

# **CHRISTIANITY: Catalyst for the Revival of Family Pastoral Care**

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**Abstract:** This paper is a focus on Christianity as a catalyst for the revival of family pastoral care in the West Nile Region of Uganda. Christianity is the second world religion that came to be known after Islam in the west Nile Region of Uganda - after the failure of Islam as an instrument of family pastoral care in the same region. Christians were not only prayerful people but generous in support of everybody including non-Christians, especially Muslims in the region. Christians are accused of promoting division in the region among themselves, and between Christians and non-Christians as some Christians are involved in promoting drug abuse, criminal and immoral behaviour in the region.

**Key Words:** *CHRISTIANITY; Catalyst; Revival; Family; Pastoral; Care*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This is a contextual research paper, focused on Christianity as a catalyst for the revival of family pastoral care after Islam in the West Nile region of Uganda. It portrays conflicting and divisive situations between Christians themselves, Christians and non-Christians especially Muslims. It presents past Christian behaviour as promoting family pastoral care. Today it is often portrayed as decadent.

Christian involvement in drug abuse has many consequences: family breakdown, youth involvement in socio-criminal and immoral activities leading to child neglect. Many baptised abandoning their Christian heritage. The study highlights various causes of this problem, which include the failure of Christian parents to form their children, the scandalous behaviour of church leaders, unhealthy media influence, and inadequate education. Addressing this problem the study advocates for collaboration and commitment from the different groups already mentioned.

### **1. Background and problem statement**

In the past Christianity was inspiring other religions in the West Nile Region of Uganda. Christian religious leaders were seen by everybody (Christians and non-Christians) as role models. All Christians were responsible people from family up to the church, school, and different government work places, including health centres. Christian hospitality was extended to everybody including Muslims. This loving concern for everybody made a great impact on many non-Christians especially the Muslims to impress Christianity without any difficulty. What about the others has been a constant theological problem for them. Perhaps due to the advance in scientific knowledge, information spread through the media and cultural change in the region. However, today this shining and inspiring image of Christianity in the region has changed to degradation.

Conflict between Christians, and between Christians with/and non-Christians especially Muslims is very common. Christian involvement in drug abuse has many consequences: family breakdown, youth involvement in socio-criminal and immoral activities and child neglect.

#### **1.1. 'Revenge or self-defence'**

Amidst many family members in the region Christians are often depicted as criminal and rebellious people because of their involvement in violent tensions with non-Christians, especially Muslims. It has left many people wondering whether this involvement is for revenge or self-defence. What did their master whom they claim to emulate say about such involvement?

The 'New Vision', Uganda's national Newspaper consistently reports Christians' involvement in conflicts with non-Christians, especially Muslims. In this paper, Dradenya, Amazia, (3 July 2007) reported loss of human life and destruction of property resulting from such conflicts. In addition, he highlighted Christians

claiming that Muslims are taking advantage over other religions especially Christianity by imposing on them their faith and practices.

Voice of Life FM 100.9, (2009: 1) revealed that a group that is predominantly Islamic (people who embrace Islam and where Islam first made its proselytes) create a lot of suspicion and fear.

According to Warom Felix Okello, (17 September 2010: 3) from Arua town in the capital city of West Nile Region, such group(s) of people, although a minority like to assert their presence amidst the majority with threats and violence, including mobilizing people to protest against church established institutions, such as schools.

### **1.2. Fighting each other**

Some church leaders refuse to fulfil their responsibilities. These are leaders, without whom public religious functions cannot go – that is refusing to administer Sacraments of the Holy Eucharist (Laghu, 2008). This is not only dangerous behaviour (Parshall Phil., 1980: 280), but it also reveals that some Christian missionaries confuse the Gospel with alien Western customs and practices which are not only strange but sometimes shocking (Chris Greyling, 1981: 130).

