

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP IN ENHANCING RETENTION OF NEW
BELIEVERS: A CASE OF THE DIOCESE OF SOROTI**

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M22M05/009

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

August, 2025



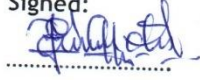
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I, EWADU THOMAS, hereby declare that this is my original work, it is not plagiarized and has whatsoever not been submitted to any other Institution of Higher Education for an award.

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DEDICATION:

I dedicate this Research to my wife Jesca M. Ewadu and my children Ruth Asingo, Jesse Ewadu, Hope Atim, Anne Apolot and Joan Isukau.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

I acknowledge the working of God's power by way of His protection, provision and in the way He granted me good health during the time of my research.

I am grateful to register my gratitude with the Diocese of Soroti for the support accorded to me during my research and study at Uganda Christian University, especially my Diocesan Bishop the Rt. Rev. Captain Kosea Odongo, the Diocesan Secretary Rev. Canon Samuel Ediau, the Archdeacon of Soroti Archdeaconry Rev. Canon Pascal Odele together with his pastoral team, the Archdeacon of Serere Archdeaconry, Rev Canon David Epongu Opiio with his pastoral team and all other people who prayed and supported me morally.

I recognize the role played by the leadership of Uganda Christian University especially Professor Aaron Mushengyesi in creating an enabling study environment.

I appreciate the Dean of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology Rev. Canon Professor Christopher Byaruhanga and his team for the support rendered that enabled me complete this research.

I am equally indebted to my supervisor, Rev Canon Dr. Moses Stephen Isabirye for accepting to supervise my research.

I sincerely register my gratitude with my wife Jesca M. Ewadu and our children Ruth, Jesse, Hope, Anne and Joan for their spiritual, moral as well as financial support during the entire period of this research.

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ABSTRACT:

This research was undertaken to assess the Significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai Parish, Serere Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Soroti. The purpose of the research was to undertake a study on the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in church so that the missions and evangelism departments can plan better for post-evangelism activities in the Diocese of Soroti.

The purpose was achieved through objectives that included; To ascertain whether discipleship is conducted for new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti, To identify the approaches used in discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti, To establish the significance of discipleship in the retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti. The objectives were assessed using the following questions; Does your church conduct discipleship sessions for its new Christian believers? What are the approaches used in discipleship of new believers in your church? What is the significance of discipleship in the retention of new Christian believers in your church?

The researcher reviewed literature related to the topic of significance of discipleship on retention of new believers in Bishop Dunstan Bukenya Library and also consulted online articles and journals as well as other electronic resources. The sources cited were properly acknowledged.

This research, conducted in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti, church of the province of Uganda was qualitative in nature and the researcher used interview guides and questionnaires to collect data from the field. The findings were analyzed and presented in form of pie-charts for easy interpretation.

Theological reflection was done based on the extracts from the Bible, it was Christocentric in nature.

The researcher ensured quality control by administering Validity and Reliability tests of the data collection instruments to ensure that the data collected gave a true and representative position of discipleship in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti. Discipleship was taken as an independent variable and retention of new believers as a dependent variable in the study

Following the deductions made, the researcher was able to arrive at the conclusion and make recommendations.

It was revealed that, discipleship is closely linked to missions and evangelism and different actors need to play a role. The Lay Readers, School chaplains, as well as the Parish priests in their different capacities. Discipleship activities need to be coordinated centrally to promote uniformity and consistency.

The church has to be intentional in the manner in which discipleship of new believers is conducted. Not only should it be left to Lay Readers, Parish priests have a crucial part to play in it.

The aspect of time allocation is paramount in discipleship of new believers and that enough time needs to be allocated for each category.

As pertains the significance of discipleship in retention of new believers, the study revealed that, Discipleship is highly significant in the retention of new believers in church. Hence, the church needs to embrace the practice of Discipleship of new believers so as to retain them in church after they have confessed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Having undertaken the study on the significance of discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers, case of the Diocese of Soroti, the researcher made the following recommendations;

The church needs to make it mandatory for discipleship sessions to be arranged for new believers and sufficient time be allocated for it as well as different facilitators for effective ministry.

Church activities need to be coordinated at different administrative levels to promote cohesion, it can be at sub-parish, parish, Archdeaconry or at Diocesan level.

The different departmental heads need to be adequately equipped through training for effective ministry.

In line with further research, the researcher recommended the following areas for further study;

A study on the different Discipleship models that can enhance retention of new believers in church.

A study on the relationship between discipleship and Evangelism

A study on the role of Discipleship of Secondary School students in their preparation for future ministry

A study on the significance of stakeholder involvement in sustaining Evangelism

CHAPTER ONE:
GENERAL INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Introduction.

This study is on the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers, case of the Diocese of Soroti. The Researcher shall conduct the study Obulai parish, in Serere Archdeaconry, the Diocese of Soroti.

This chapter shall focus on the Background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, Research questions, scope of study, justification of the study, significance of the study, and the theoretical and conceptual framework.

1.2 Background to the study.

Background to the study shall establish the rationale, statement of the problem, and a brief overview of the research questions that shall be addressed in the rest of the paper.

This study therefore seeks to investigate whether Discipleship is significant in the retention of new believers, case of the Diocese of Soroti.

‘Discipleship is the condition of being a disciple, follower, or a student of some philosophy, especially a follower of Christ’.

Chipao Lawrence defines Discipleship as ‘the condition in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well. (Chipao L. 2016, P 23)

It is therefore clear that, Discipleship is characterized with being a disciple or follower or student of some philosophy, in this case, the teachings of Jesus Christ. Discipleship plays a core role in the initial spiritual lives of new believers as they start their journey in the Christian faith as well as their subsequent spiritual walk in church fellowship being a body of Christ as a whole. Its vital role can be considered as a mechanism for imparting spiritual values in the lives of the new believers, without which, Christian transformation is hindered.

Discipleship is embedded in the great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The Great Commission concerns itself not only with making disciples of all nations but also teaching them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. The disciples were not only commanded to make converts of all nations. There is teaching and admonishing of new believers so that they can grow to become spiritually mature in Christ. Without

this, the churches will be filled with members who cannot share and witness about the goodness and love of God in their lives.

Christian discipleship implies the training through which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ as well as being equipped by the infilling of the Holy Spirit to be able to overcome the pressures of the flesh.

‘We is observable that from the beginning, mature believers attached special attention to support new believers, immediately, into starting a mentorship relationship with each other among believers. This was both on a corporate as well as personal levels. This was a means through which their growth was sustained. Three thousand believers that were converted at Pentecost immediately were amalgamated into the church, and this practice continued daily with others that were being saved (Acts 2:46-47; 4:32). Also, when the lame man at the temple gate was healed, Peter and John kept him with them for a little while as they proceeded carrying on in their ministry (John 3:8; 4:14). With this same urgency, the apostles in Jerusalem quickly sent Peter and John to support the Samaritan believers on hearing the manner in which they received the gospel shared by the apostles (Acts 8:15-25). Similar support was given by Peter to of Cornelius’ household after they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:48).’ (Coleman R. E, 1987, p 59-60)

1.3 Problem Statement.

Regardless of the fact that, the Church of Uganda, case of the Diocese of Soroti remains committed to the Mission of “proclaiming the gospel of Christ through continuous witness for Christ Jesus, teaching, worshiping and serving the people of God” by engaging in the numerous gospel outreaches throughout the year under the Missions and Evangelism department, there is actually little evidence of discipleship of new believers being done. This Research therefore seeks to assess the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in the Diocese of Soroti and suggest ways in which gaps can be bridged.

