

**PROMOTING YOUNG ADULTS' LEADERSHIP IN SMALL
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES FOR DEEPER
EVANGELIZATION: A PASTORAL STUDY IN THE
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF NYAHURURU-KENYA**

^{1*}Rev. Fr. Paul Gicheche Njiru, ²Dr. John Mwangangi Kyule & ³Prof. Rev. Fr. Clement

Majawa

¹Masters Candidate, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

²Lecturer, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

³Lecturer, the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

***Email of the corresponding author: paulgicheche1@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The aim of this thesis was to investigate the challenges facing young adults in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu, in order to help them embrace leadership in Small Christian Communities for deeper evangelization (CDN).

Statement of the Problem: It was evident that in the local Church some of the young adults were not moved to active participation in the pastoral activities of Small Christian Communities, like public worship. They did not live a life of true witness to the Gospel, they were not enlightened in the affairs of the church and so they were not so abreast with the self-ministering aspect for life of SCCs. The observations in the parishes, and in Small Christian Communities revealed that majority of the leaders were elderly people who had a lot of health problems, thus whenever there were pastoral council meetings and Church activities, many failed to attend due to their frail health. This was a clear indication that there were many challenges facing the parish and the Small Christian Communities when it comes to both the young and the elderly in the parishes. The Diocese having celebrated eighteen years since it was inaugurated, there would be need to ask why the young adults were not active in the Church and especially in SCCs. Having said that, an effort should be made to help improve the situation in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu on how to welcome and foster the leadership of the young adults. Perhaps, the young adults are in need of deeper evangelization in order to embrace

leadership in small Christian communities, or the Church needs to embrace the leadership of more young people in order to evangelize in the modern world.

Methodology: Methodologically the study employed the four moments of the pastoral circle namely; insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and finally the pastoral planning or action plan.

Result: The study found that the challenge of inactive participation was due to lack of knowledge in the theology of the Church as a family of God in the communion of SCCs. Additionally, the lack of sufficient knowledge, poor leadership and poor catechesis emerged as some of the main factors behind the challenge. Theologically the study sought to reflect on the Church position for guidance on the challenges facing young adults in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu, in order to help them embrace leadership in Small Christian Communities for deeper evangelization. This was achieved through reflecting on the scriptures, patristic and apostolic fathers, the magisterium of the Vatican Council II, Pontifical discourses, local and regional Synods, various theologians and personal human experience.

Conclusion: The study finalized by giving pastoral recommendations aimed at bringing about transformation and liberation for the young adults in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. These included; need for family Catechesis, transforming world of young adults, help the young adults Discover value and use their spiritual gifts, encourage them to live a community life, give the young adults responsibilities, involve the young adults with the youth and children ministry, change of attitude towards single parenthood, practical guidelines to guide accompaniments of young adults, ongoing formation through capacity building, introduction of relevant pastoral activities.

Keywords: *Promotion, Young Adults, Small Christian Communities, Leadership.*

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Church as God's family, is the ecclesiastical model we have adopted in developing this thesis. The young adults are the immediate future leaders of the Church and so also, they need from a young age to adopt and familiarize themselves with the affairs and the spirit of the church foremost through their active participation in the small Church that is the SCCs. The strength of tomorrow's Church depends on the foundation laid today. This calls for a very firm and strong formation of the young adults in the CDN. The young adults in CDN are facing immense and overwhelming challenges which affect evangelization in the diocese. This thesis will contribute in the task ahead that is of mitigating the identified challenges.

In this thesis we managed to insert ourselves in the lives of the young people, thus trying to understand their challenges and came out with a catalog of issues which need immediate pastoral attention especially in the CDN. Knowing the challenges is not enough; it is a starting point towards understanding the reasons why the challenges exist and this we did using social pastoral analysis which exposed to us the main domains in question which would contribute to the existing challenges. The theological reflection enlightens us on how to mitigate the challenges whereby we learned that, we must prayerfully work on finding practical and biblical solutions for the way forward. All this should be undertaken having the young people in mind that is, not planning for them but with them so that they can own the SCC' and therefore the church by participating in the work of transformation and therefore of salvation.

