Theological and Ecological Foundations for Youth Ministry in Relation to the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda - East Africa

Leo Tinkatumire

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THEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN
RELATION TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA, UGANDA–EAST AFRICA

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Theology
McAnulty College and School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Rev. Fr. Leo Tinkatumire

December 2011
THEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN
RELATION TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA, UGANDA–EAST AFRICA

By
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ABSTRACT

THEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY IN RELATION TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA, UGANDA–EAST AFRICA

By

Rev. Fr. Leo Tinkatumire

December 2011

Dissertation supervised by Maureen O’Brien, PhD

This dissertation is titled: Theological and Ecological Foundations for Youth Ministry in Relation to the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda – East Africa. The Archdiocese of Mbarara, located in the traditional kingdom of Nkore in southwestern Uganda, is undergoing societal shift. Due to the pervading influences of Western civilization and technology, the conservative and often static culture of native tribal communities with their adherence to informal education, traditional customs and worship and a predominantly agrarian economy, is undergoing steady but dramatic transformation. Amidst this process of transition, the Church is struggling with the immediate need to adjust the message and methods of its pastoral ministry, especially to the youth who are most easily allured and impacted by new waves of change.

This dissertation, concerned with ministering to the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, employs a practical theology approach under the field of pastoral
ministry in systematic theology, analyzes African Traditional Religious (ATR) and cultural heritage in Mbarara and advocates for inculturation theology. To inspire responses of faith among the youth, it emphasizes theological foundations in Christian doctrine and ATR that teach about God who takes the initiative of love by creating and sustaining all life. The dissertation recalls the basics of faith: the revelation of the Triune God through sacred scripture, sacred tradition, and the teaching authority of the Church (*Magisterium*). These fundamentals of faith are presented in a manner that encourages human response to God’s initiative through the sacraments, prayer and committed lives.

Ecological foundations as presented in this dissertation aim at illuminating God’s handiwork in the youths’ own physical, spiritual, psychological and social human nature; and of their unique ecological relationship and call to responsible living as human beings within the biosphere of God’s Creation.

The theological and ecological concepts that form the core of this dissertation aim at helping youth ministers, parents and the youth to develop upon those foundations a holistic and meaningful (youth) ministry for the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving parents Oliva Kemigango Tindamanyire (Ekifa bakahinga kya Daudi) and Narcisio Tindamanyire (Mushomesa) for their sacrifices, prayers and pieces of advice and my siblings; Kanyamurwa, Barisigara, Twinobusingye, Turinemigisha, Tindamanyire, Asiimwe, Ahimbisibwe and Twinomuhwezi as a challenge of love.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My parents raised me, praying and sacrificing to shape my character and set me on the path of formal education. They were my first teachers and to this day they continue to challenge me by word and example. I am incredibly grateful to them.

I am indebted to the Archdiocese of Mbarara for receiving me into formation to the priesthood. My heartfelt thanks go to Archbishop Paul K. Bakyenga, the Archbishop of Mbarara, for his fatherly support through the seminaries and for ordaining me a priest. It was Archbishop Bakyenga who sent me for postgraduate studies that have led me to writing this work.

My sincere gratitude goes to Dr. Maureen O’Brien for her wisdom, patience and guidance while directing this dissertation. I owe many thanks to the members of the Department of Theology, current and retired, for their academic instruction, counsel and encouragement that have led me to complete this dissertation.

I am very grateful to Marie (Ree) McGowan for her sacrifices and love in reading and editing all my writing since the time of the initial proposal. Protase Tinkatumire proof-read and Thomas Masters did the final editing, for which I am eternally grateful.

I acknowledge with gratitude: Msgr. John Barugahare, Winnie Byanyima, Amany Mushega as well as Bernadette Bigirwa (deceased) and the Mutatina family for their challenge of love and support. Also, Fr. Ray Bourque O.M.I, Herman Kelling, Dave and Debbie Groen, Rev. Dr. Robert and Dr. Pat Cuttica, Robert and Marie Mueller and family, Fr. Louis Vallone, Fr. Walter Lydzon, Fr. Richard McCue, the St. Kilian Church
and St. Helena of the Cross Church communities in the Archdiocese of Chicago and all those who spiritually, socially and materially have contributed to this academic journey away from home.

My heart-felt thanks go to my friends and companions, Fr. Michael Komakech, Fr. Alex Otubo and Fr. William Vanecko. Bishop Joseph Perry and Bishop Roger W. Gries, O.S.B., your love, encouragement and prayers are greatly appreciated.
# ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acts</td>
<td>Acts of the Apostles</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATR</td>
<td>African Traditional Religions</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Before Christ</td>
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<td>BCP</td>
<td>Behavioral Change Programs</td>
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<td>BEC</td>
<td>Basic Ecclesial Communities</td>
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<td>CBHC</td>
<td>Community Based Health Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Catechism of the Catholic Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCR</td>
<td>Catholic Charismatic Renewal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Col</td>
<td>Colossians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cor</td>
<td>Corinthians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRE</td>
<td>Christian Religious Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td><em>Catechesi Tradendae</em>: On Catechesis in our Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUEA</td>
<td>Catholic University of East Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV</td>
<td><em>Dei Verbum</em>: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eph</td>
<td>Ephesians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td><em>Evangelica Tesificatio</em>: Apostolic Exhortation on the Renewal of Religious Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Exodus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World: <em>Familiaris Consortio</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td><em>Gravissimum educationis</em>: The Declaration on Christian Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gn</td>
<td>Genesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td><em>Gaudium et Spes</em>: Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heb</td>
<td>Hebrews</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Educational Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immune Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jn</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lk</td>
<td>Luke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td><em>Lumen Gentium</em>: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mk</td>
<td>Mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLG C</td>
<td>Our Lady of Good Counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pt</td>
<td>Peter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent-Teacher Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom</td>
<td>Romans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RP</td>
<td><em>Reconciliatio et Paenitentie</em> (Reconciliation and Penance)</td>
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SC  Sacrosanctum Concilium: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
Sm  Samuel
Tim  Timothy
UPC  Uganda People’s Congress
UPE  Universal Primary Education
US  United States
USE  Universal Secondary Education
VC  Vita Consecrata: Consecrated Life
VS  Veritatis Splendor: The Splendor of Truth
YAG  Youth Alive Group
YCS  Young Christian Students
YCW  Young Christian Workers
KY  Kabaka Yeka
YSG  Youth Support Group
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................................. iv
DEDICATION ............................................................................................................................... vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................................. vii
ABBREVIATIONS ...................................................................................................................... ix
INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... xvii

CHAPTER ONE:  A DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA ........1

1.0 Overview of the Description of the Archdiocese ................................................................. 1

1.1 Locating the Archdiocese of Mbarara .................................................................................. 3

1.1.1 The Physical Description and Location of Uganda in Relation to Africa ..................... 3

1.1.2 The Historical, Political and Religious Description of Uganda ..................................... 4

1.2 Locating and Describing the Archdiocese of Mbarara ......................................................... 7

1.2.1 The Description of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Mbarara ..................................... 7

1.2.2 The Religious Composition of the Mbarara Archdiocese .............................................. 8

1.2.3 The People of the Archdiocese of Mbarara .................................................................. 9

1.2.4 Religio-Political Merger in Nkore and Its Impact on Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara ........................................................................................................ 13

1.3 The Recent Past and Current Social and Cultural, Economic and Political Dynamics Affecting Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara and the Age Group Addressed in the Dissertation ................................................................. 15

1.3.1 The Social and Cultural Shifts and Effects on Youth Ministry .................................... 15

1.3.2 The Political, Economic and Educational Factors Affecting Youth Ministry .............. 28

1.3.3 The Age Group Addressed in the Dissertation ............................................................. 33

Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 35

CHAPTER TWO:  LEADERSHIP AND PARTICULAR CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA ....36
2.0 Overview: Leadership and Particular Challenges and Obstacles to Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

2.1 Youth Ministry Leadership in Parishes and Schools in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

2.1.1 The Archdiocesan Youth Apostolate Office, Jesus is Alive Community *(Yesa Ahurire Community)*

2.1.1.1 Eucharistic Crusaders

2.1.1.2 Xaverian Movement

2.1.1.3 Focolare Movement

2.1.1.4 Legion of Mary

2.1.1.5 Apostleship of Prayer

2.1.1.6 Young Christian Students (YCS) and Young Christian Workers (YCW)

2.1.1.7 Scouts and Girl Guides

2.1.1.8 Altar Servers Associations

2.1.1.9 Church Choirs, Music Groups and Sports Groups

2.1.1.10 Youth Alive Group (HIV/AIDS Awareness Group)

2.1.1.11 Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR)

2.1.2 Institute of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC)

2.1.3 Parish Priests (Pastors) and Curates (Associate Pastors) and Appointed Chaplains in Youth Ministry

2.1.4 Parish Laity: Religious Men and Women, Lay Ministers and Youth Ministry

2.1.5 Schools, Institutional Administrators (Head Teachers, Principals, Presidents, Staff and Student Leaders) and Youth Ministry

2.2 Some Challenges and Obstacles to the Youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

2.2.1 HIV/AIDS Pandemic and Other Killer Diseases, vis-à-vis Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

2.2.2 The Abuse and Neglect of the Youth, and Inappropriate Models for the Youth
2.2.3 Communication, Web Culture, Means of Travel, the Media and Their Effect on the Youth ...................................................................................................................... 64
2.2.4 Peer Pressure and Its Effects on the Youth ........................................................................................................................................................................... 68
2.2.5 Paths of Least Resistance: Common Choices of Troubled Youth as a Grave Concern of Youth Ministry ............................................................................................................. 72
   2.2.5.1 Silence and Idleness among the Youth ........................................................................................................... 74
   2.2.5.2 Violence as a Language of the Youth ............................................................................................................. 75
2.2.6 Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities into Youth Ministry ................................................................................................................................. 77
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................................................. 78

CHAPTER THREE: THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY .......................................................................................................................... 79

3.0 Overview of the Explanation to Theological Foundations .......................................................................................................................... 80
3.1 God’s Revelation ........................................................................................................................................... 83
   3.1.1 Sacred Scripture ........................................................................................................................................... 87
   3.1.2 Tradition of the Church .............................................................................................................................. 93
   3.1.3 Teaching Authority of the Church (Magisterium) ...................................................................................... 97
3.2 Human Response to God ........................................................................................................................................... 99
   3.2.1 Sin and Grace ........................................................................................................................................... 100
   3.2.2 The Sense of Catholic Sacramentality ........................................................................................................... 109
      3.2.2.1 Baptism ........................................................................................................................................... 112
      3.2.2.2 Eucharist ........................................................................................................................................... 115
      3.2.2.3 Confirmation ........................................................................................................................................... 119
      3.2.2.4 Penance and Reconciliation ........................................................................................................... 122
      3.2.2.5 The Anointing of the Sick ........................................................................................................... 127
      3.2.2.6 Holy Orders ........................................................................................................................................... 131
3.2.2.7 Matrimony or Marriage ................................................................. 135