1.4 Purpose of the study.

This research seeks to under take a study on the significance of discipleship in the retention of new believers in the Diocese of Soroti. The findings of the research study shall be shared with the Missions and Evangelism department. This is worthwhile since Missions and Evangelism comprise one of the core priorities of the Diocese of Soroti.

1.5 Research Objectives.

This shall provide the main and specific objectives of study. They shall include the following;

- 1). To ascertain whether discipleship is conducted for new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti
- 2). To identify the approaches used in discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti
- 3). To establish the significance of discipleship in the retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Church of Uganda, Diocese of Soroti

1.6 Research questions.

- 1). Does your church conduct discipleship sessions for its new Christian believers?
- 2). What are the approaches used in discipleship of new believers in your church?
- 3). What is the significance of discipleship in the retention of new Christian believers in your church?

1.7 Scope of study.

The scope of study shall define the boundary of the study. This shall cover geographic scope, time scope and content scope

1.7.1 Geographic scope

This study shall be conducted in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti, church of the province of Uganda. Respondents shall be drawn from the parish leadership team of Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti, church of the province of Uganda.

1.7.2 Time scope

The research will cover the span of time from August 2024 to August 2025.

1.7.3 Content scope

The content of this study shall be restricted to the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new Christian believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti, church of the province of Uganda.

1.8 Justification of the Research.

The Diocese of Soroti is continually engaged in Missions and Evangelism under which discipleship falls as a sub component. Effort to conduct a study on the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers becomes of urgent necessity.

1.9 Significance of the Study.

The findings of this study will provide requisite information to the Missions and Evangelism Departments in Obulai parish, the Missions and Evangelism Departments in Serere Archdeaconry as well as the Diocesan Missions and Evangelism Department, devising appropriate strategies of Discipling new believers. This can be used as a guide in planning for subsequent Mission and evangelism outreaches, The same information will be vital at provincial and global Mission and Evangelism activities.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.0. Introduction.

This section shall present a discussion of the relevant literature that guided the researcher. In this, the researcher shall highlight the views of earlier researchers and sight the gaps which the Research study shall set out to address.

2.1. Introduction.

“Literature review shows the researcher’s adviser whom the researcher has made a thorough investigation of the topic and has read the main works already written on it. This guarantees that there will be no going over the same ground that others have covered”, Vyhmeister, 2014. P 75

This shall encompass both Theoretical as well as Empirical Literature Review

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review.

The early church gave emphasis to Discipleship of new believers and it is through this practice that the church grew both in actual numbers as well as spiritually, This is because the disciples created an atmosphere for discipleship of new believers into the Christian faith. A similar practice was the driving force that enabled the East African revival to attain significance. The early spiritual support given to

new believers in form of Discipleship is like milk to new born babies as this provides nourishment. Just like newborn babies crave for pure spiritual milk by which they should grow up in salvation 1 Peter 2:2 “Discipleship programs enable new believers get conformed to Christ and get in to Godliness”, Longnecker, 2009. P 153-155. Conformity to Christ means believers are children of God. The way one can get to have this knowledge is through discipleship.

Jesca Louise Hughes in her research on the role of Alpha course in Discipleship of new Christians delved into the role of Alpha course in discipleship of new Christians in the Washington District of Columbia area. The geographical context of Washington District of Columbia is quite different from Uganda and the Diocese of Soroti in particular. This Research study seeks to focus on Obulai parish in Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti. Based on the geographical location of Obulai parish, it is anticipated that the findings this Research study shall provide a representative position that depicts the actual position in the Diocese of Soroti.

Similarly, Timugaya Henry in his study on the contribution of Discipleship in church founded schools in the Diocese of North Ankole. His study population was secondary school students in North Ankole. In this study, focus shall be directed to churches in Obulai parish in Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti.

According to Kwasau, Y. ‘Discipleship was not only a long-practiced means of grooming and growth, it was also the similar tool that Jesus Christ, our savior, used to mentor and lead. Discipleship guarantees effective teaching of the word and remains a way to support believers not to fall through cracks, and become complacent, without purpose. Discipleship is therefore the image of the growth for the church’. Kwasau. Y. (2023, P 77)

Kwasau equally asserted that, ‘Discipleship aids to deepen and strengthen the believer’s faith in Christ, just as the newer disciple models the example of the seasoned Christian that has already journeyed through the tribulations that the new believer are likely to face. Discipleship is necessary because it intercepts complacency. Churches that only stick to the pulpit ministry and do not support individuals to be walked side side by side with seasoned Christians become stagnant and remain pulpit focused. Discipleship provides accountability into the new Christian’s life, starting with the basics and graduating them towards more complex things. It is one step to hear the sermon from the preacher, but to have someone holding another accountable, encouraging the brethren to press on, and continue walking through challenges is another. Another vital aspect of discipleship is to do with sound Christian doctrine. Discipleship is intended to teach believers who are “infants” in the faith in accordance to Christ’s teaching. New believers get it wrong often times, especially when they are still starting, thus,

it is important to have someone more well versed in faith, mentoring the other in the correct teachings of Jesus Christ. It should also be noted that, all believers ought to be able to share the word of God as well as be ready to witness about the hope they have in salvation (1 Peter 3:15). Discipleship firstly is to do with helping brothers and sisters grow in their faith so that they can draw closer to Christ, however, another element is training and equipping leaders. Similar to the very first discipleship plan during the time of Jesus, the same principle is still applicable in our present time. Discipleship is done to pass on the same values of Christ to every believer who wishes to follow Jesus. Believers are not supposed to be remain stagnant in the faith, in search for guidance and direction; the whole body of believers has to be active and working together, and operating in sound doctrine and spiritual gifts. This therefore means that, discipleship remains a major component to the Christian faith. The bible has laid out some Discipleship models that can be used in church, starting with Jesus. The major objective of discipleship is to raise dedicated and committed believers to the faith and, they should in due time, step into the ministry and calling that God has given'. Kwasau. Y. (2023, P 77-79)

2.3 Empirical Literature Review.

As asserted by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'When Jesus saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax booth, he said to him, "Follow me." And Levi got up quickly and immediately followed Jesus (Mark 2:14). The call by Jesus was made, and without haste, the obedient act from Levi followed (the one called follows). Levi's response is not any spoken confession of his faith in Jesus. But instead, it is an obedient act. In the content of discipleship, the instruction is simple, follow me, walk behind me! That is all'. (Dietrich B. 2003, P 45-46)

So, the call to discipleship encompasses a commitment completely to the person of Jesus Christ, and breaking through of all legalisms by the grace of Jesus who calls us. It is a gracious invitation, a gracious commandment. It is surpasses enmity between law and gospel. Christ calls; the disciple follows. That is grace and commandment in one. "I walk joyfully, because I seek your commands" (Psalm 119:45)'. Dietrich B. (2003, P 59)