Young people of today must not only be taught God's word, they must be mentored in ways to apply the word in their lives. They must be inspired to live more Christ like, remembering Jesus is the model (*Luke 2:48-52*). Training young adults in what it means to be excellent will equip and inspire them to be excellent leaders in SCCs in the future. Young adults must be taught how to be doers of the word (*James 1:21-26*); not just how to come and sit and listen to the old people in SCCs but also air out their views with no fear. They need to be taught how to set and reach meaningful spiritual goals. All this should take place with the spirit of union and sodality.

The mission of the church calls for complementarity and solidarity of all the members at all levels. This is not happening in the diocese especially within the SSC's. They aren't so patriotic in pastoral activities and so they don't pay any witness to Christ's mission of liberation, and if they do, it is in a very minimal way. All baptized share in the threefold ministry of Christ and every member of the family is called to the communion of discipleship.¹ In our discussion we shall suggest, highlight and propose relevant ways and pastoral activities needed to improve the participation of the young adults in the local Church of the CDN.

The diocese, since its founding has promoted mainly older people, but not the young. Today, the Priests and other ministers need to encourage and promote the young adults, in order to allow new ideas and new ways of doing things, thus bring vitality and allow new ways of evangelization. There was a plenary held in Nairobi the year 1973 by AMECEA and on pastoral point of view the plenary was very vital, even for the lay. The discussion centered on: how to assist and encourage the laity to understand and fulfill their evangelizing mission, promoting dialogue between the laity and Bishops, priests and religious in order to build up the church as a family of God, fostering human and Christian formation and technical training of the laity and encouraging the exchange of information/experiences among the AMECEA laity.

SCCs are the pastoral priority in the AMECEA region. The young people were on the fifth position in their agenda of pastoral operations². Despite this, one wonders why the young adults are still not committed to witnessing Christ through their active participation in the SCCs. Our survey showed that they were indeed active in YCW (Young Christian Workers). In the quest for change, we have come up with the following two hypotheses; first, perhaps, the young adults are in need of deeper evangelization in order to embrace leadership in Small Christian Communities. Secondly, maybe the Church needs more young people to be leaders, in order to evangelize in the modern world? Our approach is scientific and so methodological. Using the pastoral circle, an open tool to knowledge and realization, we shall categorize our research work in four chapters in line with its moments of insertion, social analysis, theological reflection and pastoral planning.

Insertion: this discusses the situational background of the local Church under challenge. The general outlook information and influential circumstances to the young adults. The second chapter is on social analysis. Here we go back to the root causes, probe and scrutinize into consequences, delineate factual linkages and identify possible actors. Critical analysis helps us make the data relevant and useful. Thirdly we shall discuss the theological reflection, whereby we looking at the scripture, tradition of the church, general magisterium contributions by some theologians and personal and human experience. Lastly chapter four is on the plan for action.

¹ Picket William L.A *Concise to Pastoral Planning*, (Indiana, Ave Maria Press, 2007), 62.

² Bishops Message, *AMECEA Documentation Service*, Youth on the Move towards the Year 2000. No.4, Nairobi, 1989, ADS89/ No 348.

This is a point of decision making which actualize the pastoral dimensions of witness, (*martyria*) communion, (*koinonia*) public service, (*liturgia*) and service, (*diakonia*). Systematically the pastoral circle finally brings us to the formulation of relevant recommendations in a way forward aimed at bringing change and transformation. This will help us propose a new praxis for the future of the young adults in the local Church of Nyahururu.

Small Christian Communities are Basic Ecclesial Communities within the Church are directly related to the renewal of the Church as expressed in Vatican II.³ At a local level and in different parts of the world, a search began on how the Church could express its identity in the light of its particular context.⁴ This expressed that there was need to form intimate and liberating faith relationships and accord the new values to the place of human experiences in revelation. This way, a new conviction was taking root in the light of Vatican II. We as community and our experiences as communion, are part of this revelation.⁵ It is upon this conviction and the need for greater communion that the Church throughout the world began to express itself in the form of Small Christian Communities.