3.2.3 Prayer and Consecrated Lives .......................................................... 138

3.2.3.1 Prayer (Individual and Communal) .................................................. 139

3.2.3.2 Consecrated Lives (Religious Men and Women, and Associates) ......... 143

Conclusion .................................................................................................. 147

CHAPTER FOUR: ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY .... 148

4.0 Overview: the Ecological Foundations for Youth Ministry ...................... 148

4.1 The Basis for Harmonious Living ............................................................ 152

4.1.1 Stewardship (Gn 1:28-29) ................................................................ 152

4.1.2 Human Dignity: Body and Soul; Male and Female (Gn 1: 27; 2:18-25) .. 161

4.1.3 The Physiological and Psychological Characteristics of the Youth ........ 168

4.1.4 The Distinctiveness of Each Individual Youth ..................................... 171

4.2 The Family and the Youth ..................................................................... 173

4.2.1 A Nucleus Community ...................................................................... 173

4.2.2 The Role of Parents in the Family ....................................................... 176

4.2.3 The Influence of Siblings .................................................................... 179

4.2.4 The Role of the Extended Family and Home Environment in Shaping the Youth ...... 180

4.3 The Church and Youth Ministry ............................................................. 182

4.3.1 The Eucharistic Community and the Youth ........................................ 182

4.3.2 The Church Hierarchy and Their Relation to the Youth ....................... 183

4.3.3 The Religious (Men and Women) and the Youth ............................... 184

4.3.4 Trained Catechists and Lay Extra-Ordinary Ministers in the Growth of the Youth.... 185

4.4 The Schools and Youth Ministry ............................................................ 187

4.4.1 Formal Educational Context and the Growth of the Youth ..................... 187
4.4.2 School Administrators and Instructors as Fundamental in Shaping the Youth ..........188
4.4.3 The Academic Curriculum and Shaping the Youth for the Future ..................189
4.4.4 The Extra-Curricular Activities in the Educational Formation of the Youth .........190
4.4.5 The School Location and Atmosphere and the Shaping of the Youth...............191
4.5 The Society: A Natural Environment for Youth ........................................192
  4.5.1 Culture, Tradition and the Youth .......................................................192
  4.5.2 Politics and the Youth .........................................................................194
  4.5.3 Ecumenism and Dialogue .....................................................................196
  4.5.4 Interreligious Dialogue, Tolerance and the Youth .................................198
Conclusion ......................................................................................................200

CHAPTER FIVE: A MOVE TOWARD IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRAL AND
MEANINGFUL YOUTH MINISTRY BY APPLYING THEOLOGICAL AND
ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS TO THE PRACTICAL LIVES OF YOUTH ....201

  5.0 An Overview: Toward an Integral and Meaningful Youth Ministry .................201
  5.1 Utilizing the Current Administrative Structure of the Archdiocese and Addressing the
   Obstacles and Challenges for the Youth ..........................................................205
    5.1.1 The Current Archdiocesan Administrative Structure Support for Youth Ministry.....205
    5.1.2 Youth Ministry and Combating HIV/AIDS and Other Deadly Diseases ..........207
    5.1.3 The Response of Youth Ministry to Problems Created by Peer Pressure, Popular
         Cultures and Disabilities .........................................................................214
  5.2 The Value of Emphasizing Context in Implementing Theological and Ecological Foundations into Youth Ministry .................................................................220
    5.2.1 Utilizing the Physical Features in Youth Ministry ....................................220
    5.2.2 Incorporating Socio-Historic Dynamics into Youth Ministry .....................221
    5.2.3 Understanding the Historical Impact of Political and Religious Factors to Youth
         Ministry ....................................................................................................225
  5.3 Inculcating Theological Foundations into Youth Ministry ...............................227
5.3.1 Relating the Revelation of the Triune God to the Youth.................................227

5.3.2 Making the Sacraments Relevant and Meaningful to the Youth .....................233

5.3.2.1 Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) Practically Related to the Traditional Rites of Passage of the Youth.................................................................235

5.3.2.2 Sacraments of Healing Presented to the Youth as Generous Means to Continue a Relationship with a Loving God ..........................................................239

5.3.2.3 Sacraments of Vocation Ordination and Marriage (Holy Orders and Matrimony) as Sacraments Anticipated and Prepared for by Youth Ministry .........................240

5.3.2.4 Prayer as Building Personal Relationships between Youth and God ...........242

5.4 Appropriating Ecological Foundations into Youth Ministry ..............................245

5.4.1 The Youth and Harmonious Living in the Archdiocese of Mbarara ...............245

5.4.2 The Indispensable Roles of the Family, the Church, the Schools and the Community in Holistic and Meaningful Youth Ministry ..............................................248

5.4.3 Life, Death and Eschatology in Shaping Youth Ministry ...............................251

5.5 The Broader Significance of the Dissertation beyond the Archdiocese of Mbarara ........256

5.5.1 “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them …” (Lk 18: 16): The Indispensability of Leadership for Youth .................................................................256

5.5.2 The Role Models for the Youth: Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and the Saints .................................................................259

CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................261

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................266
INTRODUCTION

A nation that does not provide a fitting legacy for its youth is destined for extinction. The same is true for the Church. In *Tertio millennio adveniente*, Pope John Paul II declares: “The future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation ….Christ expects great things from young people.”¹ John Paul II’s formal acknowledgment of youth as the future of the Church is the basis of this study, *Theological and Ecological Foundations for Youth Ministry in Relation to the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda*. In analyzing the context, discussing the theological and ecological foundations and proposing the way forward, this work advocates inculturation theology and seeks to provide guidelines for creating holistic, meaningful and effective youth ministry. The pastoral intention of this dissertation gives it an exhortatory tone, yet its final purpose is to propose a way forward in inculcating theological and ecological foundations into a youth ministry that will form and transform the youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

The aim of this dissertation is not to compare and contrast the texts of various scholars cited in this work, but rather to select from their writings those proposals that can best serve to update the theological and ecological foundations for today’s youth ministry, particularly youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. In the spirit of practical theology, where tensions arise between their approaches, the context of Mbarara will guide my analyses and appropriations of them. Inculturation theology will direct the study as to how youth ministers can adapt elements of ATR into holistic youth ministry.

¹John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente: On Preparation for the*
The context, the Archdiocese of Mbarara, is presented with an overview of its location and its physical features; its people, their history and their socio-economic situation; the recent cultural shifts; and the challenges of its youth as paradigmatic for a holistic, meaningful and effective youth ministry. While this dissertation emphasizes a youth ministry founded on theological and ecological foundations, it acknowledges that to involve the youth effectively in the spiritual and corporal life of the Church, youth ministry first must understand young people, including their physiological, psychological and spiritual natures, and the context of their daily environments. Therefore, the dissertation approaches practical theology under the field of pastoral ministry in systematic theology, whose commitment Maureen O’Brien outlines:

In an alternative framework, practical theology has been presented as the overarching sensibility for all theological endeavors. Instead of one-way transmission of truth to ministerial practitioners and Christian faithful from scholarly experts, a practical theology scheme envisions the enrichment of all discourse about God – in academy, church, family, work and world – through the following commitments:

-- By drawing on the experience of “ordinary” Christians in the particularity of their culture and historical situation, theology is necessarily contextualized.
-- By contextualized and ongoing reflection in a variety of Christian communities, theology is challenged to rethink supposedly universal assumptions and to wrestle with tension in ways that lead to new insights.
-- All Christians are encouraged to understand themselves as “doing theology” when they engage in theological reflection.
-- Some persons (ministers and/or academicians) will assume roles as “practical theologians” in mediating between the ongoing reflection and ministry of Christian communities and the academy.
-- The process used in the traditionally “practical” (particularly religious education) and the traditionally “scholarly” disciplines of theology will be rethought for their congruence with this model.

Thus the theological enterprise as a whole will be reconceived.²

To conceive the theological enterprise of youth ministry, young people must be considered as total persons: souls and bodies whose lives originate from the Creator and who through the nurturing of their families, discover their place in the world. In order to minister to the youth effectively, their particular context—historical, social, political, economic and religious—must be considered. In Mbarara, consideration must also be given to the effects of the societal shift from traditional lifestyles toward Western formal education and technology.

Youth aged sixteen through twenty-two are the focus of this dissertation because of their physical, psychological and intellectual transitioning into maturity as citizens and believers. These youth have acquired a theological and ecological foundation from their traditional African religious heritage, perception of the manifestation of God in creation and their exposure to basic Christian catechetical instructions for the sacraments of initiation. An effective, holistic youth ministry recognizes and capitalizes on what is inherent in the youth and explores ways to assist them in developing these religious foundations in their lives even as they adapt to a society in the process of rapid change.

Catholic teaching attests that knowing and experiencing God depends upon theological foundations: God’s self revelation to human beings and their response. Therefore, Christian faith is predicated on theological foundations, which include the three channels of revelation, the manifestation of God in creation and human experience. The

²Maureen O’Brien, “Disciplined Conversations, Faithful Practices,” in Michael Warren and Bert Roebben, Religious Education as Practical Theology (Leuven,
three channels: sacred scripture, sacred tradition and the teaching authority of the Church (Magisterium) are the basis of Christian (Catholic) faith. This dissertation emphasizes revelation, sin and grace and the sacramentality of Catholicism because they are the components that distinguish Catholicism (Christianity) from the African Traditional Religions (ATR) that are characteristic in the context of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Nevertheless, revelation is not limited to the three channels taught by the Catholic doctrine. It also includes human experience, as well as awareness and appreciation of creation, which are manifestations of God’s revelation. This will be discussed under Ecological Foundations in Chapter Four. Although it was not mentioned in my proposal, the discussion of the theological foundations in Chapter Three relies extensively on The Catechism of the Catholic Church because it is an original source and it provides a succinct presentation of Catholic beliefs. Divine Revelation evokes human response in sacraments, prayer and committed lives. Ecological foundations reveal God’s action in the nature and nurture of human beings and in creation. Among these foundations are the ecosystems, which include the natural environment as well as societal groups that nurture humanity such as the family, the Church, the school and the community. These ecosystems influence human life and human relationships. They define much of what we have, how we live and what we are capable of doing and becoming.

This pastoral, theological and systematic analysis of the need for a holistic youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara uses historical, social, political and theological descriptive and analytical methods to suggest how a comprehensive and

Belgium: Peeters, 2001), 292.
meaningful youth ministry might be designed. The dissertation advocates for inculturation of African traditional religious heritage into Christian youth ministry in the spirit of practical theology as John Mary Waliggo defines it: “Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by people of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people.”

This dissertation draws upon published and unpublished materials from the fields of systematic theology, psychology, sociology, moral theology, pastoral theology, and liberation theology, as well as liturgy, canon law, catechetics, traditional African religions (ATR), education, philosophy and other disciplines that enrich systematic theology.