Dietrich further asserts that, 'Those who carry Jesus' gospel receive his promise for their work. They become his co-workers and helpers. Because they have become like Christ in every aspect. Therefore, for the people to whom they go, they are also to be "like Christ. With them, Jesus Christ himself enters the house that takes them in. They are bearers of Jesus Christ's presence. They bring to the people, the most valuable gift-Jesus Christ, and with him, God, the Father, and that means forgiveness, salvation, life, and blessedness'. Dietrich B. (2003, P 211)

Similarly, David Watson, on the significance of Discipleship argued that; 'Firstly, many Christians, mostly in a number of the mainline churches, have been deeply disturbed by the lack of doctrinal and moral discipline within the church. Secondly, there is a considerable lack of commitment to faith on the part of numerous professing Christians, and a resultant reluctance in Christian preaching to speak about the cost of following Jesus. Little reference today is made of self-denial and the cross. We may rejoice that Jesus has died on the cross for us; but little about taking up our cross daily to follow him? For so long the church has endorsed the 'club' mentality of church-membership. Thirdly, there is also a depressing lack of direction in numerous churches. Many of the debates and activities in the church gatherings are like playing bridge on the Titanic after it has hit the iceberg. Most people are profoundly aware of the uncertainty of this present age, and everywhere there has a sense that time is running out fast. Countless Christians are deeply frustrated by lack of clear leadership from the top leadership. Someone once lamented that when an institution no longer knows what it is doing, it tries to do everything. The need for business-like discipling and for coming to grip with the real and urgent issues of today seem more important than ever. Large numbers of Christians are wanting to follow leaders who have the courage to give a clear prophetic call to the church, and who will train and mobilize the church for the tasks that are obviously relevant for today. In other words, many Christians are willing and wanting to be discipled. Fourthly, with the renewed biblical emphasis on every Christian being involved in the ministry of the church, and with increased openness to the gifts of the Spirit, confusion and excess inevitably arise where there is no firm leadership and wise pastoral care. The sad fact is that, concerning this spiritual renewal, many clergy and ministers are cautious and suspicious. When the laity are often fearing to move forward, the clergy are dragging their feet. Subsequently, this new-found freedom in the Spirit frequently has taken place in home-based "renewal fellowships" that may be lacking in experienced leadership. When the gifts of the Spirit are not carefully weighed and tested, some fleshly self-display is almost inevitable. Due to the lack of encouragement and teaching by the ministers of local churches, Christians, who may genuinely have been blessed by the Holy Spirit, will look elsewhere for spiritual guidance. And Fifthly, as the practice of the church today is, there has arisen either gross neglect in the field of mission and evangelism, or an aspect of over-dependence on the full-time evangelists who have inappropriately been given the job designated to the church. None of these attitudes is biblical. Although some ministers are called to be evangelists for the benefit of the whole church, the New Testament puts emphasis clearly on the witness of every Christian. Dr James Kennedy illustrates the value of this in the following graphic way. If you are an outstandingly gifted evangelist with an international reputation, and if, under God, you could win 1,000 persons for Christ every night of every year, how long would it take you to win the whole world for Christ? Ignoring the

population explosion, over 10,000 years. But if you are a true disciple for Christ, and if you could, under the guidance of God to win one person to Christ each year; and if you could then train that person to win one other person for Christ each year, how long would it take to win the whole world for Christ? It takes 32 years! The need for some discipling or shepherding should now be apparent. 'Unless disciples are adequately built, there will not be enough competent leadership to carry on the work of the church. (David W. 2014, P 67-69).

As asserted by Karris J. Robert, 'Luke mentions that "all Jesus' followers", together with the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching how Jesus died. Tannehill contends that Luke's characterization of the male disciples in his passion narrative is essentially negative and that Luke has even added material to emphasize the apostles' failure, like the incident of the swords in Luke 22:35-38. These flawed male disciples serve as narrative and theological foils to the faithful women in Luke 24. In Luke 23:55, the women who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem are flashbacks to Luke 8:1-3. These women were not only "witnesses to Jesus' earthly life" but also "witness to Jesus' death." And Luke 24 adds that the women were not only witnesses of Jesus' empty tomb, but that they were also understanding recipients of the Easter kerygma and of an appearance of the risen Jesus, and that they were among those commissioned by the risen Lord to be his witnesses (Acts 1:21-22). The women of Luke 8:1-3, are in the center of the stage here and are named as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them. The two men in dazzling clothes announce the Easter gospel to these women: "Why do you seek for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised" (Luke 24:5). The perplexed women remember the prediction that Jesus made to them while in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and rise on the third day. When the women go on mission and try to share the good news to the Eleven and all others (Luke 24:9-12), their Easter insight into the truth of Jesus' prediction of his crucifixion and resurrection, they are met with disbelief. Their words are perceived as "an idle lie". (Karris R. J. 1994, P 14-15).

"As a result of the current discipleship crisis in the churches by the Christian leaders, a majority who attend the churches would be more accurately described as fans of Jesus rather than true biblical disciples of Jesus. In order to do away with this crisis, there is need for discipleship programs". (Anderson, 2016. P 50)

"A holy man strives to be like our Lord Jesus Christ. He will not only live the life of faith in him and draw from him daily peace and strength, but also be conformed to his image". (Ryle, 2016. P 44). Discipleship programs help bring up morally upright followers of Christ

“The primary role of a pastor is to teach the Bible well with some depth”. (Marphurs, 2009. P 1). All the doctrine of beliefs is got from the bible. Proper teaching and understanding of the bible will enable the new believers refute the attacks of the devil

“Discipleship is a form of mutual love”. (Dever, 2016. P 1-2). There is both a teacher to student relationship as well as a peer to peer relationship. What Christians need altogether is living together in love.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

3.0. Introduction.

Research Methodology shall discuss in detail the methods, tools, techniques and procedures as well as present the Research Design that will be employed in executing this Research. The researcher shall use a qualitative approach of research and will utilize both the library information as well as information obtained from the field through observation, oral interviews and questionnaires.

3.1 Research Design.

Research Design in a broad sense encompasses all aspects that will be involved in the planning and execution of the Research Project from identification of the problem, reporting and submission of the research findings.

In this case, the researcher will give the description of the topic, research objectives, research questions, preliminary literature review, the type of study to be undertaken, steps to be followed and their sequence, the nature of data to be used and the proposed date of completion. The Researcher will undertake a Pastoral/Practical Theological Research that will assess the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai parish in Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti. The Researcher will use a descriptive survey with qualitative approaches so as to arrive at representative results. The qualitative approach shall be used to obtain information using observations, oral interviews and questionnaires

3.2 The Area of Study.

The researcher shall under take the Research study in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti.

3.3 The Sources of Information.

The researcher shall use both literal and empirical data obtained from primary sources (interviews) and secondary sources (works of earlier Researchers and related texts on Discipleship at Bishop Dunstan Bukenya Library)

3.4 The study population and Sampling Techniques.

To Ajuha, 'study population refers to all people or objects with the characteristics which the researcher wants to study within the context of a particular research problem'. Ajuha R (2009), P 155.