In these communities it became possible to seek a greater integration of faith in daily life. Small Christian Communities therefore emerged in the light of Vatican II to express in practice, ways of living a life of service. This Small Christian Communities were seeking to witness to the Gospel in ways that are accessible to their members who are involved in various responsibilities in their families and in the society. Christian Communities were seeking to penetrate the world with the Spirit of the Gospel.⁶ These Communities are today the expression of both *Koinonia* and *Diaconia* in the local Church. In their faith sharing and service to the community, the Gospel is realized through life witness among SCC members. This living of the Gospel by the SCC members has proved to be “a leaven of brotherhood and sisterhood of unity and peace,”⁷ for the transformation of the world. It is within this dynamism of prayer, reflection and transformation that Small Christian Communities form the Church.⁸

The concept of SCC is a small group of the people of God- so constituted that their daily life radiates the life of the Risen Christ in all sectors of the life and work of the community and in each member of that community⁹. In the SCCs the Christian commitment is fully expressed and lived. SCCs consist of lay faithful who stay in the same locality, coming together to read and share the word of God, pray especially the rosary, or encourage each other in life. Since generally, the SCCs are dominated by women, I got the impression that they mostly deal with their (women) affairs. Indeed, young people say they feel out of place with the women and adult talk that goes on during the sharing¹⁰. The formation of SCCs is basically about the action of

³ CF. Vatican II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, December 7, 1965, no. 2.

⁴ Kieran Flynn, *Communities for the Kingdom; A Handbook for Small Christian Communities Leaders*, Eldoret, AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2007, 12.

⁵CF. Hearne, B. “Was Vatican II a Waste of Time?” *AFER*, Vol.25,No. 2, Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1983, p. 100.

⁶ CF. Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, November 18,1965, no. 5.

⁷ CF. Vatican II, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, no. 8.

⁸ Kieran, Flynn, p, 13.

⁹ Locheng, Callisto, A.J. *Missiology: Introduction to the Roots of the Great Commission*, Nairobi-Kenya, CUEA PRESS, 2011, P, 177

¹⁰ *Good Shepherd: A Journal of Pastoral Theology*, Sr. Mishael Manianga, *My Puzzles and Insights About Small Christian Communities as a Way of Being Church Today*, Nairobi- Kenya, CUEA Press, Volume 2, Number 1, June 2017, P,97.

the Church, or if you will, the totality of the pastoral activity. Concretely, it is about evangelization in different facets and expressions like proclamation, witness, and inculturation, integral or holistic development¹¹. A true sense of co-responsibility and the principle of subsidiarity, permeate every member of the community. Implementation of the agreed and accepted priorities, policies and duties e.g., that of self-ministering self-propagating and self-supporting, become not only easier but almost spontaneous. It is in SCCs that the Universal Catholic Church becomes localized here and now¹².

In SCC the animation should work to aim at the spirit of ‘oneness of heart and mind’ the first Christians in the Acts of the Apostles experienced. This spirit of oneness is so unique since it comes from the fellowship generated through the Breaking of the Bread together and living a life so totally rooted in the Word. It generated in them zeal to spread the Good News of the Gospel. Our aim too is to help every young adult in our community to experience such deep fellowship through the Eucharist and Word-centered life which will generate in them a zeal to become missionaries for the Lord in their neighborhoods. Our hope is that through regular and sustained formation the Lord will lead us to experience the same spirit of the early community.

By the Asian Bishops in 1990, they said that the Church in Asia will have to be a Communion of Communities where clergy, laity and religious accept each other as sisters and brothers and collaborate with each other to build up the Body of Christ. SCCs are not an end in itself, but a means to renew the Church all over¹³. Pastoral refers to the holistic development of all in the Church, in order to realize that the pastoral mission of the Church belongs to all, clergy, laity and religious, alike. Everyone must realize his/her mission within the community and function. This is the mission of the Church to build up the mystical Body of Christ for its stability and growth so that she can witness to the living presence of the Risen Lord and cooperate with Him in establishing the Kingdom plan in their own neighborhood. This is the mission of every member of the Church, for that matter, this is the mission of SCCs themselves.¹⁴