This work has been inspired by Pope John Paul II—his writings on the human person and community; his themes of justice and ecology; his theology of the body and other relevant topics expressed in his papal addresses, letters, exhortations and encyclicals. John Paul II’s life history, his philosophical and theological writings on personalism and humanism and his later expressions of love and commitment to youth through personal interaction with them and in the creation of World Youth Days have greatly inspired the content of this work. This dissertation also has been enriched by the

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3 John Mary Waliggo, “Making a Church that is Truly African” in *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency* by J.M. Waliggo, A. Roest Crollius S.J., T. Nkeramihigo S.J., J., Mutiso-Mbinda (Kampala, Uganda: St. Paul Publications – Africa, 1986), 12. Waliggo further explains inculturation as the conviction that Christ and his good news are dynamic and challenging at all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. With emphasis to Africa Waliggo adds, “Inculturation, therefore, is that movement which aims at making Christianity permanent in Africa by making it a people’s religion and a way of life which no enemy or hostility can every succeed in supplanting or weakening” (13).
works of Michael Warren, who believes that youth ministry is a tool of liberation for the youth and a means of their integral development. Pope John Paul II and Michael Warren share the vision of youth ministry as a means of developing integral human beings (physical, intellectual and social as well as spiritual and political) through understanding and embracing their ecologies. Maureen O’Brien offers the practical pastoral ministry guidelines for implementing the theological and ecological foundations necessary for comprehensive youth ministry. Together with other authors in the field of practical theology, O’Brien elucidates the context as an atmosphere conducive for fostering the formation and transformation of the youth through youth ministry. Chapter Three relies upon *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Bible, Church teachings, as well as ATR because they are original and authentic sources. The explanation of African Traditional Religions (ATR) relies heavily on John S. Mbiti because he conducts his research and documents his findings without religious biases or interpretations. Authors from the African continent, especially East Africa, provide key theological sources on inculturation theology, African theological reflections and African traditional philosophy, religions and culture. In addition, the work of Western theologians and secular writers in general theology, parenting, environmental consciousness and other fields pertinent to the themes of this dissertation have enriched this work. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the Documents of Vatican II provide a fundamental explanation of the teachings of the Church.

Chapter One describes the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda, including its geographical features, its people and their historical, political, economic and social culture, as well as the beginnings and growth of the Church there. Particular attention is given to
the recent shift to Western culture, especially as it most directly affects the lives of the youth. Consequently, there is great need in the Archdiocese of Mbarara for an adaptive, relevant youth ministry.

Chapter Two presents an overview of the administrative structure for youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the existing youth groups and the challenges facing today’s youth. These factors are vital in assisting youth ministers to discern the most appropriate and effective methods for inculcating theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry.

Chapter Three explains the theological foundations for youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, using as a basis the Catechism of the Catholic Church, African Traditional Religion (ATR) and theologians. This chapter presents the necessity of increasing in young people an appreciation of God as their creator, provider, savior and final destination. While Chapter Four offers an in-depth discussion of the experiential sources of divine revelation in the ecologies, Chapter Three focuses on explaining the three channels of revelation: sacred scripture, sacred tradition, the teaching authority of the Church, including the human experiential response in faith through sacraments, prayer and committed lives. Selective examples from ATR that relate closely to the Christian theological doctrines are included as effective tools in aiding youth to understand more easily Christian theological truths.

Chapter Four establishes the ecological foundations for youth ministry as the experiential sources for the revelation of God that are essential in teaching the youth their responsibility as partners in the universal setting of humanity, the ecosystem and the community. It aims to invigorate the youth through a renewed realization that they have
been divinely appointed as stewards of creation, and that they are to live in harmony with all that exists, beginning with themselves who are created in the image and likeness of God. It challenges them as an obligation of faith and citizenship to live responsibly in relation to all creation—the ecosystem, their families, the Church, their schools and communities. The chapter advocates a comprehensive ministry that teaches youth to appreciate the totality of life and to embrace it responsibly.

Chapter Five presents practical implementations for basing an effective youth ministry on theological and ecological foundations. It aims to present a practical design for a ministry relevant and integral to the lives of these young people, who stand at the threshold of becoming adult members of society and the Church.

Finally, this dissertation discusses the broader significance of its contents beyond the Archdiocese of Mbarara. While this dissertation proposes inculcating theological and ecological foundations into a holistic, formative and transformative youth ministry within the context of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, it also discusses broader significances like the indispensability of leadership and the role of models like Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and the saints, which are of great significance to any comprehensive youth ministry in the universal Church.

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to illustrate the need for a more relevant and effective youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara as its people transition from centuries of traditional tribal culture to modern, Westernized lifestyles. This transitioning, the effect of which touches the youth most immediately, demands a ministry appropriately grounded in theological and ecological foundations appropriate to the challenges that the Archdiocese of Mbarara faces.
CHAPTER ONE: A DESCRIPTION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA

1.0 Overview of the Description of the Archdiocese

The traditional societal organization of the area currently covered by the Archdiocese of Mbarara is the historical kingdom of Nkore, the context for this dissertation, which emerges from the area of practical theology and the wider field of systematic theology. Some writers claim that all theology is really practical theology, or that practical theology is the necessary sensibility for all theological work. Bert Roebben and Michael Warren, in their introduction to Religious Education as Practical Theology: Essays in Honor of Professor Herman Lombaerts, say this regarding the discipline of practical theology and the importance of context:

The discipline of practical theology attempts to provide insight into the religious praxis of individuals and communities towards institutional and non-institutional ways of being religious. The formal object of practical theology is the empirical and/or hermeneutic: religious-related dimensions of human existence are mapped and interpreted against the background of social cultural shifts in time and space. Practical theology is developing its perspectives in and beyond the field of pastoral theology; the latter is more church and ministry related. Practical theology aims at clarifying and

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Darius Magunda, The Role of the Missionaries of Africa in Planting the Church in Western Uganda 1879-1969 (Romae: Thesis ad Doctorotum in Theologia Patim edita, 2006), 28-31. Magunda describes the traditional boundaries of Nkore and the surrounding chiefdoms. In this dissertation, the Archdiocese of Mbarara will interchangeably be referred to as Nkore, depending on the context. The region is called Nkore by the indigenous residents, but expatriates add “A” to the name because of their failure to pronounce “Nko”, which explains why in many works it is written “Ankore.” The people are called Banyankore. Today, those who occupy the region covered by the Archdiocese of Mbarara come from varied ethnic groups, as explained in the first chapter, but by the fact that they live in this geographical area of Nkore, they are generally referred to as Banyankore.
justifying the broader search for meaning, religion and faith, often taking place outside the institutional religious traditions.\(^5\)

In the spirit of practical theology, which draws upon empirical information in order to clarify and justify the broader search for meaning in youth ministry, this chapter describes the geographic location, the physical features and demographic and religious components of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Particular attention is directed to the different ethnic groups, the family and clan formations, and their means of livelihood. It focuses on the recent past and current social, cultural, political and economic dynamics of the Archdiocese, factors intrinsic to understanding the families, schools, churches and society vis-à-vis the youth.

The chapter presents an overview of the general lifestyle and current youth ministry prevalent in the archdiocese as the basis for understanding the rationale for my particular recommendations. In the conclusion, I propose an effective and integral youth ministry within Uganda which may be applied as well, with appropriate adaption, to the universal Catholic Church. The social, cultural, political and traditional religious dynamics in the Archdiocese of Mbarara resonate strongly in the life of the Church and especially in youth ministry. Those who seek to develop a comprehensive and meaningful youth ministry must be attentive to these dynamics in order to create a practical and yet solid ministry.

1.1 Locating the Archdiocese of Mbarara

1.1.1 The Physical Description and Location of Uganda in Relation to Africa

―Uganda is one sovereign state and a republic‖ in East Africa, an area known as the Great Lakes region of East Africa, with the Democratic Republic of Congo on the west, Sudan on the north, Kenya on the east and Tanzania and Rwanda on the south (Map 1 and 2). Uganda covers a land area of 77,108 sq miles (199,710 sq kilometers).

Dennis Joseph Mullins accurately describes the geographical features of Uganda as: “… a sort of undulating plateau, some 4000 ft. above sea level, the Great Lake (Lake Victoria) on which it borders being of a lower elevation by some hundreds of feet.” It is a land of fertile valleys, towering snow-capped peaks, magnificent lakes and waterfalls, dense equatorial forests and savannas teeming with wild game. Uganda is equatorial, characterized by cycles of heavy rainfall followed by relatively long dry spells. Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world, occupies a large portion of the southeastern part of Uganda. Issuing from surrounding mountains, its rivers irrigate much of the country and flow into the Nile, the longest river in Africa. Although Uganda is located on the Equator, its annual temperature averages 65°F thanks to its high plateau elevation of 4000 ft. above sea level. The beauty of the country led the 20th century British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to call Uganda “the Pearl of Africa.”


census enumerated a population of 28,195,754, three-quarters of them young people. The current birth rate is 66.2/1000, the annual population growth rate is 3.4%, and average life expectancy is 52.7 years. Uganda’s population density is 366 persons per square mile. Due to Uganda’s climate, most of the population earns a living through farming bananas, cereal grains and fruits. Cash crops include coffee, tea and cotton. The livestock are predominantly cows, goats, pigs and poultry. Ugandan agriculture is primarily one of subsistence. People use simple hand tools and raise animals mainly for home consumption. Government attempts to encourage production of cash crops for export as a means of added income have not been successful. Poor farming methods, primitive implements and little or no market for extra produce have failed to improve Uganda’s economy above the average yearly income of $200 (U.S.) per capita.

1.1.2 The Historical, Political and Religious Description of Uganda

Uganda’s centralized traditional kingdoms and well-organized extended family systems extend as far back as 500 B.C. Because indigenous Ugandans carried on their heritage by oral tradition, European—for the most part, British—colonizers and Christian missionaries (1860s – 1960s) were the first to document in written form the history of the kingdoms and the making of Uganda into a nation during the partition of Africa.8 Uganda achieved independence as a nation in 1962 with Britain’s symbolic

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8Black Past, “Pursuing the Past in the Twenty-First Century,” http://www.blackpast.org/?q=#ah/partition-africa, accessed 8/13/2010. Note on page 2 of 2, “By 1914, 90% of Africa had been divided between seven European countries with only Liberia and Ethiopia remaining independent nations.” The partition of Africa began with the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which created most of today’s African borders. Many of those boundaries, drawn up with little regard for natural landmarks or historic ethnic or political boundaries established by the Africans themselves, still endure. These
handover of the country to the indigenous. Independence, however, came at a cost.

Phares Mutibwa describes the post-colonial struggles of Uganda in *Uganda Since Independence: a Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*. The British strategy of setting different ethnic, social and religious groups against one another laid foundations for the post-colonial political upheavals. Abolition of constitutions, political intrigues, coups d'état and a series of wars have left the country plundered emotionally, morally and materially.

Boundaries, most of which have been retained after independence, continue to generate conflict.

