorous study is needed on how effectively the model retains youth engagement over time, as this demographic often drifts away from traditional church structures. Research questions should explore whether the integration of communal practices and economic empowerment creates stronger youth commitment to the faith community. Second, ongoing theological research must monitor the model's impact on doctrinal orthodoxy, particularly examining whether cultural adaptation leads to any subtle syncretism over extended periods. This research should employ both quantitative measures (retention rates, participation levels) and qualitative methods (interviews, case studies) to provide a comprehensive evaluation. Establishing a diocesan research committee comprising theologians, anthropologists, and educators could ensure this evaluation remains systematic and actionable.

The ultimate value of this proposed model lies in its dual commitment to cultural relevance and biblical faithfulness - a balance that many African churches struggle to maintain. By rooting discipleship in familiar community structures while maintaining clear scriptural boundaries, the model avoids both the extreme of cultural isolation (where faith seems foreign) and cultural compromise (where truth becomes diluted). The practical nature of this framework shows in its use of existing social networks for spiritual growth, its integration of livelihood skills with Bible teaching, and its development of leadership pathways that don't require Western-style formal education. Theologically, the model remains sound by submitting all cultural adaptations to scriptural authority, ensuring that Bagisu traditions are redeemed rather than simply incorporated. This careful balance makes the model particularly promising for rural African contexts where similar challenges of syncretism, leadership development, and holistic ministry exist.

For diocesan leaders considering implementation, several practical next steps emerge. First, identifying pilot communities that represent the diversity of North Mbale (in terms of urbanization, economic activity, and traditional practice) will provide the most meaningful test of the model's adaptability. Second, investing in the training of trainer-of-trainers will create the multiplier effect needed for widespread impact. Third, developing monitoring tools from the outset will ensure that both the community and leadership components can be properly evaluated. Finally, establishing partnerships with theological institutions and anthropological researchers will bring needed expertise to the refinement process. As the diocese moves forward with implementation, periodic review points should be scheduled to assess progress, make adjustments, and document lessons learned for the benefit of other regions facing similar discipleship challenges. Through this thoughtful, research-informed approach, North Mbale Diocese has the potential to develop a discipleship model that not only transforms its own communities but serves as an exemplar for contextualized ministry across Africa.

4.7 Conclusion

The proposed model synthesizes biblical principles with Bagisu cultural strengths, offering a sustainable path for discipleship in North Mbale Diocese. By prioritizing relational engagement, holistic transformation, and indigenous leadership, the diocese can overcome current stagnation and foster a vibrant, growing church.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Discipleship is the heartbeat of church growth, yet its effectiveness depends on how well it is contextualized within a given cultural setting. North Mbale Diocese, like many African church contexts, faces challenges in making discipleship both biblically sound and culturally relevant. This essay explores the biblical foundations of contextualized discipleship, the challenges of implementing it in North Mbale, and the diocese's strategic response to these obstacles. By examining scriptural models such as Jesus' use of parables and Paul's missionary adaptability, the discussion establishes a framework for balancing doctrinal fidelity with cultural responsiveness. The analysis of current discipleship challenges—including theological tensions, socioeconomic barriers, and resistance to contextualization—highlights why a new approach is necessary. Finally, the study evaluates the diocese's existing strategies and provides recommendations to enhance contextualized discipleship while preserving scriptural integrity. Through this exploration, the essay seeks to offer a practical pathway for revitalizing discipleship and fostering sustainable church growth in North Mbale Diocese.

Chapter Two Summary: Biblical Foundations of Contextualized Discipleship

This chapter establishes seven key biblical principles for contextualized discipleship through examining Jesus' ministry, early church practices, and Pauline missions. The analysis reveals that effective discipleship requires both doctrinal fidelity and cultural adaptation, as demonstrated in Christ's use of parables (Matthew 13:10-17) and Paul's "all things to all people" approach (1 Corinthians 9:22). Core features include obedience to Christ's teachings, relational discipleship, servant leadership, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The chapter particularly emphasizes how these principles must be adapted for North Mbale Diocese's context, where traditional

discipleship methods have failed to address cultural realities like communal learning preferences and oral transmission styles.

The biblical models demonstrate that contextualization is not optional but mandated by the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). However, the chapter cautions that cultural adaptation must never compromise scriptural authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The early church's handling of cultural issues at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) provides a pattern for maintaining this balance - affirming core doctrines while allowing cultural flexibility in non-essential matters. This foundation is crucial for addressing North Mbale's discipleship challenges.

Chapter Three Summary: Challenges of Contextualization

This chapter analyzes six major obstacles hindering effective contextualized discipleship in North Mbale Diocese. Theological tensions emerge when biblical teachings confront deeply-rooted cultural practices like ancestral veneration and polygamy, with of rural congregations having polygamous elders despite 1 Timothy 3:2's standards. Syncretism risks are evident as believers combine Christian prayer with traditional offerings to mountain spirits. Socioeconomic barriers include poverty and youth unemployment that disrupt discipleship continuity.