Perhaps this has been the Church's 'traditional form and structure' (Winston Grawley, 1988: 32 – 39). Tradition can be useful, but it can also limit outreach and growth. In this case of the church leaders, tradition acted as a hindrance to the spread of the Gospel, and flexibility of Ecclesiology. Thus, the Church leadership model becomes unbiblical. It portrays the church as unconcerned about promoting new forms and structures of church life and new leadership patterns to spread the Gospel. Consequently ordinary baptized Christians severely criticise their pastors/ priests including religious brothers and nuns (George Laghu, 2008).

### **1.3. Radio: silence about violence**

At times the Church institutions responsible for public information have failed to report bloodshed and destructions of properties, which were purely results of Christian-Muslim violence. It is difficult to know the reason why, perhaps because Christian radio broadcasts fear causing more bloodshed. This is a lesson learnt from Rwandan radio broadcast, through Radio Pacis, Catholic Community radio broadcast in Arua, the capital city of West Nile Region of Uganda. This radio station reported on the Rwandan local radio broadcasting that promoted violence between Tutsis and Hutus in 1994.

Here is the challenge and the mission of Radio Pacis: In Rwanda, in the year 1994, a radio was able to incite so much hatred between two tribes that people were led to genocide. If a radio can bring evil into the hearts of so many people why can't Radio Pacis plant seeds of peace and development in the hearts of 5 million listeners living in 7 dioceses (Arua, Nebbi, Hoima and Gulu in Uganda; Mahagi in Congo; Yei and Torit in Southern Sudan) through programmes that educate towards faith, health, agriculture, ecology, human values? (Radio Pacis Media Centre 2009: 14).

In the viewpoint of James Putzel&Joost Van de Zwan, this was devastating time; the problem was the local media. The authors point out that the Rwandan radio had succeeded in fermenting evil in the hearts of so many people in Rwanda during the genocide. The radio station even located the exact places where people were hiding for their lives.

It has also come to be known that other Christian media stations, such as Voice of Life (VOL) do not welcome non-Christians, especially Muslims to share in their educational programmes. This implies that Christian media broadcasts although they play an educational role in the region, also have their own limitations that can be regarded as challenges to the universal church: should we promote life by keeping silent about the losing live or not? Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae*, (1995: No.2) promotes 'the Gospel of Life'. Always our aim has to be one of protecting and preserving human life.

Paul VI's *Nostra Aetate*, (1965:3), teaches people to regard highly non-Christians. It challenges Christians to have a special regard for Muslims, because they share a similar belief in one God as Christians, and a common ancestry from Abraham.

Negative attitudes revealed divisions existing among Church members. They provided an occasion for the non-Christians to attack the Church. It also showed the mission of the church was and is merely saving individuals and educating them for eternity, without taking on the challenge of building a just society. This is significant tension between Christians and non-Christians in the Region.

### **1.4. Drug abuse**

Looking at the rate that the Christian youth indulge in drug abuse, many Christian and non-Christian families are scared. Those under the influence of drugs bring shame to their family. This fear of drug abuse by Christians is somehow reflected as religious conflict. The study conducted in 2016 about family pastoral care as the church's task in the nation building in the West Nile Region, reflected:

33% of social decay in the Region is due to drug abuse. According to Okumu (2016:38), such substances abuses are intoxicating, stimulating, or narcotic chemicals, and are usually illegal. The research highlighted them as marungi, opium, and alcohol. These are chemicals that can be seen or touched. In the interview, it was noted that, out of 10 elders, 21 school administrators, 8 Catholic priests, 20 students, 28 people chewing marungi and smoking opium, 2 senior police officers, 6 LC1s, and 20 young Christians, 63% believed that social decay in this region is caused by the majority group engagement in drug or substance abuse. Only 37% (65 interviewees) gave other causes (Arima 2017:171).

In *The New Vision* (vol. 31 no. 49 of Wednesday 9 March 2016:38) these illegal drugs and substances, commonly abused, are named ‘sachet waragi, beer, kuberm cigarettes, shisha, marijuana, khatmiraa, cocaine, and glue’.