The British use of “indirect rule” and “divide and rule or divide and conquer” favored dividing traditional societies, giving preferential treatment to Anglican converts over those of other religious faiths, including Catholicism. Traditional leaders who refused to be converted were deposed and often assassinated. Thus, Anglicanism became the dominant religion of the ruling class in Uganda. Of all the tribes, the British showed preference to the Baganda, the first kingdom to enter into an agreement with them. The Northerners who include the Lugbara, the Acholi and Langi were recruited into the military because of their well-known physical strength and warrior reputation; and the Easterners, including the Ateso, the Karamajong and the Bamasaba were appointed to the police force because of their imposing height. The tribes of the southwest, the Bakiga, Banyankore, Batooro and Banyoro (the area that would later be the Archdiocese of Mbarara) were allowed to continue their farming heritage. As Uganda neared independence, the Baganda realized that the British agenda would no longer benefit them and came to prefer Catholicism over Anglicanism, which strategically led the British to hand over the political power not to them, but to the Northerners to rule over their former rulers. These divisions damaged unity and solidarity during the transition to independence and contributed to unsatisfactory political leadership. For example, the illiterate dictator Idi Amin Dada was promoted to the rank of general in the army although there were better educated and trained soldiers from the southwest like Major Augustine Karugaba, a graduate of the famous Sandhurst Military Academy in the England. Also, after independence, the 1961 first national election, in which Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Muganda and a Catholic appeared to have won, was nullified by British leaders. In 1962 the British colonial government organized another national election and the predominantly Anglican Uganda People Congress (UPC) merged with Kabaka Yeka (KY) – the Baganda royalist party—to win the majority and to make Milton Obote, an Anglican, Prime Minister. The upheaval created by the British continues to trouble Ugandan politics, affecting its citizens, and consequently, the youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.
The residual political, social and economic turmoil that has followed British rule continues to impact Uganda’s politics and citizens and thus should be addressed in youth ministry.

A document by the United States Bureau of African Affairs that describes Uganda’s current ethnic groups as “Baganda, Banyankore, Bahima, Bakiga, Banyarwanda, Bunyoro, Batoro, Langi, Acholi, Lugbara, Karamojong, Basoga, Bagisu and others”. This description presents the notion of a unity, but fails to capture the reality of how deeply Ugandan people are divided. Each of these tribes has its own traditional lands, customs and ways of life. The 1995 National Constitution recognizes and approves 56 indigenous communities, each with a different language or dialect.

Uganda’s wide cultural variations in languages, marriage systems, dances and drama, songs and stories, and other expressions of traditional values that still compose the fabric of today’s society, are clearly evident in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Socio-cultural shifts such as the establishment of formal education and rural-to-urban migrations offer enrichment to the youth through exposure to people of other cultures.

The constitution of Uganda allows freedom of worship, which has turned Uganda into a melting pot of religions. *Infoplease Internet Tools*, the most up-to-date source, estimates the distribution of religions in Uganda as: Roman Catholic 33%, Protestant 33%, Islam 16% and Indigenous beliefs 18%.


12 The statistics indicated do not consider the overlap of the acquired
youth ministry must be conscious of such religious pluralism. They must maintain
sensitivity to society’s other religions while inculcating the Catholic faith in the youth of
the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

1.2 Locating and Describing the Archdiocese of Mbarara

1.2.1 The Description of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Mbarara

The Metropolitan Archdiocese of Mbarara is located in southwestern Uganda, with Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West, the Archdiocese of Gulu to the North and the Archdiocese of Kampala to the East (Map 3). The Archdiocese dates back to the Vicariate Apostolic of Rwenzori, which was erected on May 28, 1934 by splitting the Vicariate Apostolic of Uganda. On March 25, 1953 Mbarara was elevated to a diocese and renamed after its principal town Mbarara. In 1961 Mbarara lost territory to the newly elected diocese of Fort Portal and again in 1966 to the diocese of Kabale. On January 2, 1999 the Metropolitan Province of the Archdiocese of Mbarara was created, including as suffragan dioceses Fort Portal, Hoima, Kabale, Kasese and Mbarara. The metropolitan seat is at Nyamitanga, in the town of Mbarara. Before being elevated to an Archdiocese, Mbarara was the suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Kampala.13 This dissertation presents the situation in the single suffragan diocese of Mbarara (referred to in this dissertation as “Archdiocese of Mbarara,”

religions and the indigenous ATR, which is so intertwined with the culture of the people.

or simply “Mbarara” when the context clearly refers to the diocese and not the city itself) rather than the entire metropolitan province of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. However, material herein may be applied to the metropolitan province and to the universal Catholic Church (see Chapter Five).

1.2.2 The Religious Composition of the Mbarara Archdiocese

The Archdiocese of Mbarara is socially and religiously cosmopolitan. People living in its territory include Catholics, Anglicans and Evangelicals, as well as Muslims, Seventh Day Adventists and those who profess African Traditional Religions. Its jurisdiction includes 2,446,500 people, with 911,400 Catholics, 25 parishes and 13 centers with priests. It has 120 indigenous diocesan priests, 19 Religious Missionary priests and about 300 Religious men and women.

14In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, parishes are parochial territories with a presbytery and a full time parish priest/pastor. They are territorial in that all Catholics living within the physical geographical boundaries of that territory (parish) have to belong to that parish community and register there for worship, sacraments and other pastoral activities and services. Since most are in rural areas, the local boundaries are an added convenience for parishioners, who do not own cars and appreciate being able to walk to church from their homes. Even where parishioners can travel to a parish of choice, the Archdiocese still supports the policy that geographical location should determine one’s home parish.

15In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Centers are ecclesial territories created by dividing each parish into several smaller areas. They are comparable to outstations or mission churches, with well-organized administrative committees and a worshipping order (services led by a catechist when a priest cannot be present). The organization of the parish council at the central level is replicated at each parish level. Every Center has a trained Catechist to lead Sunday prayer services, enroll and train catechumens, prepare people for sacraments and lead the faithful in funeral services when a priest may not be available. Each center has a church building for worship and a priest’s house. The Center council administers the community in worship, development projects and any other concerns. Parish priests schedule their visits to Centers of their parishes throughout the month(s) depending on how many Centers make up a particular parish. There are Parish
1.2.3 The People of the Archdiocese of Mbarara

The demography of the Archdiocese of Mbarara has become increasingly diverse, with an increase of marriages between different tribes due to migrations resulting from trade, the search for job opportunities and travel to schools offering formal education. Major ethnic groups in the archdiocese include the Banyankore, the Bakiga, the Batagwenda, the Banyaruguru, and the Bakooki. These groups are culturally and

Sundays when all the able faithful must walk to the main parish for worship. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara some Centers have not yet been elevated to the level of parishes, with a priest in residence. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Centers are further divided into Hiikas, which on a smaller scale replicate the organization of a Center. These have a trained catechist, a chapel, a catechist’s house and a Hiika council to ensure that its faith community runs smoothly. Hiikas themselves form a center that is further divided into Basic Ecclesial Communities, Emigongo or Hills. These also replicate the structural organization of the Hiika although they do not have a trained catechist and an actual place of worship or church building. Basic Ecclesial Communities [BEC], or Mugongo, include 10 to 15 families under the leadership of an Omunyamugongo (an activity coordinator) and a council. In Basic Ecclesial Communities, the Omunyamugongo and the community council help to identify new members, enroll catechumens, and lead the members of the Mugongo in praying the rosary, making the way of the cross and other common devotions.

http://www.archdioceseofmbarara.org, accessed 8/8/2011. The Archdiocese of Mbarara was started by the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers). Subsequently, many other congregations have come to the Archdiocese, such as the Montfort Missionaries, the Comboni Missionaries and the Franciscan Missionaries. Also the Claretians and the Apostles of Jesus have recently arrived and have begun working in some parishes. Congregations of religious men and women, such as the St. Charles Lwanga (Bannakaloli) Brothers, the St. Joseph the Worker Brothers and Good Samaritan Sisters are present. The Institute of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Council (OLGC), a local indigenous congregation, who became independent from the mother founders in Canada in the sixties, and the Daughters of Fatima, a group of consecrated women that started in the Diocese of Kabale, now also work in the Archdiocese Mbarara. The Daughters of Mary and Joseph Sisters, an international congregation, have some houses, including a section of their formation house, in the Archdiocese of Mbarara; the Poor Clare Sisters are the only cloistered or monastic community in the archdiocese. All these groups work with the youth in a variety of ways and regularly invite young people to join their congregations or participate in their programs.
linguistically harmonized under the four dialects of Runyankore, Rukiga, Runyoro and Rutooro. A single language to unite the four dialects, Runyakitara,\(^{17}\) has emerged and is being taught at the university level. The ethnic makeup of the archdiocese is in a state of change, since migration is not restricted. People from across Uganda, and even from outside the country, have taken up residence there. In many instances these people assimilate into the existing society. Nevertheless, cultures of the five majority ethnic groups listed above maintain dominance through social influences like music, administration and education.

The Banyankore\(^{18}\) occupy the greater portion of the territory that comprises their traditional kingdom of Nkore, where the archdiocese is located. In fact, the name “Banyankore” means “the people who occupy Nkore.” The traditional Banyankore included two indigenous groups—the pastoralists and ruling aristocrats known as the Bahima and the agriculturalist civilians, the Bairu, who did much of the labor. When Uganda became a British Protectorate, the Bahima were enlisted to help govern. In return for political leadership positions, the majority of Bahima embraced the Low Anglican Protestant Church, living and working among the Anglican Church


\(^{18}\)Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda* (London: Macmillan Publishers LTD, 1997). Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, a Protestant Munyankore Muhima and freedom fighter, entered politics and became president of Uganda from 1989 through 2010. He is an important source because of his personal knowledge of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. A native son, he declares, “I was born among the Banyankore Bahima nomads of southwestern Uganda in 1944” (1). As he grew up, passion for his native country led him to become a freedom fighter, and later a history and economics graduate of the University of Dar es Salam. Museveni has provided me with accurate social, cultural, economic, political, and to a great extent religious history.
ministers and political governors of the region. The Catholic missionaries, predominantly French, Belgian, Irish and German, were not compatible with the British administrators and their counterpart Anglican Protestant Missionaries. While the Anglican Protestant missionaries tended to focus their attention on the aristocratic Bahima, the Catholic missionaries concentrated on the lower class majority Bairu, converting most of them to the Catholic faith, using the neighboring Baganda as catechists. As a result, most of the Catholics in Mbarara today are Bairu and Baganda. Nevertheless, tribal differences are not given much attention in this work because the historical and current political and religious tensions that cut across all tribes have done far more damage to personal and religious relationships than have any tribal differences.

The Bakiga occupy the cool highlands of the traditional territory of Kigezi in the southwestern part of Uganda, the area now covered by the Catholic diocese of Kabale. Unlike the kingdom of Nkore, the territory of Kigezi had no centralized administration or monarchy. The Bakiga live in harmonious extended families, identified by means of totems. They are industrious and resilient, quickly assimilate into the existing communities, easily adapt to the cultural and religious practices of the established communities, and even assume roles of leadership in religious and local politics. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the Catholic Bakiga are passionate about their faith and commitment to the Church.