1.2 THE OBJECTIVE OF SCCS

The primary objective of any SCC is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. The results focus on a change of heart, realization of convictions, and commitment among the adherents, if the work is appropriately done.¹⁵

- i. Theological: Christ’s will for unity is realized in SCC and the community aspect of the Church is made concrete in them; they make the Church present to the ordinary life experience of people; they provide a means of sharing responsibility so that everyone is involved in the common task; they help to create Eucharistic communities, with Christ truly at the Centre; and they are the Church at the grass-roots.
- ii. Biblical: the SCCs are attempts to recover the New Testament sense of community and brotherhood; in them, the people hear God’s word addressed to them, and are challenged by the Gospel.

¹¹ *Ibid*,

¹² Locheng, Callisto, A.J. p, 177.

¹³ [https:// www.go.ke://](https://www.go.ke/) Small Christian Community, Global Collaborative website, Anpiam: *A Brief History of Small Christian Communities in Tumilnadu, India*, accessed on 19th January 2021, 10:08 pm.

¹⁴ Cf. Pope Paul VI, on Evangelization in the Modern World: Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1992, 38-46.

¹⁵ <http://makir.mak.ac.ug>handle>, accessed on June 3rd 2021. At 9:34.

- iii. Sociological: people need to share with each other, to communicate at a deep level, to feel a sense of belonging to a “primary group” be “at home” – in this connection it is the idea of enabling people to relate at a personal level.
- iv. Missionary: SCC are effective way of developing the missionary dimension of the Church at the most local level, and of making people feel that they are really part of the Church’s evangelizing work.
- v. Social and human development: SCC can help to promote a better human life in all aspects; and, by enabling people to participate in the decisions and action of the community, they help to free people, from various forms of oppression¹⁶.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study explored the implications and the impact of spheres like lack of sharing and status quo on the challenges of young people inactive participation in SCCs in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu (CDN). In light of faith, the challenges mentioned in chapter two will be tackled from theological point of view. In the theological reflection, the discern on our analysis in the light of tradition; based on scripture, Apostolic era, Magisterium, not evading Vatican II, Papal literature Synods of Africa, view of young adults, and some theologians in history. In addition, it is better to seek the role of God’s mystery of love behind our experience. The ecclesiology of God’s family, adapted by Synod of Africa will be our guiding model of the Church in this chapter,¹⁷

The Church was founded to spread the kingdom of Christ over all the earth for the glory of God the Father, to make all men partakers in redemption and salvation, and through them to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ. Every activity of the Mystical Body with this view goes by the name of “apostolate”; the Church exercises it through all its members, though in various ways.¹⁸ In the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole people of God.¹⁹

The Church, as God’s family must be a sign and instrument of the young people transformation, liberation, communion and solidarity even in the society. This should enable the young adults to be involved in the Church activities, radiating in them a future full of hope.²⁰ The AMECEA bishops call the Church to be credible, homely and incarnational, enshrining the young people in SCCs to liberate them into shares. The family life is homely, nurtured, and liberated. Christ chose liberation through it. As an African family the Church should be both immediate and extended, enjoying a shared life.²¹

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 180, 181.

¹⁷ Pope John Paul II, The Church in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, 1995, no. 63.

¹⁸ Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II; The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Bandra, Mumbai, St. Pauls, 1975, p. 677.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ McGarry, *What Happened at Africa Synod*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications, 1995, 36.

The second chapter is the social analysis section, and will focus on the situation among the Christians. The focus is to make direct analysis of the data collected from the community in regard to the challenges that young adults in the Small Christian Community (SCCs) face. The purpose is to find the root causes why the young adults are not vibrant in places where they are existing of SCCs. The chapter explores the issues of age difference in the Small Christian Communities within the diocese and evaluates the impact of physical development, unemployment and employment as well as the educational levels and technology, church factors as failed pastoral, and leadership in the involvement of the young people in the religious practices.