My personal observation is that young Christian men are strongly involved in drug and substance abuse. These drugs or substances include marungi (taken in by chewing), opium (smoking), and alcohol of different types revealed by *The New Vision* newspaper above. It is not only the young baptized who abuse these drugs, but also Christians who are adults, regardless of gender.

Many people in the Region are involved in different forms of drug abuse, but the greatest number of drug abusers, are Catholics below the age of 18. It is a common phenomenon causing social decay in the Region. It appeared in the questionnaire and interview responses. The same information is revealed by newspapers. Questionnaire responses from both the Church and the school reported that 50% of the total population believes that social decay in the region is associated with the lack of parental care, while the other 50% perceive it as young Christians’ involvement in drug addiction.

This fear of Muslims cannot disappear, because it is deeply rooted in the minds of Christians. Nobody can remove it from their minds, except the Christians themselves: both young and old are capable of doing this by changing their behaviour; they can withdraw from illegal drug abuse and restore the confidence of the Muslims in the community. This will not only enable them to be responsible Christian family members, but it will also open the way for future non-Christians to be taken care of by their Christian fellows. Non-Christians, who have been negatively affected by the behaviour of the drug-abusing baptized, need to recognise the transformed behaviour of Christians and respond to it in a positive manner.

## II. QUESTIONS AND DESIGNING METHODOLOGY

The key question guiding the study is: How can Christianity serve as a revival of family pastoral care in the West Nile Region? Supplementary questions include:

- i. What are the problems affecting Christianity as a revival of family pastoral care in the region?
- ii. What are the root causes of these problems?
- iii. How can these problems be addressed pastorally?

This is qualitative research. It is a ‘form of enquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings, uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them’ (Anderson 1998:119); it investigates culture, society, behaviour through an analysis of people’s words and actions’ (Hogan, Dolan & Donnelly 2009:3); it can be described as ‘pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experience of people’ (Marshall & Rossman 2006:2). The data collected and analysed were either the original words spoken by the research participants, or their words written in the documents issued to them; these are complemented by the words of the researchers themselves to present the activities, images, and environment being observed (Hogan 2009). The sources of information were basically observations of and interviews with the participants (Firestone 1987:16–21), as well as archives of records and documents (e.g. newspapers and articles) concerning this issue.

Qualitative research is seen as the best method to accomplish this task, as it is a ‘suited activity that locates the observer in the world, which consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:3). As this method is about finding out what people think, feel, and/or believe, the researchers used interviews, questionnaires, and attitude scales to reach answers (Marshall & Rossman 2006:3). Qualitative research is done in the presence of the people being studied, and within the environment they are examined (Hogan 2009). This is ‘uniquely suited to discerning human participation in what happens to them’ (Fisher 2005:411). Included is the ‘desire to understand behaviour and institutions by getting to know the people involved and their values, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and emotions’ (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1996:281).

### 2.1. Procedures for collecting data and the Sample size

Empirically, data collection was through questionnaire, oral interview (Patton 1990:169–183) and review of scholarly works of other authors (Hansen 1995:34–45) and e-sources. Questionnaire sample size is ten people (male and female). Interview among 180 interviewees but for this study only 18 interviewees were selected because of their education (graduates from university) and experience (35 years and above) in family pastoral care ministry in the region under study.

## **2.2 Procedure for data analysis, management and ethics**

The researchers followed active analytic processes throughout all phases of the research to understand processes and interpret correctly data. They used inductive reasoning to analyze data and to generate ideas (Patton 1990:169–183). The researchers gained consent from the people as an essential part of obtaining information from them (Eiserman&Behl 1992:15). Participants provided information voluntarily. Confidentiality was observed in data collection and analysis.

## **III. ROOT CAUSES**

The key root causes include: irresponsible parental care, scandalous attitudes, unhealthy media influence, and inadequate education.