The Batagwenda,\textsuperscript{19} the Banyaruguru\textsuperscript{20} and the Bakooki are generally believed to have descended from the Baganda. The Batagwenda occupy the northeastern

\textsuperscript{19}Darius Magunda, “The Role and Impact of the Missionaries of Africa in
corner of the archdiocese in the parishes of Ibanda, Mabonywa and Ishongorero. The Banyaruguru occupy the northern portion of the archdiocese in the parishes of Rugazi and Kyamwiru. The Bakooki occupy the southeastern parishes of Buhungiro and St. John Baptist, Birunduma. These people, probably because of their roots in Buganda, are staunch Catholics and their parishes produced the first catechists in the archdiocese. The earliest missions were established in Rugazi (Bunyaruguru) in 1909 and Ibanda (Kitagwenda) 1912, following the mission at Nyamitanga (Mbarara) in 1902. The Batagwenda, the Banyaruguru and the Bakooki are important not only because of their historical significance as migrants from the Buganda kingdom, but also because of their strong social, cultural and religious influences. The first indigenous bishop, John Baptist Kakubi, was from the Bakooki of Birunduma; the Vicar Capitula who administered the diocese before him, Msgr. Hilary Tibanyenda, was from the Banyaruguru. Both church and cultural music in the Archdiocese are dominated by melodies composed by musicians from Ibanda, Bunyaruguru and Kitabi. The music and social dances of the Banyaruguru, the Batagwenda and the Bakooki, Entogoro, Kinyaruguru, Kitagwenda, have a rhythm

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Planting the Church in Western Uganda 1879-1969” (Pontificia Universitas Sanctae Crucis Facultas Theologie, Thesis ad Doctoratum in Theologia Partim edita, Romae, 2006), 38. Magunda is a priest of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. He writes, “The kingdom of Kitagwenda lay to the north of Nkore and was always friendly to Nkore and so was never attacked by it.”

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20Ibid., 39. Magunda, himself from Bunyaruguru, describes the area as unique because it remained untouched by foreign invasion due to its geographical isolation. It was ignored by raiding kingdoms because it had no cattle. He also affirms that Banyaruguru are Baganda by origin.

21Ibid., 117-137.
and a pattern of body movements that appeal to young people and so have a definite place in youth ministry.

1.2.4 Religio-Political Merger in Nkore and Its Impact on Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the Catholic and Anglican Churches have a history of adversarial relations which affect the youth of today. During the time of British occupation, the Catholic majority belonged to the Democratic Party (DP) while the Anglican Bairu and the Bahima\(^{22}\) belonged to the ruling Uganda People’s Congress party (UPC). The Bahima and Anglican Bairu enjoyed British political appointments until the mid 1950s when the Bahima realized that the British were now appointing an increasing number of Anglican Bairu to key political positions. The Bahima chiefs, resenting their diminishing authority, forged a political alliance with the Catholic French missionaries and the Bairu who had remained Catholic, appreciably augmenting the Democratic Party.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni writes in *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom in Uganda*:

> As far as national politics were concerned, from 1960 until I left university in 1970, I was a DP (Democratic Party) sympathizer. This political affiliation was based upon nothing more than historic sectarian grounds – in 1956 the Bahima chiefs and the Catholic leaders in Ankole had made an alliance against the

\(^{22}\)The Bahima were the aristocrats of the Kingdom of Nkore. During the early days of their occupation, the British had signed agreements allowing them to retain power under the indirect rule system. Gradually, as happened in other Kingdoms like Buganda, the British realized the difficulty of imposing political, educational and even religious policies upon the traditional ones of the aristocratic Bahima and shifted awarding preferential priority to tribes with less status. The Bahima have since lost their standing as aristocracy but have never ceased petitioning the Uganda government to reinstate them to their former noble rank. Their entreaty has so far been repudiated by the general Nkore population which loathes the aristocracy and strongly opposes its return.
Protestants. Since my parents were DPs, I also became a DP sympathizer, a youth “winger.”

This alliance has generated much of the present tension and even enmity between Catholic and Anglican political parties and social relationships in the Archdiocese. These tensions affect not only adults, but in many cases also appear in schools, where fierce competition can exist between Catholic and Protestant students who tend to regard one another as enemies. Unfortunately, the French and British transferred their adversarial political and religious tensions to Uganda and to those they governed. To this day, Ugandan Anglican Protestants are raised to be assertive and contemptuous of Catholics; Catholics are taught that Anglicans are deserters from the Church and should be eschewed. Although these attitudes are gradually changing in schools, the old religious and political prejudices continue to affect the life of the Church.

Finally, the complexity of demographic patterns and the political and religious environment of the archdiocese cannot be overstated. Some have migrated to work as temporary laborers in the fields and mines, while the urban areas have drawn professionals such as teachers, nurses and even catechists. Most eventually settle and became assimilated. Others who chose to settle in Mbarara were originally conscripted from areas surrounding the Archdiocese of Mbarara, which, as will be discussed later in this work, still reflects the devastation of nearly two decades of war. Understandably,

\footnote{Museveni, 15-16. The previous footnote indicates that Museveni was a Protestant (Anglican) and from the Bahima (aristocratic clan) yet he became a Youth Winger for the Democratic Party because of the alliance between Catholics and Bahima.}
young people in Mbarara share the same religious, political and ethnic composition of the archdiocese, demographic factors that must be addressed in youth ministry.

1.3 The Recent Past and Current Social and Cultural, Economic and Political Dynamics Affecting Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara and the Age Group Addressed in the Dissertation

1.3.1 The Social and Cultural Shifts and Effects on Youth Ministry

Uganda’s social, cultural, economic and political dynamics have had a continuing influence on youth ministry. These dynamics range from social-cultural transitioning, political instability and full-scale war to daunting levels of poverty, disease, illiteracy and other forms of backwardness that characterize developing countries. These challenges to theology and the Church appear in the Introduction to Challenges and Prospects of the Church in Africa: Theological Reflections of the 21st Century, edited by Nahashon W. Ndung’u and Philomena N. Mwaura:

Africa has entered the 21st century still carrying baggage from the 20th century, in terms of escalating poverty, violence, gender injustice, globalisation, environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS and other debilitating diseases. Therefore, the question arises: What is the role of theology in the social reconstruction of Africa? How does the Church perceive herself and her mission? What does the Church have to offer in this context?24

This section discusses the issues that Ndung’u and Mwaura present, as they are found in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

The traditional social and cultural dynamics of the people occupying the archdiocese are beyond the scope of this discussion, so I will not delve into the deep ethnology and anthropology of the people. Rather, I offer a brief glimpse into the social and cultural ways of the people so as to make clear the context for effective youth ministry there. This section limits itself to the importance of the hierarchy of authority, kinship, family and marriage, education and socialization, which shape the ways young people think and live out their lives. These concepts are so closely linked in the fabric of the society that they must be discussed together.

Traditionally, the secular and religious hierarchies among the people of Nkore are intertwined. Because the spiritual and material worlds are conjoined, they must be treated together in order to understand the social-cultural concepts held by the people of the archdiocese. Even as modern thinking advocates the separation of religious and secular authority, the traditional people in Nkore regard any hierarchy of authority as a spiritual part and parcel of their lives. John S. Mbiti, former professor of theology at Makerere University in Uganda and a renowned scholar and writer on the topics of theology, religion, philosophy and literature, explains the spiritual concept of the hierarchy of authority within the African communities: “A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of society, his kinships and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence.”

The hierarchy of authority provides the genesis and sustenance of all that exists in the descending order of one God, the ancestral spirits and other sub-deities,

human beings, followed by animals, phenomena\textsuperscript{26} and objects without biological life.

Mbiti explains the centrality of the human person in the hierarchy of authority:

Expressed anthropocentrically, God is the Originator and Sustainer of man; the Spirits explain the destiny of man; Man is the centre of this ontology; the Animals, Plants and natural phenomena and Objects constitute the environment in which man lives, provide a means of existence and, need be, man establishes a mystical relationship with them.

This anthropocentric ontology is a complete unity or solidarity which nothing can break up or destroy. To destroy or remove one of these categories is to destroy the whole existence including the destruction of the Creator, which is impossible.\textsuperscript{27}

The people of the archdiocese of Mbarara, Christians and Traditionalists, like other traditional people of Africa, are monotheists.\textsuperscript{28} They believe in one God known by the many names which describe the deity’s attributes. Such names are: \textit{Ruhanga}, the creator; \textit{Rugaba}, the provider; \textit{Kazooba}, like the sun; \textit{Nyakubaho}, the one who was, the one who is and who will continue to be. God is eternal, omniscient, transcendent and yet immanent in human life and the entire universe.\textsuperscript{29} The people of Nkore have such deferential respect for God that they never offer direct sacrifices. Instead, they present

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\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., Mbiti uses the word phenomena or natural phenomena to refer to realities like wind, air or others which may not be categorized as biological beings or objects with biological life.

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 16.


\textsuperscript{29}Mbiti, 41, 52.
offerings and supplications through intermediaries, such as ancestral spirits or other sub-deities.

Mbiti observes, “The Ankore think that God does not expect any sacrifices, so they do not make sacrifices to God but rather to the deities and the ancestral spirits or the living-dead.” 30  Emizimu or the Living-dead are deeply involved in family affairs. The Living-dead are normally regarded as family heroes that continue to watch over their living members. For traditional people of Nkore, death is not the end of life but rather a crossing from the mortal life to the eternal Living-dead. The major deities include the guardian spirits Emandwa31 and the family spirits Emizimu or the Living-dead.32 The Emandwa are benevolent spirits inherited by lineages and families. The word okubandwa means “to worship” or “to honor,” and Emandwa means “the worshipped” or “the honorable.” When the Christian missionaries came to Nkore they condemned all traditional beliefs and expressions of worship as pagan, satanic rites. Yet, even today in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the people of Nkore who converted to Catholicism still

30Ibid., 60.
31Emandwa is a general name for all the deities among the Banyankore, other than the one almighty and supreme God, Ruhanga. This dissertation uses the name Emandwa to refer to spirits, including ancestral spirits (Emizimu or Abazimu [the living-dead]); the deities for specific purposes such as rain, fertility and diseases; and other spiritual manifestation in persons ( mediums), objects and places. For particular protection, needs and remedies, the Banyankore call upon a deity dedicated to those specific needs, such as rain, fertility, or relief from famine and plagues. Certain persons are also believed to act as hosts for the spirits (human spiritual mediums) and even some animals such as bulls, rams and dogs. Natural features like rivers, hills, and trees are believed to be inhabited by the spirits. Worship would be directed to such persons, creatures and places. These tendencies bear some resemblance to the Catholic devotions to saints.

32Mbiti, 87.
adhere to the worship practices of their deeply ingrained traditional beliefs. Although they go to churches for Christian prayers and worship, at home traditional spirituality prevails and family shrines are commonly regarded as sacred talismans with the power of blessing or of warding off evils such as sickness and drought. These people are perfectly comfortable with their syncretism or religious dualism. Individuals, families and communal celebrations honor *Emandwa* in order to obtain their intercession with God to grant such favors as fertility, wealth, rain, peace and the cessation of plagues. Individual deities include, among others, *Nyangi* for health and wealth, *Ndungusi* for rain and good harvest, *Nyaburezya* for plagues and mortality and *Rugambamazima* for family protection, morality and divination. While deities and ancestral spirits are generally benevolent, they are also known for their malevolence when the expressed wishes and directives of the ancestors are contradicted or ignored. In fact, fear of their wrath seems to be the main reason they receive frequent homage.