The study population shall comprise of Lay Readers, Missions and Evangelism Coordinators, Heads of Laity and Discipleship Coordinators and Youth Leaders in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti. The Researcher shall employ the non probability sampling technique among the 12 sub-parish churches in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, diocese of Soroti. Five (5) respondents shall provide responses to the oral interviews and questionnaires in each sub-parish church which will be administered during data collection stage of the Research study

3.5 Variable Definitions and Measurements.

In pursuit of “The significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti”, the researcher shall take Discipleship as an independent variable and retention of new believers as a dependent variable. The rationale for the use of the variables shall be based on ratio. The ratio of 1:1 shall imply a high significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti, while a ratio of 1:0 shall imply low or no significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti

3.6 Data Collection Procedures.

The Researcher shall prepare a set of questions that shall be administered orally to the respondents whose responses shall be recorded by use of a tape recorder and a note book for analysis. The researcher shall also prepare questionnaires that shall be delivered to the respondents to be filled at will. The questionnaires shall be received back after they are dully completed and the data analyzed.

3.7 Data collection instruments.

The researcher shall use per-designed questionnaires and a tape recorder and a note book for collecting data. The questionnaires shall be used to receive written feedback and a tape recorder and note book shall be used to take record of the responses during oral interviews

3.8 Quality/Error control.

The researcher shall ensure quality control by administering Validity and Reliability tests of the data collection instruments to ensure that the data collected gives a true and representative situation in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti.

3.8.1 Validity.

“Validity is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are designed to measure. It is the extent to which research results can be accurately interpreted and generalized to other

populations”, Kirk. J (1986), P 13. To ensure this, the researcher shall pre-test the instruments before they are actually used

3.8.2 Reliability.

“Reliability is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent data after being used over time”, Theirat (2001), P 204. To ensure reliability, the researcher shall pre-test the instruments with a smaller population before they are administered

3.9 Data processing and analysis.

“Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the complicated mass of qualitative data that the researcher generates during the research process”, Swinton Mowat (2006) P 57.

This section shall provide an explanation and justification of the methods of data collection and analysis. It shall also show how data shall be cleaned and organized for analysis. The researcher shall organize data from the field after which it shall be analyzed by use of ratios. The closer the ratio, the higher the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers and the wider the ratio, the lower the significance of Discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry, Diocese of Soroti

3.10 Ethical considerations.

Ethical considerations is to do with matters of confidentiality, consent, anonymity, and integrity. The researcher shall brief the respondents that the information shall be treated with utmost confidentiality and that; it shall be for only academic purpose. The researcher shall also observe guidelines against plagiarism and as well acknowledge all sources of information that will be consulted during the course of research.

3.11 Methodological constraints.

This part shall explain the limitations and possible weaknesses of the methods and tools employed in research and how they may affect the findings. Some respondents may show bias and partiality in answering questions and may give exaggerated or incorrect information. Under such circumstances, the researcher shall employ the skill of anonymity so that respondents answer questions objectively without disclosing their names.

CHAPTER FOUR:
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS:

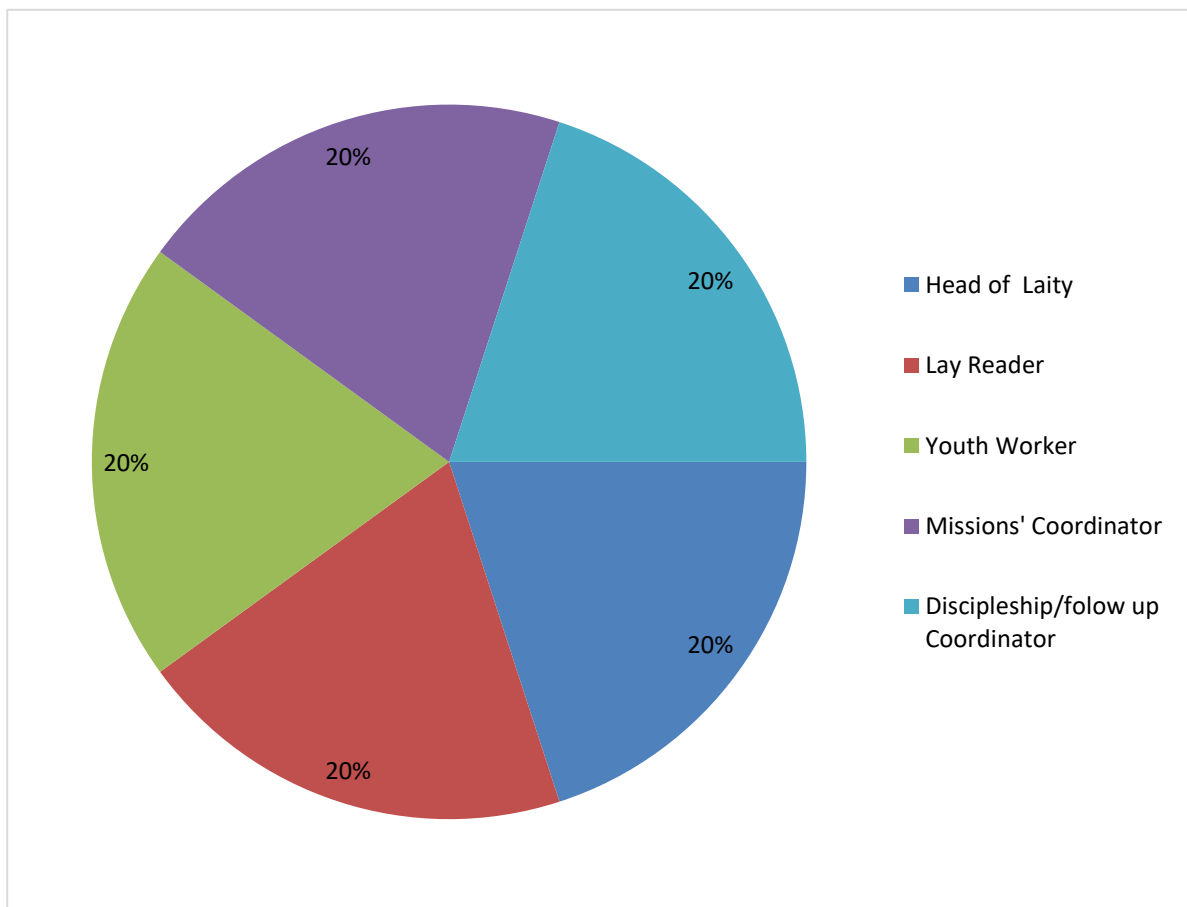
4.0. Introduction.

Data analysis and presentation of findings gave focus on the techniques that were used to summarize and present data in a more meaningful and simplified manner in which interpretation becomes easy. The researcher used Pie-Charts to analyze and present data to make it more representative.

4.1. Category of respondents.

The respondents for this research comprised; Heads of Laity, Lay Readers, Youth Workers, Missions Coordinators and Discipleship/Follow-up Coordinators. One respondent was identified in each category per church in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Soroti. In each category, 12 out of the 60 respondent were interviewed in each, this represented 20% of the respondents throughout Obulai Parish.