### **3.1. Irresponsible parental care**

The majority of Christian parents do not take their irreplaceable responsibility for rearing their children seriously enough in this region. Parents give birth to children but these children are often not taken care of by them. They are taken care of by their grandparents, the school, and the Church, as well as house helpers, children in child-headed households, and other adults such as aunts and uncles.

There are various reports of parents leaving their children by themselves and many infants dying from neglect and sickness. There are incidences where parents are available to their children, but they never attend to their emotional needs, very high rates of infant mortality, very few families attempting to form close attachments with their children. In such a situation parents directly or indirectly setback Christianity as a revival of family pastoral care in the region because of the consequences of such proxy upbringing of young people in the Region are detrimental.

Social development and progress are now impeded by the young Christians' involvement in criminal activities such as robbery, rebel movements, and rape. Christian women and girls are involved in sexual promiscuity. Christian youth get involved and injured as victims of religious conflicts in schools. Teenage pregnancies, environmental degradation, and forced displacement leading to the increase of refugees, have become common in the Region. Christian youth are affected physically, psychologically, behaviourally, and socially. Furthermore, their Christian heritage is weakened or denied. The situation of Christian children, who are disabled, is even worse: Christian parents become stressed and angry and sometimes even beat the vulnerable child.

### **3.2. Scandalous attitude**

Worldwide, church leaders are seen as responsible people, capable of leading all people (Christians and non-Christians) to God. This begins at home which is the domestic church. It extends to others – non-Christians, political and civic world. However this is not the case in the West Nile Region, where conflict between religious leaders and ordinary Christians is common.

My personal experience in attending meetings with lay baptised in the already mentioned region over the years, was to hear the complaint: 'Our priests are the problem! When we lay people wish to introduce something new, the priest often blocks us'. This complaint signifies that many priests still reign as supreme in their parishes, assuming all responsibility to themselves.

This attitude of priests leads to failure to activate the enormous resources, talents, and energy that exist in every parish and inevitably leads to apathy and passivity among the people. This, in turn, prevents the development of a sense of community, so that many people are abandoning church, or leaving to join other smaller (Pentecostal) churches, where much more participation is allowed, and they feel at home.

Laghu George (2008) reports conflicts between Catholic religious leaders and ordinary Christians in Moyo Catholic Vicariate within the same region of West Nile: 'the Episcopal vicar' declined to 'conduct a requiem mass for the mother of Moyo district Chairman' because 'the cow to be eaten at the funeral had been slaughtered by a Muslim'.

Consequently other Catholic priests could not conduct mass in similar situations because for them this order comes from higher authority, and related to church rubrics. Priests and nuns are thus often accused of contradictory behaviour towards non-Christians. For years priests, nuns and ordinary Christians were buying and eating meat from the butcheries run by non-Christians i.e. Muslims. They knew quite well that Muslims decline to eat meat of an animal slaughtered by non-Muslims.

### **3.3. Unhealthy media influence**

The media do not attempt to explain complex matters carefully and truthfully, especially foreign media (Western broadcasts). They do not give due consideration to the priorities and problems of Christianity as a revival of family pastoral especially in respect of Christian cultural values. However, Catholics must also understand that they are very often ambiguous in their attitude to such offerings. Very often, adults desire for

themselves the same entertainment that disturbs them when they see their children exposed to it. Practical example used to be Arua One 88.7 FM (Islamic established media) before New Vision took it over. Monday – Friday Line up of Arua One 88.7 FM journalists used to spend more time on a programme known as the ‘Romantic Zone’. It was one of the important programs in Islamic established media in the region. ‘Romantic Zone’ takes three hours daily from 11.00 A.M to 2.00 P.M and from 9.00 P.M to 12.00 A.M (Arua One 2002-2009:1). Perhaps non-Catholics dialogued with the media personnel of this radio broadcast about the safety of their own children.