Through the use of the data obtained from the parishioners,²² this section of the paper will be dedicated to exploring the roles of Christian and leaders in the SCCs in creating and sustaining the best environment for the involvement and engagement of the young people in evangelization. The primary concern that the chapter seeks to finally address is the existing challenges within the SCCs that the leaders have often neglected and are currently unaccounted for, leading to repulsion of the young people from the activities of the SCCs in their areas.

2.2 Empirical Review

The data for this chapter was obtained from a total of 100 participants who were randomly selected from Small Christian Communities within the Catholic Diocese of Nyahuru (CDN). To ensure that the sample selected represented the whole population, two SCCs were randomly selected from two parishes in each of the six deaneries in the CDN. A total of 135 questionnaires were issued to the parishioners through the assistance of their parish priest and local leaders and religious men and women conducting their pastoral experience in the deaneries. However, only about 102 were returned in good time and 100 of them were selected as having completely met the analysis criteria. This represents a response rate of 74.04% which is adequate to ensure reliability and validity of the data collected and inform on the comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. The next sections in the chapter directly analyses the data as received from the participants.

2.2.1 Causes of the Lack of Young Adults Participation in SCCs

There are some questions raised here: a). Where do the young adults go when it is time for Small Christian Community gatherings? b). Who are responsible for their lack of participation in the affairs that pertains to the life of the Catholic Church in the neighborhood? c). Could it be that the parents do not remind their children about such important gatherings in their faith? d). Is it that various animators, including the priests, catechists, leaders have failed to convince the young people to show up in larger number for spiritual gatherings or SCCs activities?²³ These questions allude to the fact that, Small Christian Community are properly reserved for the young people, Small Christian Communities are erroneously considered as some activity peculiar for women, and old men, an activity in which youth and the young people are not supposed to participate. It is important to know that our analysis here dwells on the young adults

²² Questionnaires issued in the parishes for data collection, January, 21st 2021.

²³ <https://smallchristiancommunities.org/lack-of-touth-in-small-christian-communities-sccs-in-africa-and-the-way-forward/>, accessed on June, 7th 2021, at 9:11.

belonging to the age bracket of 18-40 years old.²⁴ Various reasons may be singled out for such attitudes, but the most remarkable ones are as follows:

The primary focus of this chapter was to examine the question “what is happening?” The chapter therefore has provided the social analysis of the problem of poor young adult’s participation in SCCs and Church evangelization. The bulk of the chapter has been on examining and analyzing the data collected from the questionnaires that were issued to more than 100 respondents from various Small Christian Communities in all the deaneries in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. The spread and scope of the sample is a significant representative of the whole population and helps to exemplify the overall perception about the participation of the young people in evangelization and related activities in the Church and in SCCs. Based on the data collected and hereby analyzed, there are several issues and barriers that hinder the participation of the young people in the Church and the Small Christian Communities. Among these barriers is the lack of opportunities, negative environment due to the different perceptions, attitudes and judgment as well as the absence of proper programs aimed at the young people, among others. The social analysis that has been conducted in this chapter will form the basis for the theological reflection and pastoral planning for action that will take place in the next two chapters.

Origins of How Small Christian Communities in the Diocese

The answers received from the questioners in question number one, the researcher wanted to see whether the young adults really understand what Small Christian Community is, and the origin together with the activities of the SCCs. Only 13% could try to understand the origin of the SCC, at least 44 could tell the functions of SCC. By the statistics it shows that even those who attend SCC may not be knowing the origin of the SCC. A total of 45% confessed ignorance about the origins of these primary and fundamental forms of the presence of the Church.²⁵ The traditional tendency of considering young people as no precious resource in the faith communities, plays a role. Due to prejudice, they are regarded immature and irresponsible by those who started the SCCs in the most parishes in CDN, this is a root cause. This rendered them not, included in deciding the matters of SCCs. This violated their Christian right of being part and parcel of the communion (*koinonia*) in collaboration.²⁶

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the study, significantly more female participants (69%) were included as compared to the male participants who were only 31%. However, these differences in gender were not as significant as the age differences that the participants exhibited. Of all the participants who took part in the study, only 24% could be considered as young adults (below 40 years), the majority of the rest were people between 41 and 49 years (45%) with fewer respondents being above the age of 50 years (19%).²⁷ Only two respondents, however would be considered as elderly, above the age of 65 years. The age gap in the community setting exposes the young people to undue and unwelcome criticism from judgmental impression from the parents and the society leaders. Often, the young people have priorities, attitudes and perceptions that are way different from

²⁴ Jane Kiura, *Understanding Myself*, Pauline Publication Africa, Nairobi, 2010, p, 27.