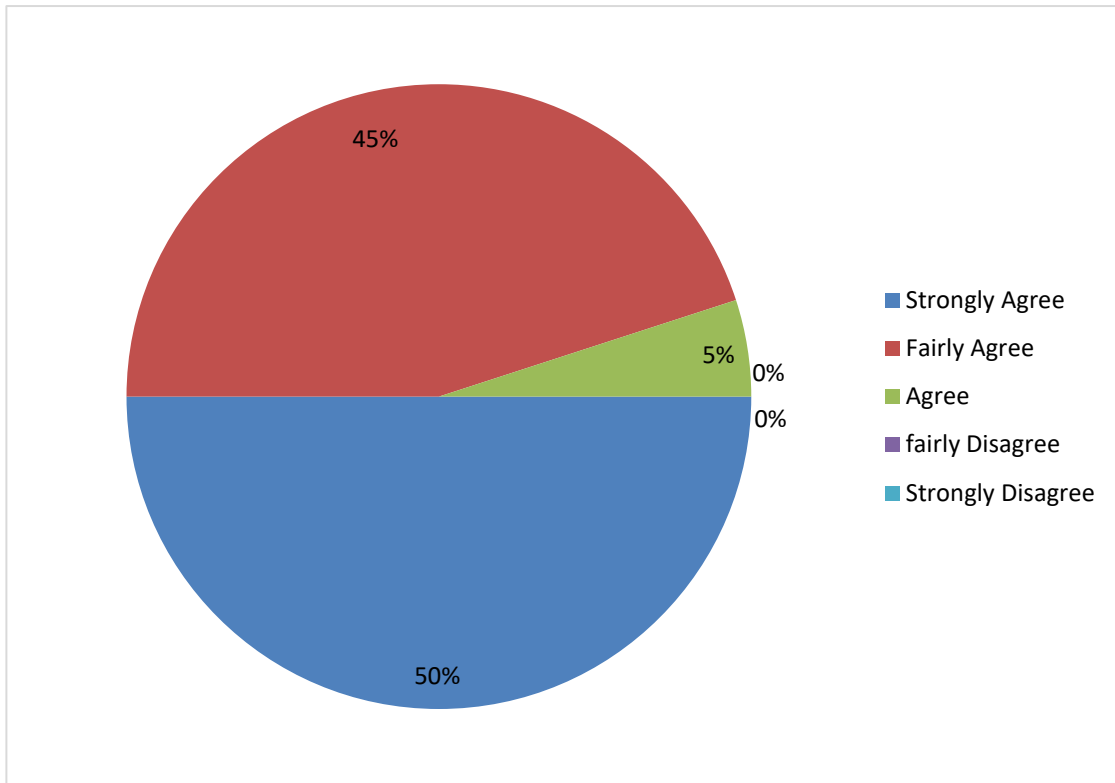
4.2 The



practice of Discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish.

The respondents were asked to rate the conduct of Discipleship of new believers according to their own judgment, stating whether they strongly agree, fairly agree, agree, fairly disagree or strongly disagree that Discipleship is actually conducted for new believers in Obulai Parish. 30 out of 60

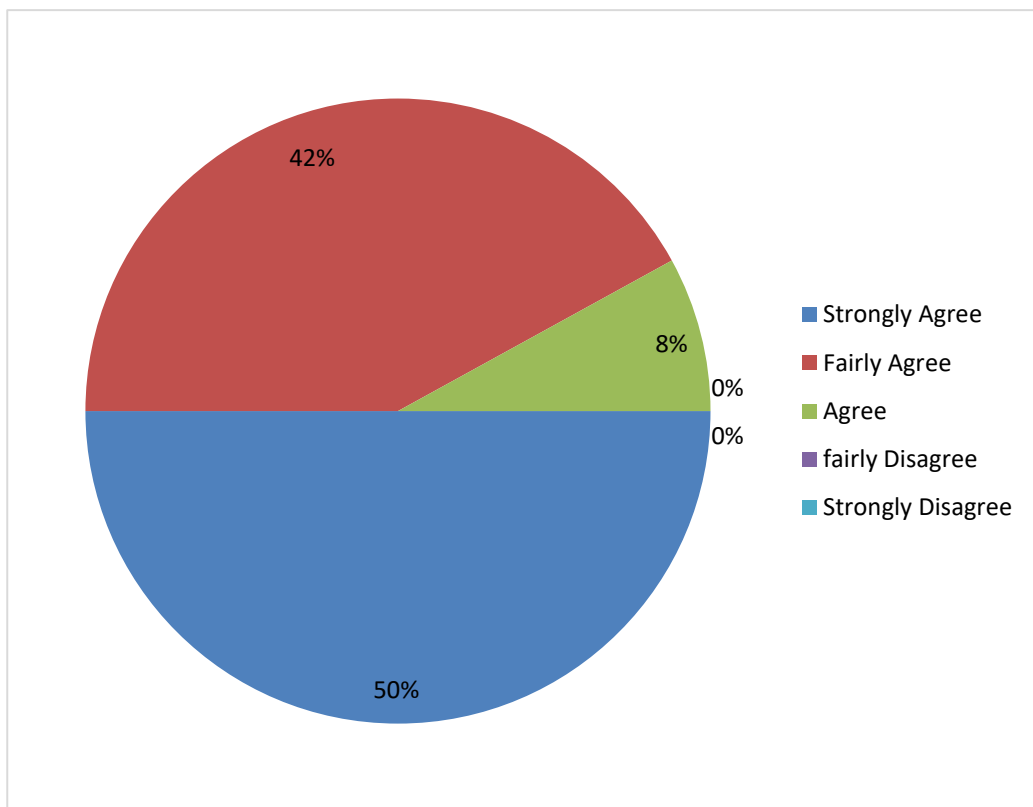
respondents strongly agree, 27 out 60 respondents fairly agree, 3 out of 60 respondents agree. 0 out of 60 fairly disagree and 0 out of 60 strongly disagree to the practice of Discipleship in Obulai Parish. This represented 50% respondents who strongly agree, 45% respondents who fairly agree, 5% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the practice of Discipleship in Obulai Parish.