Instead of giving a detailed explanation of complex matters, media tend to oversimplify them. Take sex education for example: traditionally in the Region sex education takes the form of an arcane discipline. Sex education progresses gradually, stage by stage, according to age and understanding, throughout the natural development of the children. It is important because of the role it plays in both Christian marriage and family life. This includes the responsibility Christian parents have in raising their children. However, the media oversimplify this by exposing everything to children at a tender age. The results are sexual promiscuity and violence, unwanted pregnancies, and HIV and AIDS. It means that nobody can consider him/herself, immune to the negative effects of media, such as pornography. In the face of violence, or/and injury at the hands of those acting under their influence, the young and the immature are especially vulnerable and most likely to be victimised. Pornography and sadistic violence debase sexuality, and corrode human relationships. It undermines marriage and family life, fosters anti-social behaviour, and weakens the moral fabric of society (PCSC 1989:10).

With foreign media on the internet, a distorted vision of life and human beings is often imposed. The media flood communities such as the Region with pornography and violence. The internet does not only come with formative messages to young people, but also provides them with pornography. It has been easy for the youth to access the internet through mobile phones and computers. Internet use can lead to addiction because of explicit images about sexual gratification. This use can trigger and leave an impression on the memory, where fantasies are created which can be easily recalled. The internet can easily ensnare the unsuspecting, including young people. The images and sexual gratification the internet brings tempt young people to look at these images again and again. With repeated use, the viewer builds up tolerance to its harmful effects, with a progressive need for more stimulating images, which can cause intense physical changes in the body and brain, and reinforce disordered thoughts and behaviour. With repeated use, the obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour associated with sexual images become increasingly difficult to interrupt or resist.

Young Christians in the Region find themselves living in a culture that is increasingly dark and death-dealing. Young Christians easily absorb these negative influences – taking them in like a plant absorbs through its roots what is in the soil or ‘culture’ in which it is planted. They are becoming numb and do not realise that they are slowly being poisoned. Although the government can impose undue control over the media and so prevent easy access, it lacks the will to do so. Media abuse has become one of the causes inhibiting Christianity as a revival of family pastoral care in the region.

### **3.4. Inadequate education/training**

The failure of education is linked to the failure of Christianity as a revival of family pastoral care In the West Nile Region. There are four types of education in the Region: 1) general education (government education); 2) African cultural education; 3) Islamic education; and 4) Christian education. African cultural education focuses on the initiation of young people into adulthood. It lays an emphasis on the following of cultural traditions. It takes place at home, mostly in the evenings. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and peers are teachers.

General education or government education, takes place in government own institutions, such as primary and secondary schools, tertiaries and universities, such as Makerere University (Langa 2013). Government often supplies those schools with educational materials. Its purpose is the promotion of intellectual knowledge. This means limited emphasis is put on moral and spiritual formations. Its focus is intellectual training through the system of academic examinations. Readiness for life therefore is no longer judged in terms of participation in community service. The training sometimes becomes superficial among youth who are already alienated from traditional cultural values by urban city life. Education no longer takes seriously Christianity and church life. Perhaps for the government they are not important. They fail to see that Christianity does much more than simply introduce young people to gaining factual knowledge.

Islamic education takes place in the mosques and Muslim-established families. It focuses on the teaching of the Quran (Holy book of the Muslims). The young Muslims only have Muslim teachers (La-Salandra 2003:2-4).

Christian education takes place in the Church and in Christian institutions (La-Salandra 2001:8) – schools, health centres, and families. It focuses on prayer to the Triune God and the sacraments (Ediofe Vicariate Music Committee 2004:21). In summary, Christian education focuses on the love of God and neighbour (Mt 22:37-40).