²⁵ De Jong A, *the Challenges of Vatican II in East Africa*, 2004, 95.

²⁶ Thomas Franlin O’Meara, *Theology of Ministry*, New York, Paulist Press, 1983, p, 142.

²⁷ Questionnaire, question no 3, “who are the majority in terms of leadership in your small Christian community?”

those of the adults. They therefore feel that the older members of the Church Community do not understand their views and perspectives and hence often tend to stay away from SCCs activities and overall evangelization.²⁸

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By way of conclusion, we re-state that, in this paper, we have tried to highlight the reasons why young adults take the backseat in the SCCs affairs. We have singled out five main reasons, namely age difference with the parents, unemployment, education, peer pressure and failed pastoral. In order to ensure that young adults are not left confused in their faith, in chapter three we shall try to come up with biblical reflection and what the Church has taught about fully participation in Church and SCCs activities. It is upon the priest or the pastoral agent to carefully decide, sometimes together with the young adults within the parish, on the best way that will really help young adults come together and be able to live their faith in an active and meaningful way.

A world without youth is a world without a future, and if the Church does not take care of youth, it is like a house founded on sand (Mt 7:24-27).²⁹ So what should be the attitude of civil society, politicians and the Church towards young people? For centuries the political world, with its worldly ideologies, has increasingly forgotten its responsibility to promote the youth which will be the society of tomorrow, healthy and with profound human and religious values.³⁰ However, the Church has never forgotten its responsibility to form young people, to seek the most appropriate ways to, listen to the world of youth and ask how to accompany the new generations to recognize and welcome the call to love and to life in fullness. There are many apostolic and mission initiatives. The Church is always available to help young people both to find a space of discernment and to rekindle the flame of faith that the world of today with its false and worldly propaganda seeks to extinguish.

Today the world of youth is polarized by ideas and proposals that are contrary to true moral, ethical and political freedoms; the Church, for its mission, must always ensure young people its closeness and its support so that they should never feel alone. The Church must serve as a mirror of truth, a mirror that reflects to the young the teachings of Christ, the way, the truth and the life. (Jn 14:6) Today, more than ever, the Church is called to show young people the true path to follow, that is, to show Christ, because Christ is the way that every Christian is called to follow if he wants to find peace, happiness and unconditional love.³¹ Therefore the Church is called to respond to the needs of the young people, building the Christian and at the same time the man: the man because Christian and the Christian because man.

²⁸ For some major world religions, data are available only in a small number of countries. For example, when it comes to importance of religion, Pew Research Center has large enough sample sizes to distinguish between older and younger Jews only in the United States and Israel, and among Hindus only in the U.S. and India (though there were also enough Hindus surveyed in Bangladesh to include them in statistics about overall religious commitment). But in the survey data that are available for five major world religions (Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews) and the religiously unaffiliated population globally, it is rare for adults under 40 to be more religious than older adults within any religious group.

²⁹ The African Bible, p. 1647.

³⁰ <https://ofm.org/blog/youth-future-hope-of-the-world0and-of-the-church>, accessed on June, 14th 2021, at 22:49.

³¹ Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel; Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2013, no. 218, p. 112.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

We have argued here in a considerable detail about the challenges of the participation of the young adults in the Small Christian Communities in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu in Kenya. This was done in four chapters. On a pastoral point of view, we expressed the significant position given to the young adults in the universal church and the AMECEA region. Despite the weight of this priority of presenting them as the future and hope of the church, we were greatly puzzled with the reality on the ground in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu. It came to our notice and amazement that this group though zealous and enthusiastic is not raising the flag high enough in the area of active participation in SCCs.