4.3. Discipleship of the main categories of new believers in Obulai parish (Candidates for baptism, candidates for confirmation and members who have newly confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in their lives)

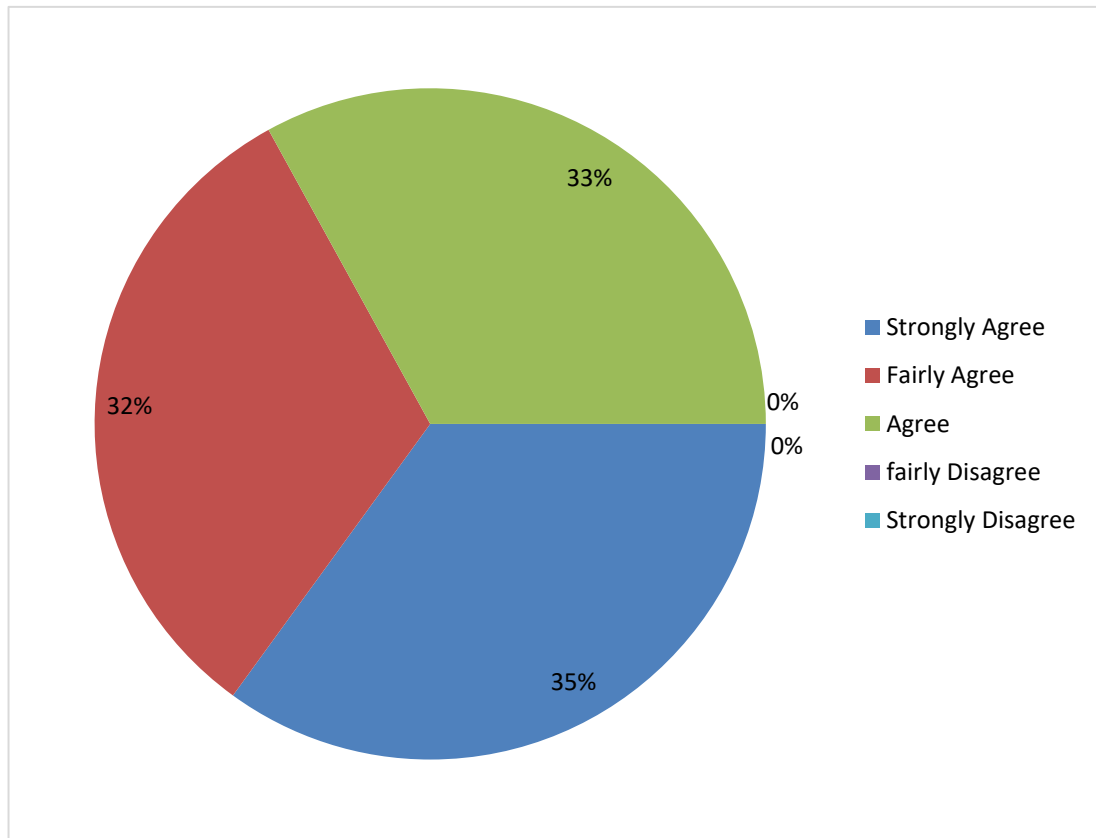
The respondents were asked to response in accordance to the main categories of new believers in Obulai Parish that encompassed; Candidates for baptism, candidates for confirmation and members who have newly confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in their lives

30 out of 60 respondents strongly agree, 25 out of 60 respondents fairly agree, 5 out of 60 respondents agree. 0 out of 60 fairly disagree and 0 out of 60 strongly disagree to the practice of Discipleship among the main categories of believers in Obulai Parish. This represented 50% respondents who strongly agree, 42% respondents who fairly agree, 8% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the practice of Discipleship among the main categories of believers in Obulai Parish.



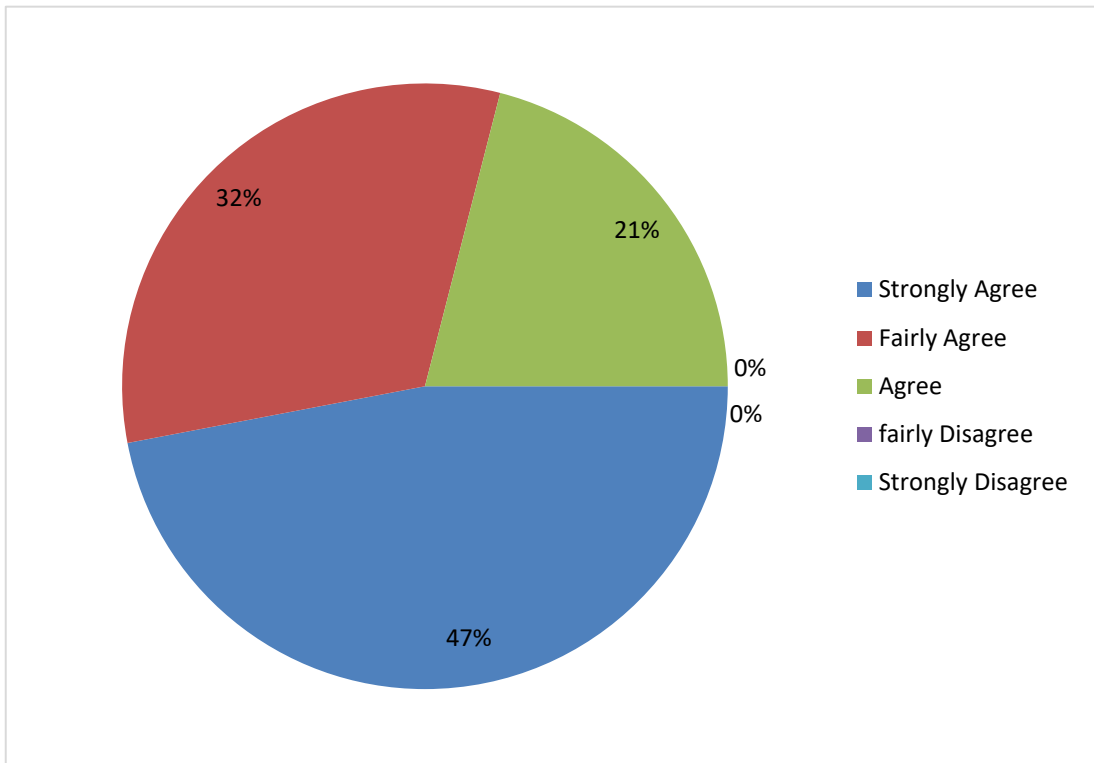
4.4. Time allocated for the Discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish.

The respondents were asked to give response in accordance to time allocation for Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish. 21 out of 60 respondents strongly agree, 19 out of 60 respondents fairly agree, 20 out of 60 respondents agree. 0 out of 60 fairly disagree and 0 out of 60 strongly disagree to the assertion that enough time is allocated for Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish. This represented 35% respondents who strongly agree, 32% respondents who fairly agree, 33% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the assertion that enough time is allocated for Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish.