Next in the spiritual hierarchy of authority are the living elders of the community. The highest-ranking authority among living people is determined by seniority. It is believed that the greater one’s age, the closer he or she is to the ancestors and to God. The hierarchy of authority among the living also includes the unborn, even those believed to be in the loins of the young. After human beings, the next hierarchical level of authority is given to animals, living plants and inanimate objects because it is believed that each is a manifestation of God’s presence.

Most people in the Archdiocese of Mbarara believe in the traditional concept of an all-encompassing hierarchical order, which forms the basis of deeply engrained customs that permeate their lives. It is paramount that the positive aspects of
respect for the divine and the elders are acknowledged and inculcated in the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry.

Given the factors of the intertwined relationship between divine worship and traditional customs of respect, it is important to acknowledge that in some instances, the hierarchical order can be a pretext for perpetuating absolutism of the elders and abuse of the weak, especially women and young people. Meaningful youth ministry cannot ignore the fact that the all-encompassing hierarchical order includes considerable disadvantages, especially when the majority male elders and a few female mediums\textsuperscript{33} wield what they claim as divinely given authority to subjugate others. For example, choice foods like chicken, goat meat and eggs are reserved for the male elders, while women and children may be denied even basic nutrition. Worse, some of these elders and female mediums make immoral and unlawful demands, cursing women and children with divine punishment or taboos should they dare to refuse, thereby effectively quelling any questioning, challenge or change. Such misuse of absolute authority can permeate everyday life, precluding open dialogue or democracy. Recently, however, greater emphasis on Christian values and the infiltration of democratic Western perspectives are noticeably shifting the hierarchy of authority to persons with academic credentials,

\textsuperscript{33}In the traditional Kingdom of Nkore, mediums (\textit{Abahangu}) — men as well as women—were raised solely for the purpose of becoming hosts for the spirits. They were set apart at birth and raised by the spiritual leaders in seclusion from the rest of the tribe. Their special training emphasized purity, particularly abstinence from sexual intercourse and the communication skills essential for conveying messages from the spirits. To be effective mediums they were taught to make themselves totally available to the spirits so that by words and actions, their bodies could act as channels of communication with the spirits for the good of the people. When necessary, these mediums were also capable of acting with ruthless malice on behalf of malevolent spirits.
material wealth and high social status. This shift emphasizes democracy, emancipation for all, and individual achievement, the exaggeration of which breeds extreme selfishness, callous competition and erosion of respect for traditional values.

In Mbarara, family is the cradle of life and the central pillar that holds humanity together. Professor John Mbiti clarifies: “For African people the family has a much wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe or North America. In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children and other immediate relatives.”

The concept of family also includes the unborn and dead family members and relatives. The family network begins with the individual, Omuntu and extends to the nuclear family or household, Eka—father, mother and children. The extended family, Ekika, includes grandfather, grandmother, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, adopted children and blood pact friends. It includes the clan, Omuryango, the extended family from the third generation

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34 Mbiti, 106.

35 Ibid., 11. Professor John Mbiti quotes from J. Jahn’s book Muntu, which adopts the categories of A. Kagame to give the explanation of Nkore: “Muntu is the philosophical category which includes God, spirits, the departed, human beings and certain trees. These constitute a ‘force’ endowed with intelligence.” pg. 11. Kuntu includes all the ‘forces’ which do not act on their own but only under the command of Muntu, such as plants, animals, minerals and the like. Hantu is the category of time and space. Kuntu is what he calls ‘modality’ and covers items like beauty, laughter, etc. The people of Nkore share this exact understanding of Muntu or person and O-Buntu as the essence of a person embodied in goodness, generosity and being. A person is never understood as just an individual but rather as a constitution of the total hierarchy of authority, a “force” which begins with God and courses down to the unborn who are in the loins of the living.

36 Among the people of Nkore blood pacts, Emikago, were a means of including strangers into families through a friendship ritual of cutting on each other’s bellies, smearing the blood on a coffee seed and each swallowing the seed tinctured with
and beyond with the same known ancestor. Then it expands to a tribe, *Oruganda*, people bonded by the same ancestors, who speak the same language and observe the same cultural customs and share the same totem. The concept of family even includes all living humans who inhabit the universe, *Abantu*; the spiritual world of *Abazimu*, the Living-dead, deceased family members who remain “alive” through the memories of the living; the sub-deities; and God. In his research on the nature of family among the tribes of East Africa, John Mbiti explains the significance of the Living-dead and of the unborn:

The family also includes the departed relatives, whom we have designated as the living-dead. These are, as their name implies, “alive” in the memories of their surviving families, and are thought to be still interested in the affairs of the family to which they once belonged in their physical life. …

[The] African concept of the family also includes the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living. They are the buds of hope and expectation, and each family makes sure that its own existence is not extinguished.^{37}

The traditional concepts of family and kin remain strong among the people of Mbarara, accentuating family values that are reflected in the recent past and present social and cultural dynamics, thus far managing to remain strong despite social, cultural and economic shifts. There is growing lack of commitment to traditional family values, however, particularly among the youth. Their exposure to modern civilization and Western education tends to desensitize them to the deeply rooted family values of African people in general and Ugandans in particular. Ongoing respect for the traditional values of family and kin and understanding that they are of no less value in a transitioning society

the blood of the other. Hence, the blood pact friend would be accepted into the family as a family member. Today this practice is discouraged because of the fear of HIV/AIDS transmission.

^{37}Mbiti, 107.
are imperative among the youth. At the same time, the negative consequences of domination by heads of families who subjugate other family members by denying them self-expression, emancipation and a sense of personal worth must be acknowledged as unacceptable.

In Mbarara, marriage is considered fundamental for the maintenance of society, and for propagation. Like other family relationships, it reflects the prevailing agricultural lifestyle. For example marriages involve exchange of substantial agricultural products between the families. As John Mbiti explains, “Marriage is a complex affair with economic, social and religious aspects which often overlap so firmly that they cannot be separated from one another.”

Since marriage in the Archdiocese of Mbarara typically occurs at an age when young people would still be under the religious guidance of youth ministers, it is worthwhile to briefly examine the traditional marriage ceremonials. Gifts, which serve as dowry, and bridal gifts (bride price) are exchanged by the young couple’s families, beginning at the time of the engagement and continuing to the actual marriage ceremony. In keeping with an agricultural society, these gifts occur in the form of livestock, libations and foodstuffs. In traditional society every family had herds of

38 Ibid., 133.

39 Foreign anthropologists called what is given at marriage (enjugano) ‘bride price’. Subsequent writers use the same word yet, in fact, traditionally in Nkore, it is not a price for buying a person but rather an initial presentation to the family of the bride (a surety or commitment) that the family of the groom is determined and has what it takes to marry their daughter and raise a family. As a matter of fact, most of the things given would be given back to the new couple during the process of marriage in form of gifts or dowry.

40 Among the Banyankore, the process of marriage, Okushwera, is a lengthy and elaborate family process that takes from six months to a year of communication,
animals and crops from which the whole extended family contribute to provide for the bride price, dowry and marriage preparations. Today most families do not have enough to take care of themselves, let alone to give away elaborate gifts. Uganda’s shift from traditional to Western culture has placed an emphasis on a monetary economy and encouraged a spirit of capitalism which challenges families and especially the youth, who must struggle just to support themselves. Young people need to learn how to cope with the changing pre-marriage procedures which have begun to affect them and their extended families. The consequences of the shift are evident in the Archdiocese of Mbarara: many young couples live together and even produce children without the traditional process of marriage that involves the exchange of expensive traditional gifts like cows, goats and food stuffs (enjugano, okujuga); other couples get as far as the traditional family introduction, okwanjura, but dispense with the elaborate big party and gift exchange of the give-away ceremony (okuhingira) and church weddings (okugaintwa); still other young couples run away from their rural homes to live in the towns without the benefit of a formal marriage because they lack sufficient money to pay for the elaborate marriage discussion and exchange of visits and gifts. It begins with the bride introducing her suitor to her family, an act known as Okwanjura. The “introduction” initiates a series of visits, exchanges of gifts, and sharing of meals as well as agreement on the bride price, Okucwa ebintu or Okujugisa. The next significant step is the payment of the bride price by the groom’s family to the bride’s family, Okujuga. Bride price in Mbarara includes animals like cows and goats, and foodstuffs like bananas, beans, maize, millet, cowpeas, and sorghum. Also included are personal gifts, such as clothes for the parents, brothers and sisters-in-law and other basic family needs like salt, sugar, soap and paraffin. The climax of the marriage process occurs when the bride’s family officially “gives away” their daughter, who is joyfully received into the groom’s family— Okuhingira. All these phases are unhurried, deliberate and ceremonial, with much festive eating and drinking that builds relationships between both extended families and are teaching and learning moments for the youth and adults.
process. Families shun their eloped youth and the government or neighboring churches do not offer any assistance. These young people disappear in the crowds and eke out a living doing odd jobs, struggling to support themselves and their children. Despite the challenges of societal shifting, which are eroding the traditional family values like marriage and kin, the prominent role of marriage cannot be replaced. Socialization and marriage are the major channels for traditional community collaboration and propagation of social and religious values.

Socialization is a form of traditional informal education by apprenticeship in Mbarara. In the traditional Nkore, parents and the tribe at large pass on to “coming of age” youth the tribal knowledge through informal lessons and rituals explaining relationships between suitors and marriage partners through everyday socialization. These lessons which include stories, riddles, proverbs and recitations as well as elaborate ceremonials are an integral part of the traditional master apprenticeship and peer apprenticeship. In the process, individuals learn to identify one another through a ritualized greeting involving a family totem. For example, my family, of the tribe of Bakiga known as the Bazigaba, has a leopard for its totem. When meeting strangers for the first time, we are required to announce our totem and the names of at least three male heads of our family lineage. In a typical scenario, upon meeting a stranger, I would announce myself in this way: I am Tinkatumire (I myself), the son of Tindamanyire (my

41 Occasions of master apprenticeship and peer apprenticeship occur when pubescent youth are sent to their aunts and uncles for extended visits and when teams of youth work together on community projects or simply help and learn from one another. Other opportune times for the elders to teach the youth about tribal heritage and rituals occur during family celebrations, pregnancies, childbirth, naming ceremonies and rites of
father), who is the son of Barisigara (my grandfather), who is the son of Kakaya (my great grandfather), who is the son of Rubungo (my great, great grandfather). I am a *Muzigaba* of the *Banyangabo* lineage and our totem is a leopard. In response, the stranger would recite his or her family lineage, the name of the clan and their totem. Only after that mutual greeting would a normal conversation follow. This has been a common practice in all the tribes that occupy Mbarara but the shifting culture is now de-emphasizing the customary greeting, deeming it unnecessarily complicated and prolonged. Unfortunately, omitting this announcement of bloodlines has already resulted in instances of unintentional incestuous marriages among consanguineous couples.