Today, the young adults in the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu exhibit a certain lukewarm attitude towards the activities in SCCs. This prompted us to carry out a research to ascertain the cause (s) of this attitude. We found out in chapter one that the background (Geographical, Social, Political, Economic, Religious and Historical) of the Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu where this research was carried out has a direct bearing on how Christianity was received and how it is lived today resulting to this lukewarm attitude within this group of young adults.

In chapter two, though data collection, interpretation and analysis, we unearthed several causes of this challenge, the main cause being Poor knowledge of how Small Christian Communities began in this Local Church, age difference and physical development, Unemployment and employment, Greater affluence, Higher focus on kid's activities, More travel, Online options, The cultural disappearance of guilt, self-directed spirituality, Failure to see a direct benefit, Valuing attendance over engagement, Education level and technological set up, Peer pressure and different cults from the community, Peers "rika", Extracurricular activities. Religious families and religious communities, failed pastoral, Family structure, the role of leaders in SCCs in evangelization, Challenges encountered by the current leaders, Leadership problems. Taking this as our sign for theological reflection in chapter three, we found out that the sacred scripture both old and new testaments; the sacred tradition of the church, the teaching of the Church Magisterium and some theologians agree that for a successful religious young adults' formation is very necessary. In chapter four, several pastoral suggestions are recommended which will make Christianity the spinal cord of the contemporary culture by catalyzing the evolution of the current lived in culture towards Christian way of life in which young adults will live and be formed in order to be activities in the Church and SCCs activities.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In virtue of the baptism of young people, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciple's.³² Youth and young adults have an unquenchable desire for intimacy, reality, sense, identity, the young adults want things to happen in their way, quickly and with no difficulties, and reason that society cannot fulfill. These needs are quenched by communion with Jesus Christ, which leads to fellowship disciples. Our interactions with teenagers and young adults can facilitate young adult's disciple's encounters with Christ. Accompany them, encourage them to feel a sense of belonging in the parish and in SCCs, guide them to missionary

³² Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium; Apostolic Exhortation: The Joy of the Gospel*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2013, 67.

testimony³³. In the Church and fruitful exchange of love and caring with others who are in need. This relationship can also be defined as an invitation to become a missionary disciple of and for Jesus Christ. Baptism starts the discipleship process for young adults, and it continues until they learn to know Christ and practice His ways³⁴.

I have never encountered a parish which didn't want to reach young people, though the methods used are not palatable for the young adult but majority are relevant for the youths. Every parish sees the value in younger people becoming an active part of the Church. They know the future life of the Church depends upon them. The problem is often that the parishes doesn't act like what they claim to value. If a parish is more interested in protecting traditions, for example, than it is in creating a future, then it will most likely fail to attract young people and especially in SCCs. If a parish is interested in attracting young people, it must think strategically about doing so. And, let's be honest we are all figuring out this subject. We should be totally open to learning from these research and others of the same or related topics.

³³ <https://cruxnow.com>church-in-africa>, Youth Take Center Stage at Major Meeting of African Bishops, accessed on 31st April 2021, 20:48hrs

³⁴ Andrew Orta, *Catechizing Culture: Missionaries, Aymara, and the New Evangelization*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, 342.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. BIBLES

The African Bible, Nairobi, Pauline Publications, 1999.

The New Jerusalem Bible, London, Longman & Todd, 1985.

II. Magisterium Documents

a) Past and post Conciliar Documents

Vatican Council II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches, 21st November, 1964. No 47, 449.

Ad Gentes Divinitus, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, 7th December, 1965. No 1.813.

Gaudium Et Spes, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, 7th December 1965, AAS (1966) 903-907, 1125-1120.

Papal Documents

Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1995.

Christifideles Laici, Apostolic Exhortation on the Vocation & Mission of the Lay Faithful, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1994.

Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 1992.

Pope Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation, the Joy of the Gospel, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2013.

Laudato Si, Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father on Care for Our Common Home, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2015.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Courage! Get on Your Feet*, Continent of Africa, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2009.

Africae Munus, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2012.

Other Church Documents

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nairobi, Kenya, Pauline Publications Africa, 1992.