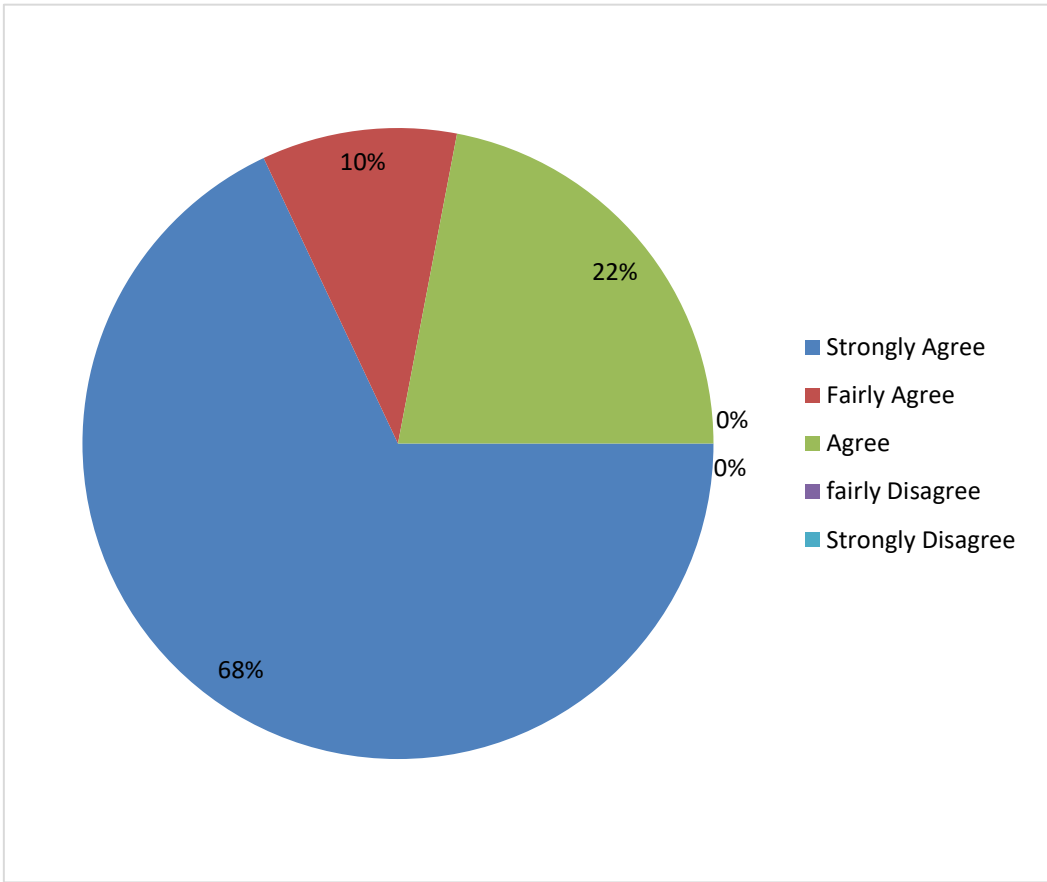
4.5. Effectiveness of Discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish.

The respondents were to scale the performance of the church in relation to Discipleship of its new believers. This was ideally asking for their assertion on how much the church was doing in Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish. 28 out of 60 respondents strongly agree, 19 out of 60 respondents fairly agree, 13 out of 60 respondents agree. 0 out of 60 fairly disagree and 0 out of 60 strongly disagree to the assertion that the church was doing enough in Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish. This represented 47% respondents who strongly agree, 32% respondents who fairly agree, 21% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the assertion that the church was doing enough in Discipleship of new believers in Obulai Parish.



4.6. Significance (contribution) of Discipleship in retention of new believers in Obulai parish.

On significance, the respondents were to give their overall perspective of the significance of Discipleship in retention of new believers in Obulai Parish. This was conclusive in nature in that, it the respondents were to give their general perspective on the necessity of Discipleship of new believers in in church using Obulai Parish that they were more familiar with. 41 out of 60 respondents strongly agree, 6 out 60 respondents fairly agree, 13 out of 60 respondents agree. 0 out of 60 fairly disagree and 0 out of 60 strongly disagree to the necessity of Discipleship of new believers in in church following their experience in Obulai Parish. This represented 68% respondents who strongly agree, 10% respondents who fairly agree, 22% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the necessity of Discipleship of new believers in in church following their experience in Obulai Parish.



CHAPTER FIVE:
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

5.0. Introduction.

This presented the position of findings from the field and deductions arrived at during analysis and presentation of data.

5.1 Discussion of findings.

The respondents attested to the fact that discipleship of new believers was actually done in Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Soroti. With 50 % of the respondents strongly agreeing, 45% of the respondents fairly agreeing, 5% of the respondents agreeing, 0% fairly disagreeing and 0% strongly disagreeing to the fact that discipleship of new believers is done in Obulai parish, this supposes that 100% of the respondents are in agreement against 0% of the respondents in disagreement to the practice of discipleship of new believers in Obulai parish. This trend is highly attributed to the fact that Obulai parish is actively engaged in Missions and Evangelism and the presence of a number of Institutions such as Olio Polytechnic, Serere Township Secondary School, and Emmanuel Schools among others with serving Chaplains that has boosted the ministry in Obulai parish all programs including discipleship of new believers. The Lay readers in the Sub-parishes have as well earnestly embraced the practice. At Archdeaconry level, emphasis has been attached to uniformity and specific days have been assigned particular activities. Discipleship of new believers (New believers classes) is 3:00 pm every Sunday evening throughout the Archdeaconry.

Discipleship usually focuses on the major categories of new believers that includes; candidates for baptism, candidates for confirmation, and those who have newly confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior in their lives. The percentage of respondents in agreement to discipleship of the major categories of new believers was at 100% against 0% in disagreement. This shows that, the different categories of believers are actually attended to though in varying proportions.

The respondents attested to the fact that, sufficient time was allocated to discipleship of new believers ranging from one to three months depending on the category of new believers. Candidates for baptism took one month and those for confirmation took three months.

The general perspective of the respondents reflected that the church was doing its best in discipleship of new believers and that, follow up activities were made to facilitate post evangelism phase during missions. This implies that, discipleship of new believers is a requisite component in the church ministry of missions and evangelism for the church to realize positive outcome in her witness to the lost souls.

It is also prudent to suppose that, different sessions with different facilitators be organized for the major categories of new believers like candidates for baptism, candidates for confirmation, as well as the members who have newly confessed Jesus Christ as lord and Savior in their lives since each of them require specific learning content.

On the significance of discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers, With 68% of respondents who strongly agree, 10% respondents who fairly agree, 22% respondents who agree, 0% respondents who fairly disagree and 0% respondents who strongly disagree to the necessity of Discipleship of new believers in church following their experience in Obulai Parish, it is imperative to suppose that, Discipleship is highly significant in enhancing retention of new believers in church following the case of the Diocese of Soroti.

Considering the case of Obulai parish, Serere Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Soroti, the church of Uganda as well as the global Church needs to embrace discipleship of new believers to enhance their retention.

5.2 Theological Reflection.

Discipleship of new believers is a spiritual discipline that has been in practice from the time the church was born in Jerusalem. The church in Jerusalem gave key attention to Discipleship of new believers as well as addressing the physical needs of the believers.

Acts 9:19 gives an account of Paul being discipled by the disciples at Damascus. Paul spent some days in Damascus with the Disciples after his conversion. During this time, he was undergoing discipleship into the new faith that he had just confessed to. Consequently, in Acts 14:21-22, Paul and Barnabas made return journeys to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen souls of the new disciples there. This follow up was an act of Discipleship. Through this, they exhorted the disciples to continue in the faith amidst tribulations.

The main approaches to Discipleship of new believers included;

Individual exhortation as it was with Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:1 and Paul to Philemon in Philemon 1:1.

Home fellowships as it was the practice among the early believers in Acts 2:44. They kept together encouraging one another.