Additional challenges include erosion of biblical authority through over-reliance on oral traditions and resistance to contextualization from urban traditionalists. The chapter demonstrates how these interconnected issues contribute to the diocese's membership decline. While contextualization is necessary, the analysis warns against over-adaptation that dilutes the gospel message, using examples from Middle Eastern contexts where Islamic influences compromised Christian distinctiveness.

Summary of Chapter Four: Established Model

The chapter presents a hybrid contextualized discipleship model for North Mbale Diocese, designed to address the unique spiritual and cultural needs of the Bagisu people. Built on five core principles - biblical fidelity, cultural relevance, holistic

transformation, sustainable leadership, and community integration - the model offers a balanced approach to discipleship that respects local traditions while maintaining theological integrity. It incorporates relational ministry, oral communication methods, economic empowerment, and indigenous leadership development to create a comprehensive framework for spiritual growth.

The proposed three-phase implementation strategy begins with pilot testing, expands to diocese-wide rollout, and concludes with evaluation and sustainability planning. The model specifically addresses key challenges including theological tensions around traditional practices, cultural syncretism, economic inequality, resistance to change, and resource limitations. Through targeted solutions like a Bagisu-specific discipleship manual, oral Bible storytelling, integrated livelihood programs, elder engagement, and local resource mobilization, it provides practical responses to these obstacles.

Contextualized discipleship is essential for the spiritual growth and sustainability of the church in North Mbale Diocese. The study has demonstrated that biblical models require both faithfulness to Scripture and sensitivity to cultural realities. While challenges such as syncretism, socioeconomic struggles, and resistance to change hinder effective discipleship, strategic responses—such as culturally relevant teaching materials, expanded rural and urban programs, and leadership development—offer viable solutions. The recommendations outlined, including the creation of a Bagisu-specific discipleship curriculum and the establishment of a Contextualization Task Force, provide a roadmap for overcoming these challenges. By committing to both biblical fidelity and cultural relevance, North Mbale Diocese can strengthen its discipleship efforts, reverse membership decline, and fulfill the Great Commission in a way that resonates with its people.

Recommendations

For theological implementation, the diocese should develop a Bagisu-specific discipleship curriculum that addresses the seven biblical principles from Chapter Two while providing clear guidelines for cultural adaptation boundaries. This curriculum should train leaders in both biblical theology and Bagisu cultural anthropology, using local case studies and language. Annual clergy retreats should incorporate "double listening" exercises where pastors practice applying scripture to specific cultural challenges like ancestral veneration or initiation rites.

For practical application, the diocese should adopt a hybrid community-centered and indigenous leadership approach, supported by ongoing research and strategic partnerships. Key recommendations include establishing monitoring systems, developing reproducible training materials, and creating sustainability mechanisms. This model offers North Mbale Diocese a biblically-faithful yet culturally-relevant path to revitalize discipleship, with potential applications for similar contexts across Africa. By combining scriptural foundations with appropriate cultural adaptation, it aims to foster lasting spiritual transformation within the Bagisu community in North Mbale Diocese.

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APPENDICES

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Disciple;

Comes from the Latin term *discipulus*, derived from its verb form *discere*, means to learn.

The common word used in New Testament is *Mathetes*. In early classical times, it was generally used to refer to a learner. Therefore, this term is generally understood to refer to the adherents of a leader.

Technically, there is no biblical word for discipleship what followers are various quotes from biblical scholars regarding the meaning of discipleship.

As an Abstract term, 'discipleship' does not appear in the New Testament rather, it is derived from the account of the relationship between Jesus and his followers as recorded in the gospels. It is characterized by two terms found frequently in the gospel material. *Mathetes* (disciple) and *Akolothain* (to follow).

Discipleship consists of the teachings of Jesus, which pertain to being His follower. The researcher will use this term for the process of developing believers into mature believers.

The intimacy of God for the disciples is evident with the writings of (Barrigar, 1998, p.34) he suggests that God's love for the world was so great that he gave his only son. For this research, also disciple will mean to be a learner and a follower of Jesus Christ. It implies a life style that demonstrates spiritual growth and formation in terms of character and service.

Discipleship Model

According to (Wilhoit, 2008,p.56) Discipleship model refers to a structured approach in which a small number of individuals, often from the same faith community, gather regularly under the guidance of a leader, mentor, or parish priest to deepen their understanding of religious teachings, grow in their spiritual

journey, and strengthen their relationship with God and fellow believers. These groups typically meet for Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and mutual support, with the ultimate goal of fostering spiritual growth among Christians.