Traditional education in Nkore, a largely oral culture, has been informal. For centuries and even today, stories, proverbs, riddles, music, dance and drama as well as elaborate ceremonials were the medium of communication and transfer of knowledge. Historically in Uganda, the purpose of education has been the transmission and celebration of traditional values promoting pride of one’s culture; respect for the immediate and extended family and for members of the community; and an understanding of age and sex set groupings in the cultural and social life of the community. In contemporary Mbarara the majority of adults are illiterate and those youth recently introduced to formal education do not have public libraries or other educational resources except when they are at school. By its very nature, traditional informal education is limited because there is no way to ascertain the accuracy of professed facts or make room for challenge.
Traditional education explains the social setting as a patriarchy, with the father as the head of the family, clan and tribe; even inheritance is in the paternal line. Ideally there is a high level of respect for adults and children of both sexes. Roles in society are defined and distributed according to sex and age sets; people of the same sex and age perform team tasks. Parents, uncles and aunts cooperatively work together to initiate their children, nephews, and nieces into the traditional social culture. The men are charged with the responsibility of educating the boys while the women are charged with priming the girls. According to tribal social customs, each generation is responsible for initiating the next in the customs and traditions of the past and for promoting family and social values. The impetus to pass on these values and enlighten the young so that the culture may survive invigorates the older generation and makes them eager to volunteer their time and effort. By its very nature, this informal education by apprenticeship demands proximity between the teachers and the students, as well as openness to and great respect for one another.

In summary, the social cultural shifts in Mbarara affect the related areas of the hierarchies of secular and religious authority, family, kin and marriage and education. The hierarchy of authority puts God at the apex and indicates that divine authority permeates all levels of life, family and kin and education. Family and kin provide the spiritual and human bond that keeps society together through systems of tribe, clan, family, spirits and the unborn. Marriage is the elaborate process between families with new relationships and new life, prefaced with an elaborate exchange of gifts. Education by oral tradition and master apprenticeship is the transmission of the traditional heritage, skills leading to incorporation into community. Although traditional methods have long
served the greater good, instances of abuse of authority and exploitation of the weak sometimes occurred. Such problems and the irrelevance of some of the past practices in the present social and cultural shifting society call for diligent exploration of the traditional social cultural structures in a meaningful and comprehensive youth ministry.

1.3.2 The Political, Economic and Educational Factors Affecting Youth Ministry

Uganda was a British protectorate from 1894 to 1962. The departure of the British left the country divided along political, tribal and religious lines. Despite these after-effects, deeply rooted traditional cultural lifestyles have survived until recently. But the shift toward Westernized culture has begun to erode traditional culture in Mbarara, especially among the youth.

Since its independence in 1962, Uganda has been troubled by worsening poverty, loss of property and loved ones in wars, debilitating war injuries and moral decadence resulting from wartime lawlessness. Concurrent with these challenges,

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42Phares Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes* (Trenton, NJ.: Africa World Press Inc. 1992), 1-21. This book explains that Uganda, as a protectorate and not a colony like many other African countries, was able to maintain its tribal languages and preserve some of the lifestyle of its traditional communities, free from British tampering. However, many Ugandans, including myself, challenge British claims that they did not colonize Uganda but only protected it. Despite the survival of some cultural harmony in Uganda as opposed to the total cultural devastation of other African countries, the British did not leave this country unharmed. In fact, like all colonizers the British suppressed traditional leadership, culture and traditions. For example, indigenous traditional leaders had to follow the British directives that banned the practice and use of traditional medicine, traditional artisan work such as iron smelting, art and traditional ritual worship and sacrifices. Those who resisted were either murdered or sent into forced exile where they eventually died. Rather than give up their faith, most leaders went underground and pretended to convert to Christianity, which explains the inherent syncretism.
communities in Uganda are experiencing economic, social, religious and cultural shifts which threaten to uproot longstanding traditions. John S. Mbiti observes:

Everyone is aware that rapid changes are taking place in Africa, so that traditional ideas are being abandoned, modified or coloured by the changing situation. At the same time it would be wrong to imagine that everything traditional has been changed or forgotten so much that no traces of it are to be found. If anything, the changes are generally on the surface, affecting the material side of life, and only beginning to reach the deeper levels of thinking patterns, language content, mental images, emotions, beliefs and response in situations of need. Traditional concepts still form the essential background of many African people, though obviously this differs from individual to individual and from place to place.43

Mbiti’s observations are clearly manifest in the religious and cultural behaviors of contemporary Ugandans, including the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

Economically, life in the archdiocese continues to be largely one of subsistence. There are no factories or commercial industries in Mbarara. Most of the people grow crops and raise animals without modern methods of farming, always at the mercy of nature. Cultivating crops is difficult and often disheartening for those who spend many days toiling in the fields under a blazing sun, using only simple hand tools and harvesting so little. Therefore, farm production is small-scale and almost solely for home consumption. Only on rare occasion is there a surplus that can be sold so as to buy whatever cannot be produced at home. Ordinarily, to send their children to schools for formal education, or to buy things that cannot be made at home, people must forgo what they would ordinarily eat and sell or trade these items at the market place for clothes, medicine, salt and kerosene. For the majority of Ugandans, soil, plants and animals, water and air are part and parcel of life and naturally affect their limited world view and
expressions of their faith in God. Such a lifestyle, together with the high levels of poverty, greatly affect the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara who, like the adults, spend much of their time struggling to survive and who have lost most of their bread-earning adults to HIV/AIDS. As a consequence of this widespread poverty and subsistence living, youth ministry cannot afford to properly fund its programs. Chapter Five will discuss some ways of youth assisting one another to overcome the predicaments and poverty of subsistence living.

Despite widespread poverty and the elders’ insistence on traditional informal education, formal education is steadily taking root in Africa. In Uganda, Universal Primary Education (UPE) was introduced in January 1997, as part of government policy to provide free education to four children in every family, including the orphaned and the disabled. However, Universal Primary Education in Uganda is considered inferior because its overcrowded schools lack critical components such as sufficient classrooms, sanitary structures, books or teachers. Therefore, especially in rural settings, many parents make the sacrifice to send their children to private schools, most of them boarding schools in urban areas far from home. Many children enter these boarding schools as young as five years of age and consequently are removed from the family setting where human values and character development would have been modeled and nurtured by adult relatives. Instead, at a most impressionable age, human values and

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43 Mbiti, xi.

character development of formally educated Ugandan children are influenced by school personnel, peers and the school surroundings. The growing tendency for young people to leave home at an early age and learn about life from non-family adult role models creates challenges for families, schools and youth ministers. It is critical that the Church, families and schools work together to address the issues of character development and the transfer of values in a society whose children are shifting from the informal family-centered education to the formal educational setting.

In addition to formal education, other recent positive changes are contributing to the politics and economy of Mbarara. Improved political stability since Kaguta Yoweri Museveni took over as president in 1986 has led to more peaceful, harmonious living among the people of different religions, tribes and political parties. On the economic front, there is slow but evident growth due to a growing financial discipline on the part of families and government. Jobs to improve infrastructures like roads and communication lines are becoming available. With increased income, more families can afford to send their children to private schools and because of extra money, there is even improvement in people’s hygiene and overall health.

In the area of technology, internet cafes are cropping up while CDs, DVDs, and movies, especially Hollywood productions are now available in towns and in some schools. Even in certain rural areas, mobile generators power temporary movie shelters, thus exposing many more people to the outside world via the media of film. Cellular phones are providing instant communications between families, villages, and even countries around the world, creating views of the world as a “global village.” While this intercultural pollination commonly occurs in highly populated areas, the more rural regions
remain virtually unaffected by these developments because most people there cannot afford modern “luxuries” and lack even such basics as electricity. In urban areas where the technology is becoming commonplace, many people require psychological preparation in order to adjust to abrupt cultural changes.

Modern devices and “popular culture”\(^{45}\) have overwhelming effects on young people. At home they ask for televisions, telephones, computers and other electronic devices common at their schools and in the urban areas where their schools are located. Many youth ministers are finding themselves in a cultural limbo since most churches in Mbarara do not have essentials such as electricity. Many parents and youth ministers are ignorant of the terminology of modern devices and are equally unfamiliar with the language the youth acquire from films and their other interactions in Uganda’s shifting culture.

In summary, political and economic shifts affect the general lifestyle of the youth and methods of effectively ministering to them. On-going wars and political instabilities deprive the youth of a stable, peaceful environment; traditional farming methods and low income prevent young people from improving their livelihood; modern formal education is expensive and competitive; and the urban location of schools detaches the youth from their rural families. Additionally, the pressure to acquire modern technological devices puts extra financial burdens on struggling families while the use of

\(^{45}\)Michael Warren, *Seeing Through the Media: A Religious View of Communications and Cultural Analysis* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), 7 – 30. For Warren, “popular culture” includes what catches the youths’ attention beyond the school, the family and the Church: music, the heroes being proposed to them, fashion, films, TV, patterns of work, leisure, monetary purchases, and electronic
technology is exposing the youth to a popular culture that is not always beneficial. Youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, as in many developing countries, must seek every possible means to keep up with political and economic changes; to embrace the challenges of formal education despite feelings of inadequacy due to their humble backgrounds; and to understand that education is the best tool to help them overcome poverty and make a positive difference in society. Finally, a proactive and relevant youth ministry makes every effort to understand the effects of the shifting cultural, socio-economic and political forces in the lives of the youth and familiarizes itself with the use of modern technological devices in order to encourage young people to use these instruments constructively.

1.3.3 The Age Group Addressed in the Dissertation

Adolescents aged sixteen through twenty-two are the focus of this study because they are at the threshold of transitioning into adulthood and are about to make major life decisions like choosing a profession, entering into marriage, or both. Traditionally, this age group is tribally trained and initiated into maturity. In the current shifting society they are enrolled in high schools and colleges, vocational schools, or universities where critical determinations of the courses of their lives are most often made without the family’s input. The Church and society at large will benefit from deliberate attention and counsel to the youth of this age group since the future of both depends on the preparation and choices these young people make. Unfortunately, youth of this age group are often characterized collectively as restless, rebellious, insubordinate, unruly, communication that shape their world meaning.
reckless and dangerous, along with a host of other stereotypes. Consequently, many of those responsible for religious formation tend to dismiss youth as unimportant or even detrimental to the vitality of the Church. Michael Warren addresses the problem of stereotyping youth by asking, “HOW CAN WE RE-IMAGINE THE ROLE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE SOCIETY?” (emphasis in original) and then explaining, “This question must be asked in a time when the young people, at every turn, find themselves imagined at their least: as greedy, lustful, violent, characterized by trivial concerns and narcissistic self-preoccupation.” These stereotypes which have been common in Western societies, are now surfacing in Mbarara as the youth transition from traditional to modern lifestyles.