Code of Canon Law, Bangalore, India, Theological Publications in India, 2008.

Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu, *Strategic Plan 2009-2013*, Makuyu, Don Bosco Publishers, 2009.

Catholic Diocese of Nyahururu, *Strategic Plan 2021-2031*, Makuyu, Don Bosco Publishers, 2021.

III. Books

Marie France Perrin Jassy, *Leadership*, Eldoret, AMECEA Gaba Publications Spearhead, 2001.

Flynn Kieran, *Communities for the Kingdom*, A Handbook for Small Christian Community Leaders, Eldoret, Gaba Publications, 2007.

Denise Darnell, Mc Daniel, *The Combine Leadership Theory: Mobilizing Generation Y into the Evangelization of the World in This Generation*, New York, Regent University, 2003.

Healey, *Strengthening the Growth of Small Christian Communities in Africa: A Training Handbook for Facilitators*, Nairobi, CUEA Press, 2011.

De Jong A. *The Challenge of Vatican II in Eastern Africa, The Contribution of Dutch Missionaries to the Implementation of Vatican II in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi, 1965-1975*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 2004.

Callisto Locheng, A, J. *Missiology: Introduction to the Roots of the Great Commission*, Nairobi-Kenya, CUEA PRESS, 2011.

Michael Moloney, *Skills for Counselling Young People: A Practical Approach*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, Nairobi, 2013.

Chandra Muller & Christopher G. Ellison, *Religious Involvement, Social Capital, and Adolescents' Academic Progress: Evidence from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988*," *Sociological Focus* 34, 2001.

Anthony G. Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church*, Herndon, VA: An Alban Institute Publications, 2000.

Jimoh, Anselm Kole, and Agih Vincent, *the Concept of Democracy in Thomas Aquinas' Political Philosophy; Towards an Evaluation of Democratic Governance in Nigeria*, *Nasara Journal of Philosophy*, Nigeria, St Peter and Paul Seminary Press, 2019.

IV. Articles

Kalilombe P, "An Overview of Building of SCCs," in *Afer*, Vol.18, No.5, 1976. 261-275.

Pope John Paul II, "His Message to the Youth of Kenya," in *AMECEA Documentation Service* ADS 89/No314 September, 1985.

Pope Benedict XVI, "An Address to the Centismus Annus Pro-pontifical Foundation," in *Catholic Alive, Catholic Monthly News*, No. 178, May 2012,

Sr. Mishael Manianga, *Good Shepherd: A Journal of Pastoral Theology, My Puzzles and Insights About Small Christian Communities as a Way of Being Church Today*, Nairobi-Kenya, CUEA Press, Volume 2, Number 1, June 2017.

Mundele and Segeja, *Good Shepherd: Shepherd and Prophetic Leadership in the 21st Century*, Nairobi, CUEA Press, 2017.

Evelyn L. Lehrer, "Religion as a Determinant of Marital Fertility," *Journal of Population Economics* 9, no. 2, 1996

Donahue M.J. & P.L. Benson, "Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents," *Journal of Social Issues* 51, 1995.

V. Electronic Media

<https://www.mcgns.or.ke>. "How the Maasai Labelled most parts of Kenya." *The Standard*. Retrieved 2020-12-17.

<https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpro=2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-volume-i-population-by-county-and-sub-county>.

<https://data.world/kenya-open-data/f291cf3e-a14b-4f24-92bd-1416652126ff/workspace/file?filename=county-poverty-rates20056-csv-1.csv>

<http://icta.go.ke/pdf/32.pdf>

<http://icta.go.ke/pdf/18.pdf>

<https://laikipia.go.ke/assets.file/79271cf-cidp-2013-2017.pdf>

<https://www.nyandarua.go.ke/portfolio/county-integrated-development-plan-cidp-2018-2022/>

http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/lifestyle/holidays/december_2020/americans_want_christmas_more_religion_in_schools.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/prophetjeremiah>, accessed on 10th April, 2021, 23:05hrs.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patristics>, accessed on, 8th April, 2021, 13: 47 pm.