Traditional education in the Region like any other region in Africa, is expected to be ‘co-responsible for the extended family’ Shorter (1972:68), introducing the child to a wider community. The education by relatives who are not immediate parents has many of the advantages that are claimed by boarding-schools. Different relatives take care of different levels and emphases in the child’s education. ‘Thus the grandparents and older kinsfolk inculcate the deeper moral values, and introduce the child to basic religious beliefs and practices. The children’s own parents, on the other hand, introduce them to the practical duties of their sex in the home and outside. Father’s sister and mother’s brother (in patrilineal societies) take an affectionate interest in the children’s moral, personal and social education, and may play special roles at moments of crises. Although traditional education is based on African world view and African family practices of extended polygamous families, it is contrary to the education on the monogamous family, based on the teaching of the Bible (cf. 1 Cor 7:2-5). While the emphasis of education was to serve evangelism and catechesis, the situation has changed currently’.

La-Salandra (2004:30), amidst so-called educated and civilised western colonial Christian missionaries, states that Muslim children were unable to obtain the necessary skills for advancement, as they only had a Quranic school (‘garan’ in Arabic) for their children. Such exclusion of Muslims from the educational system, which was Christian based, added to the ordinary problems of West Nilers and the danger of establishing two classes of people: the elite and the non-elite. The elite could further their education and thus be incorporated into the colonial system as clerks, messengers, etc., while the non-elite (Muslims and those who never went to school) would be relegated to the role of peasant farmers, working in sugar plantations or employing themselves as petty traders.

#### **IV. PASTORAL CARE REVIVAL**

It looks at Christianity not only in relation to the family, but also in relation to community. The study realizes that in whole of the West Nile Region everyone seems to be talking about community. This is reflected in the Catholic Church, as Small Christian Communities – SCC (Cadri 2007: 1-3) or JumuyiaNdogoNdogo (in Kiswahili). It is a pastoral plane – Community Serving Community’. A reason for this emphasis is the realisation that without community in this region, people’s faith, hope and charity gradually die. Only through community are family members’ lives more fully realised (Connor 1988:23-24). There is also a stress on the oneness (the unity) of the community, and the necessity to overcome unnecessary conflicts between clergy and the lay people as a prerequisite for a real experience of community.

##### **4.1. Education for formation**

It focuses on development and liberation. Although there are four types of education in the Region, Christianity as a revival of family pastoral care currently sees that a theology of education, and education for development, is at stake. A theology of education is a theology of human liberation in its deepest sense. It perceives that education is for the whole area of human rights as a constituent part of the education for justice. Currently, education is understood as an instrument of social change, but education must serve the purpose of humanisation within the gospel perspective. There must be education for freedom and love, education for justice, and lastly, a Christian social strategy. It also aims at development.

Education for development looks at Christ as the model teacher. He is always gentle, informal, and contextual in his teaching approach. While critically examining the present state of the formal educational system, family pastoral care emphasises the role of non-formal education in educational institutions by either bringing outsiders in for part-time courses or by establishing non-formal centres, particularly in rural areas. In these situations, the social function of education is also analysed in the broader context of the social, economic, and political structure of society. This is where the family pastoral caregiver must be connected to the role of colleges in society and the contribution they can make within the framework of constraints and opportunities to the emergence of a just social order characterised by human rights, freedom, and participatory processes.

Analysing education in development, the study examines the role of education, especially adult education, in the process of women’s emancipation and the correction of systemic injustice (Brown, DC. 1996:47-65) within the Region. The framework of this experience was women’s and girls’ involvement in sexual promiscuity due to poverty and fear. With this approach, the study urges for transformation that can be gained through self-reliance. The lessons learned here are: 1) the importance of a positive environment; 2) education as a liberating process; and 3) education and rural development as redemptive work. Added to this is a redoubled effort to recover reformed principles of life, especially for parents, which include prayer, initiation in Christian faith, and a more radical Christian lifestyle.

##### **4.2. Becoming role models**

Christians must learn to be role models both to Christians and non-Christians. This can begin with the priest. It is important to note that priests as moral and spiritual leaders of all people (baptised and non-baptised) need to

embrace a Christianity that revives their understanding of family pastoral care that affects everyone regardless of religion, gender, status, age, and colour.