Church visits. The churches in Galatia and Phrygia benefited from this approach to Discipleship. (Acts 18:23)

Matthew 28:18-20 lays the foundation of Discipleship. The Lord Jesus disciplined His followers before He could finally send them out to make more disciples. The same charge was given to the disciples. They were to make disciples of all nations. In addition to baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, there was the aspect of teaching them everything that the Lord Jesus Christ had commanded His disciples. The component of teaching the disciples of all nations is Discipleship that every new believer needs to start new life in faith. Without it, spiritual walk is stunted or halted.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

6.0. Introduction.

Under the conclusions and recommendations, the researcher provided the deductions derive from the study suggestions put forward for further study.

6.1. Conclusion.

From Data analysis, presentation and discussion of findings, the researcher came to a conclusion that;

It is observable that, discipleship is closely linked to missions and evangelism and different actors need to play a role. The Lay Readers, School chaplains, as well as the Parish priests in their different capacities. Discipleship activities need to be coordinated centrally to promote uniformity and consistency.

The church has to be intentional in the manner in which discipleship of new believers is conducted. Not only should it be left to Lay Readers, Parish priests have a crucial part to play in it.

The aspect of time allocation is paramount in discipleship of new believers and that enough time needs to be allocated for each category.

As pertains the significance of discipleship in retention of new believers, the respondents are strongly in support of it, 68% of the respondents conclusively strongly agree that Discipleship is significant for the retention of new believers in church against 0% of the respondents who conclusively strongly disagree on the significance of Discipleship in the retention of new believers in church.

This shows that, Discipleship is highly significant in the retention of new believers in church. Hence, the church needs to embrace the practice of Discipleship of new believers so as to retain them in church after they have confessed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

6.2. Recommendations.

Having undertaken the study on the significance of discipleship in enhancing retention of new believers, case of the Diocese of Soroti, the researcher made the following recommendations; The church needs to make it mandatory for discipleship sessions to be arranged for new believers and sufficient time be allocated for it as well as different facilitators for effective ministry.

Church activities need to be coordinated at different administrative levels to promote cohesion, it can be at sub-parish, parish, Archdeaconry or at Diocesan level.

The different departmental heads need to be adequately equipped through training for effective ministry.

In line with further research, the researcher recommended the following areas for further study;
A study be done on the different Discipleship models that can enhance retention of new believers in church.

A study be done on the relationship between discipleship and Evangelism

a research be conducted on the role of Discipleship of Secondary School students in their preparation for future ministry

a research be done on the significance of stakeholder involvement in sustaining Evangelism

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APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

15th March 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION

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

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

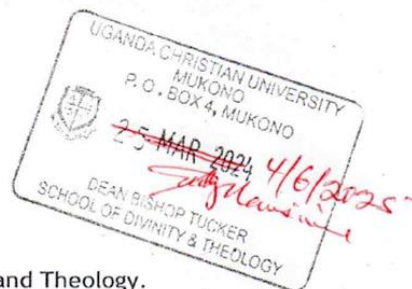
Counting on your cooperation and thank you in advance

Yours faithfully

Rev. Prof. Elly Kansiime

Research coordinator, Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.

ekansiime@uccu.ac.ug, 0772621182



APPENDIX 2.

QUESTIONNAIRE.

Dear respondent, I am Thomas Ewadu, a student at Uganda Christian University, pursuing a Master of Divinity Degree. I am currently carrying a research project on the topic; “The Significance of Discipleship in enhancing Retention of New Believers, Case of the Diocese of Soroti”.

I have selected this parish for my research study. I kindly request you to answer the questions freely and honestly for this will enable me to arrive at a true and representative conclusion on my topic of study,

All information shared here is purely for academic purposes and no information shall be shared whatsoever outside the objectives of my research study.

Name: [Optional]

Church Sub-Parish Church): [Optional]

PART 1. Category of Respondent.

Please, tick in the space provided [] as appropriate to the category in which you belong;

Head of Laity []

Lay Reader []

Youth Worker []

Missions’ Coordinator []

Discipleship/Follow up Coordinator []

PART 2. Discipleship of New Believers in the parish.

1. New Christian members are usually Discipled in our parish.

Strongly Agree []

Fairly Agree []

Agree []

Fairly Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

2. It is normally a practice to Disciple the major categories of New Believers (Candidates for Baptism, Candidates for Confirmation, and members who newly confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior).

Strongly Agree []

Fairly Agree []

Agree []

Fairly Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

3. Time Allocated for Discipleship of New Believers in the Parish.

Enough time is usually allocated for Discipleship of New Believers in the Parish.

Strongly Agree []

Fairly Agree []

Agree []

Fairly Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

PART 3. Effectiveness of Discipleship of New Believers in the Parish.

1. This church as well as the Parish do enough in Discipleship of New Believers.

Strongly Agree []

Fairly Agree []

Agree []

Fairly Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

PART 4. Contribution of Discipleship towards retention of New Believers in the Parish.

Discipleship is necessary for the retention of New Believers in church!

Strongly Agree []

Fairly Agree []

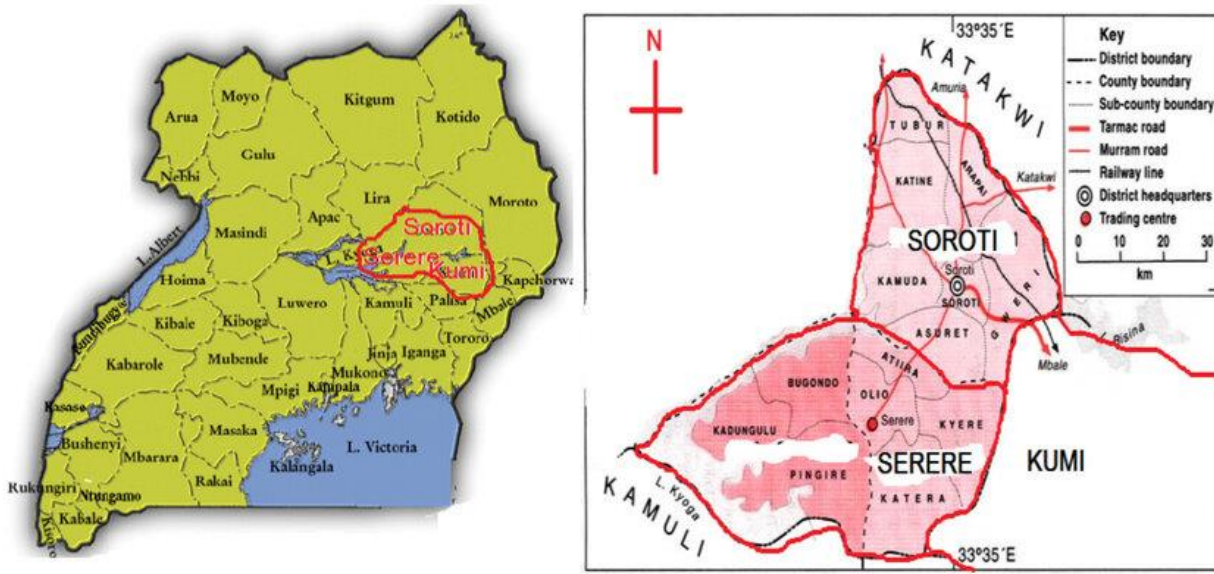
Agree []

Fairly Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

APPENDIX 3.

THE MAP OF UGANDA SHOWING THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF SERERE DISTRICT.



Appendix 4: similarity report

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