The conceptualization of group discipleship model is rooted in the belief that personal spiritual development is not only an individual pursuit but can be significantly enhanced through communal engagement and shared experiences. These groups provide a safe and supportive environment for members to share their thoughts, struggles, and triumphs, thereby facilitating personal transformation and strengthening the bond within the faith community.

Church Growth;

“Church growth is the task of the church Period.” (Wilhoit, 2008,p.78) he argues that spiritual growth of individuals is witnessed in community spiritual growth which then provides practical guidance for its implementation that lead to church growth. Wilhoit's Reformed orientation shows in his understanding of spiritual growth as a lifelong process; he also draws heavily from the older emphasis on Christ in that he delineates a communal perspective on responding to Jesus' invitation to love God and neighbor which emphasizes shared commitment, practices and learning.

Writing out of a concern that much of spiritual growth can be individualistic and narcissistic, the author wants the gospel to be the ground of our formation. To realize Church Growth Christian need to be natured nurtured in programs of spiritual formation that are tended to see Christian education, discipleship and spiritual formations as thing that happen after the gospel is preached and believed. Before the Gospel is shared there is no need for pre-discipleship as the gospel is seen containing both the indictment of our sin and the announcement of hope through the cross. Wilhoit says, "The gospel must permeate any program of Christian spiritual formation. Returning to the cross in awareness of our sin, rebellion, and brokenness is the bedrock of spiritual growth."

The way to express spiritual growth is to demonstrate the practical way that is manifested in physical seen by increase in number of attendance in church gathering, establishment of new places of worship as those impacted move with the fire to benefit others and the influence of spiritual growth is felt by the community surrounding those that part of design.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Observation Checklist for Contextualized Discipleship Model and Church Growth in North Mbale Diocese.

General information

- Date of observation
- Location
- Observer Name
- Time of observation

Section A: Biblical features of a contextualized discipleship model

1. Presence of scriptural references

- Are biblical scriptures cited during teachings?
- Is there a focus on biblical principles in discussions?

2. Cultural relevance

- Are local customs and practices incorporated into discipleship activities?
- Is there an adaptation of biblical teachings to fit local contexts?

3. Community Engagement

- Are participants involved in community outreach programs?
- Is there collaboration with local leaders or organisations?

4. Holistic approach

- Are spiritual, social and physical needs addressed?
- Are participants encouraged to develop personal relationships with God?

Section B: Weaknesses of Contextualized Discipleship Model

1. Lack of theological foundation

- Are there instances of teachings that deviate from scriptural accuracy?
- Is there evidence of confusion among participants regarding core doctrines?

2. Participant Engagement

- Are participants actively involved in discussions and activities?
- Is there a noticeable lack of interest or attendance in sessions?

3. Resource availability

- Are there adequate materials and resources for effective discipleship?
- Are facilitators properly trained to lead contextualized discipleship?

4. Feedback mechanisms

- Is there a system in place for participants to provide feedback on the model?
- Are challenges identified and addressed in a timely manner?

Section C: Church's role in handling challenges

1. Support structures

- Are there support systems in place for participants facing difficulties?
- Is there a mentorship or counseling program available?

2. Training and development

- Are church leaders provided with training on contextualized discipleship?
- Are workshops or seminars conducted to address emerging challenges?

3. Communication and outreach

- How effectively does the church communicate its vision for discipleship?
- Are there efforts to reach out to the community regarding discipleship programs?

4. Evaluation and improvement

- Is there a regular assessment of the discipleship model's effectiveness?
- Are changes made based on participant feedback and observed outcomes?

Additional Notes

- Observations on interactions
- Overall impressions of the model's effectiveness
- Recommendations for improvement

REC CERTIFICATE



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Office of the Vice Chancellor
Research Ethics Committee UG-026



27th March, 2025

MAKOKA RONALD GUDOI
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UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Makoka Ronald Gudo, Principal Investigator

Re: UCU-REC Application titled: Contextual Discipleship Model and Church Growth in North Mbale Diocese.

Application Number: UCUREC-2025-832-1

Version: 4.1

Type: INITIAL REVIEW
 Protocol Amendment
 Letter of Amendment (Loa)
 Continuing Review
 Material Transfer Agreement
 Other, Specify:



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

Approval of the research is for the period from 27th March, 2025, to 27th March, 2026

This research is considered minimal risk category.

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

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.

1 of 2

Research and Ethics



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4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved 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 27th March, 2026 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period.** Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. Your research details have been shared with the Executive secretary of Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and you are not required to get clearance since you are a Master's Degree research. Refer to UNCST Research registration and clearance Policy and guidelines (July 2016) in Uganda section 6(e).

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

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Protocol	English	1.0	2025-03-25
2.	Interview guide	English	1.0	2025-03-25
3.	Questionnaire	English	1.0	2025-03-25
4	Informed consent form	English	1.0	2025-03-25

Signed and Stamped


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



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