Many priests as superior to the people seem not bothered to consult lay people. They operate in an undemocratic fashion: that is without any sense of accountability to the people. Many people, both within and outside the church scoff at church calls for democracy in the region, while undemocratic practices within the church are still defended. It is a clear that there is a line between the sacred priest and the people. This is a manifestation of clericalism which the Laity Commission of the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference SACBC 1990:7) aptly describes as

an attitude of feeling aloof, separate from the people; an attitude of alone possessing all guidance of the Spirit, all insight and all responsibility; an attitude of not being brother to the other baptized, of disregarding the equal dignity of all believers; an attitude of having nothing to learn from people.

Those who experience the gap most acutely are women because emphasis is on male priestly status. A growing resentment amongst more and more women at their exclusion from central functions and offices in the church are brought to mind. Yet they are the backbone of the church in virtually all communities in the region.

There are also a growing reaction to a number of priests concelebrating the liturgy of the mass, as this is seen as a sign of male, clerical dominance. The all-made body of priests around the altar can awaken negative feelings in women who are excluded from liturgical functions.

#### **4.3. Cooperation**

Cooperation is a way forward to tackle the root causes to the problem of Christianity as a family pastoral revival in the region of West Nile. Christians and non-Christians are products of both the nuclear and extended family. Key people responsible for family pastoral care revival are the baptised. Careless Christians can easily block family pastoral care revival. The starting point for this revival is the local church. The Church is the 'family of God', and the family is 'domestic church', or 'school at home' (Paul VI *Gaudium et Spes* 1965a:52), and 'primary cell or seed of society' (Paul VI *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 1965b:11). The domestic Church is the foundational social institution. Failure of the church in pastoral care revival means that the family, school and society have also failed. When these institutions are united, they contribute in abundance to nation building. Responsible, mature young people become the future leaders of the family, the church, the school and nation. That is why all the baptised, including those who are government functionaries, must also play their part not only politically but also by supporting family pastoral care revival, through aiding Christianity.

Accusation against Christians as promoters of division in the region between themselves, and between Christians and non-Christians, through allegations of Christian involvement in promoting drug abuse, criminal and immoral behaviour, will also be solved. Consequences of drug abuse, such as violence against women and children will also be tackled.

The study has already noted that women and children suffer most from the failure of family pastoral care revival. Cooperation between all concerned serves as 'recognition and empowerment' and as the solution to 'divided families and communities' in situations of violence and paedophilia. The stated violence is not only limited to the region understudy but it affects the entire continent of Africa. Female and young victims of war have been raped; there are homicides, and many have contracted HIV and AIDS. HIV/AIDS cannot be confined to war zones because of its pandemic character; the pandemic 'knows no boundary'. It is especially 'prevalent where there is political instability or lack of education or joblessness and poverty, and it affects both women and men' (Bennett 2010: 97- 98).

#### **4.4. Commitment**

Cooperation must be accompanied by practical commitment to aid Christianity as family pastoral care revival. It must not be commitment limited to issues affecting the government, e.g. media information that can tarnish the image of the country (Features 2014). Without this commitment, cooperation in support of Christianity as family pastoral care revival remains at the level of theory. What is theoretical is an idea/set of ideas to explain something or a set of principle(s) on which an activity is based (Soanes 2008:945). However theory without committed, concrete, strategic action will be useless. Christians, whether in the family, school, or government must support each other and be committed so that proper pastoral care revival to non-Christians, especially Muslims, takes place in the region.

Christians play an essential role in society, whose permanence they guarantee. Committed Christians foster the socialization of the young and help curb the phenomena of violence by transmitting values and the experience of brotherhood and solidarity. In the search for justified solutions in modern society, Christians are representatives of the family. The Christian family as the domestic church cannot be put on the same level as mere associations or unions (The Pontifical Council for the Family 2000:33). For the family to function in pastoral care revival, it has a right to be protected and promoted by society. In the State, the family must be recognized by law. The well-being of the family promotes the common good of society.

Unity between Christian family members must find protection and care in the Republic of Uganda and it must be re-enforced by the law enforcing agents. The Christian family is the fundamental nucleus of society. Therefore, it is the duty of the State to give protection, not only to members of society in general but also to the church as the domestic family. The State must protect all the church members. The State must recognize with no discrimination, the primacy of the inalienable rights of the person and protect the family as the basic institution of society. Christian family life is founded on the basis of individual dignity and equality between the sexes, therefore, the State must use all the means at its disposal to attain this end.

Failure to take seriously these solutions (suggested above) by church and the State is a failure to recognize that the family (including the Christian family) is the foundation of the Nation. It is a failure to promote solidarity between Christian family members, the family's active promotion, and its complete development. The community and the State must therefore protect the Christian family and promote it. The Christian family constitutes the greatest human capital, but its pastoral dimension encompasses many other tasks of non-Christians.

#### **4.5. The church must take the lead**

The church must take the lead in the promotion of family pastoral care revival in the region. This does not mean that the church has never taken the lead in addressing these matters. The universal church calls parents of all families (Christian and non-Christian) to a responsible love. It is now the duty of the local church in the region to call them also to responsible parenthood. Pope Paul VI stated clearly that those are considered:

to exercise responsible parenthood who prudently and generously decide to have a large family, or who, for serious reasons and with due respect to the moral law, chose to have no more children for the time being or even for an indeterminate period (Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* 1968:10).

For Christianity as a family pastoral care revival, this implies that to have child (ren) should result from prudent reflection, not 'chance'. On the other hand, it teaches family members must have serious reasons to avoid pregnancy and must respect the moral law, the 'ethics of the sign' (West 2009:114-115).

Taking the lead in the promotion of family pastoral care revival is an inescapable responsibility for the church because 'it was founded to spread the kingdom of Christ over all the earth for the glory of God, to make all people partakers in redemption and salvation, and through them to establish the right relationship of the entire world of Christ' (Paul VI *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1965b: 2). Pastoral care ministry is the church's fundamental task in human society. It is a command from her/his master and Lord, 'Go make disciples of all nations (Mt 28: 19).

Therefore the church must encourage everybody including all other institutions, such as family, school, and government to engage in sensitizing their members to collaborate to promote family pastoral care revival. This must first take place among church members as pastoral care givers. Church pastoral workers must collaborate with other institutions and organisations including those which are non-Christian. Conflicts between family members on the basis of belief system, including child abuse and child neglect (by parents, teachers, police and judiciary) must be reported to the proper authorities (Ariaka 2015). On the other hand, the church must make sure that every opportunity is utilised to educate and assist parents and other adults to resist ill-informed 'peer/adult pressure' (Diocese of Tzaneen 2011: 68-69), and to correct wrong perceptions as to how to rear their children.

On sexual misconduct, the church needs to take every opportunity to educate and assist men and boys not to give way to ill-informed peer pressure about what it means to be a man or a woman, to help those who have wrong ideas about sexuality and masculinity to change their attitudes and behaviour even if they are under drug influence. We need to protect against sexual misbehaviour, to assist the victims and above all make the region a much safer place for girls and women (SACBC 2013: 147).

### **V. CONCLUSION**

This is focused research on Christianity as a catalyst of family pastoral care revival in the context of the west Nile Region. It accepts the practice of true Christianity as the solution to the failure of Islam in regard to family pastoral care ministry. Christianity was very influential in a positive manner in past decades but as time advanced it started to decline in influence because Christians did not take seriously their responsibility to be "light and salt" to all, including non-Christians and especially Muslims.

The article calls Christians from all spheres of life to act as role models of all that is right and good, to cooperate among themselves and with non-Christians, and to become more committed in fulfilling their irreplaceable duty as family pastoral care givers in the region. To be role models, they are to follow the teaching, and imitating the life, of their master, the Lord Jesus Christ. This will require tolerance, and non-violent resolution of conflicts.

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