The passage from ages sixteen through twenty-two is in itself challenging due to the physical, psychological, intellectual and social changes in addition to other adjustments that adolescents must make. As they stand between childhood and adulthood, they need appropriate recognition, attention, understanding and guidance from adults. The future belongs to the youth, but adults must prepare them for what that legacy entails. Youth ministry must use appropriate educational, psychological and cultural information to guide and support young people during these transitional years.

Despite the common adult prejudices regarding youth between sixteen through twenty-two, my personal experience from teaching in high schools and seminaries

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48 Shelton, 1-14.
had led me to appreciate them as generally intelligent, curious, energetic, ambitious and adventurous. Properly ministering to them can be a problem because, many of the youth in Mbarara, similar to their Christian counterparts in the Western world, end their catechetical instruction after receiving the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation), leaving a catechetical void until they enter into the adult sacraments of committed lives such as Matrimony or Ordination, or when they might choose consecrated religious life. A holistic youth ministry is necessary to fill this void with proactive and educational youth programs. Such youth programs can incorporate integral and effective elements of theological and ecological foundations into a youth ministry that is effective for this particular age group.

**Conclusion**

Chapter One has described the geographical, demographic, historical and religious features of Uganda and the territory formation, tribal composition of the Archdiocese of Mbarara as the context of this dissertation. It has located the Archdiocese in relation to its global positioning in the country of Uganda: the physical features, the people and their means of livelihood. It also has discussed the social, cultural, economic and political dynamics which naturally impact religious practices and consequently, Youth Ministry. The chapter has acknowledged that due to the ever pervasive influences of Western civilization and technology, the conservative and often static culture of the native tribal communities of Mbarara with their adherence to informal education, traditional customs and worship and a predominantly agrarian economy is undergoing steady but dramatic transformation and amidst this transition, the Church is
struggling with the immediate need to adjust the message and methods of its pastoral ministry to the youth of ages sixteen through twenty-two.

CHAPTER TWO: LEADERSHIP AND PARTICULAR CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO YOUTH MINISTRY IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MBARARA

2.0 Overview: Leadership and Particular Challenges and Obstacles to Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

Chapter Two explores the leadership structure which oversees ministering to the youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the existing youth groups and certain challenges and obstacles to effective youth ministry in the Archdiocese. It presents the current administrative structure that the archdiocese uses to disseminate the content of its youth programs. It also exposes the conditions and circumstances surrounding the lives of the youth that must be the focus in planning a holistic, meaningful and effective youth ministry. Finally, this chapter serves as preparation for the theological and ecological foundations presented in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Youth Ministry Leadership in Parishes and Schools in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

2.1.1 The Archdiocesan Youth Apostolate Office, Jesus is Alive Community (Yesu Ahurire Community)

The Youth Apostolate Office, a branch of the Lay Apostolate Office in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, is headed by a priest chaplain appointed by the archbishop. The
chaplain coordinates youth ministry and its activities, assisted by two adult laypersons, the archdiocesan youth leader and the archdiocesan youth office secretary.\textsuperscript{49} This team mobilizes youth groups in parishes and in schools\textsuperscript{50} as well as groups for youth out of school.\textsuperscript{51} The three-person team organizes youth groups in every parish, in schools, and in other youth communities according to established guidelines. The group in each location appoints its own executive committee of a chairperson, secretary, treasurer and two committee members. All the executive committees then convene to elect the Archdiocesan Youth Council, which has its own chairperson, secretary and treasurer, plus representatives from every archdiocesan youth group. The Archdiocesan Youth Council studies proposals for programs and activities, accepting, denying or altering them if necessary, before approving and disseminating them to be implemented throughout the archdiocese.

The archdiocesan youth office team keeps records of all the youth groups, coordinates their activities and integrates them as a single youth ministry. The

\textsuperscript{49}Through the Archdiocesan Personnel Board the chaplain appoints the youth leader and the secretary, who must meet professional requirements and are paid employees. The youth leader animates and coordinates the work of youth ministry in the Archdiocese.

\textsuperscript{50}In Uganda schools are either private or government owned. In the privately owned schools like seminaries, religious vocational schools and individually owned schools, the government provides and supervises the academic curriculum and ensures that academic environments meet Ministry of Education standards. The religious and moral aspects of education are left to the schools’ discretion. The founding bodies provide chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers of the governing board (Board of Governors) and Parents and Teachers Associations (PTA). The government oversees the school’s financial and academic requirements.

\textsuperscript{51}The term “out of school” signifies school dropouts, those who never went to school and some graduates without jobs.
archdiocesan office, therefore, serves as a hub that ensures continuous communication and coordination among all youth programs and activities. Some groups, however, are not subject to direct administration and accountability to the Archdiocesan Youth Office. As a rule, individual youth groups are expected to be self-supporting by raising their own funds through the parishes or schools. The Archdiocesan Youth Office may allocate some funds for specific programs to those youth groups that fall directly under the office, but those monies are dependent on external donors. For all youth groups, the Archdiocesan Youth Office provides information regarding potential project sponsors and resource personnel for many programs, especially behavioral change programs. The youth groups sponsored by the archdiocese include those listed below.

2.1.1.1 Eucharistic Crusaders

The Eucharistic Crusaders, which includes both boys and girls in the Archdiocese, is aimed at forming spiritual and moral character. The movement resembles in some ways the Crusaders of more than eight centuries ago, who responded to papal appeals to rescue the Holy Land and its sacred sites from defilement. However, unlike the knights who wielded swords, Eucharistic Crusaders are youth who are taught to wield prayers. Their official description connects their role with the deeds of the crusading knights: “A child becomes full pledge in the Eucharistic Crusade when he is officially received in one of the three Degrees of the Crusade, namely PAGE, CRUSADER or

52 The sponsorship of the youth groups is more administrative than financial. Most groups raise the money they need for their activities from the parishes, institutions and individuals. Sponsorship largely refers to the youth programs, education and structural organization. The Youth Office will also transport and pay facilitators that the Archdiocese provides for youth groups.
KNIGHT (HANDMAID for girls).” The Eucharistic Crusade, a powerful tool for sanctification, inculcates in children the habit of prayer and sacrifice. The Eucharistic Crusaders is an especially popular movement among the youth in schools and in the rural parishes of the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

2.1.1.2 Xaverian Movement

The Xaverian Movement is popular with both girls and boys. Founded in 1952 at Bukavu Zaire (present day Democratic Republic of Congo) by a Missionary of Africa, Rev. Defour, the movement centers on the spirituality of solidarity, development of personal talents, skills and character formation. These goals include: to become mature, responsible persons, good Christians with an active prayer life and citizens who actively participate in the development of the Church and the country through initiatives and service to society. The Xaverian Movement strives to inculcate among the children and youth the human virtues of honesty, kindness, generosity and courtesy; to exercise participatory leadership based on teamwork, to assist and guide children and young people to actively participate in the practice of prayer, liturgical celebrations and sacramental life as well as Bible study and personal devotions. The movement strives to assist and support children and adolescents to be informed Catholics whose lives are relevant to the church’s mission based on the teaching of the Catholic Church.


54 The aim of the Xaverian movement, named after its patron St. Francis Xavier, is to bring youth together in a congenial atmosphere inspired by the Gospel. The objectives are summed in two simple principles: love of God and love of neighbor. http://nansanaxaverian.cfsites.org , accessed 3/16/2011.

young people develop spiritually, morally and socially as well as offering practical life
skills for encouraging economic independence. The popularity of the Xaverian Movement
in the Archdiocese of Mbarara is a direct result of its goals, which promote a spirit of
solidarity through respect for human life and its focus on the holistic development of the
individual for the service of church and community.

2.1.1.3 Focolare Movement

The Focolare Movement, which emphasizes the spirituality of unity, was
founded by Chiara Lubich of Trent, Italy in 1944. The Focolare explores the love of
God manifested in human based on a spirituality that emerged from a rediscovery of the
Gospel. History of the movement attests that Chiara and her first companions were
particularly moved by Jesus’ priestly prayer, “May they all be one …” (Jn 17: 21). During
the darkest hours of World War II, they questioned how unity could be accomplished in a
world torn apart by hatred and violence. This question became their personal prayer and
served as the impetus for initiating the Focolare Movement, whose central goal is the
fulfillment of Jesus’ last prayer, “May they all be one” (Jn 17:21). The Focolare goes
beyond the boundaries marked religious affiliations, race and any other bias that divides
humanity to seek total human unity inspired by divine love.

Because of its emphasis on unity through communion and community, the
Focolare Movement has been enthusiastically adopted in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Its

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03/16/2011.

goal of the unity of people regardless of religious affiliation, color or ethnicity makes the movement especially attractive to high school and university age youth.

2.1.1.4 Legion of Mary

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is popular in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. The Official Handbook, *Legio Marie*, defines the Legion of Mary as:

an association of Catholics who, with the sanction of the Church and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all Graces (who is fair as the moon, bright as the sun, and – to Satan and his legionaries – terrible as an army set in battle array) have formed themselves into a Legion for service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers.  

The Legion of Mary develops devotion to Mary as loving Mother of God and their mother as well. From the strict discipline of the Legion, young people acquire the habit of punctuality, commitment and administrative skills. From performing Legionary work they learn humility, piety and selfless service. Youth are instructed how to pray and are prepared for the sacraments of initiation. Since the Eucharist is the center of the Legionary spirit, the youth learn to revere and love Jesus Christ, following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Legion of Mary website notes the vital importance of the Legion in a parish community:

Members become instruments of the Holy Spirit through a balanced program of prayer and service. Works include door-to-door evangelization, parishioner visitation, prison ministry, visitation of the sick or aged, crowd contact, religious education, visiting the newly baptized, Pilgrim Statue of Mary rotations, and meeting the other spiritual needs of the parish community. Legionaries are under the guidance of a spiritual director named by the pastor. The legion is, in essence, an extension of the heart and hands of the pastor.  

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58 Legion of Mary [http://www.legionofmary.org/lom.html](http://www.legionofmary.org/lom.html) (accessed
2.1.1.5 Apostleship of Prayer

The international Apostleship of Prayer has also found a place in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Its mission statement declares:

*The mission of the Apostleship of Prayer is to encourage Christians to make a daily offering of themselves to the Lord for the coming of God’s Kingdom and for the Holy Father’s monthly intentions. This habit of prayer encourages a Eucharistic spirituality of solidarity with the Body of Christ and loving service to others. Nourishing this spiritual program is the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.*[^59] [Emphasis is in the original].

The spirituality of Apostleship of Prayer attracts the youth both in schools and in rural parishes.

2.1.1.6 Young Christian Students (YCS) and Young Christian Workers (YCW)

YCS, an international Christian Students’ organization, operates in over eighty countries worldwide. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, YCS is a powerful group aimed at integrating into classroom education a conscientious awareness of world issues such as poverty, justice, peace, leadership and liberation. The YCW, while emphasizing the same values as the YCS, adds the component of the value of work, since its membership encompasses working youth, particularly those in rural areas whose lives are centered on farm work. Both groups share a belief in the inherent potential of youth to

make a positive impact on the Church and community in the areas of leadership, spirituality, integrity, commitment and diversity.\textsuperscript{60}

2.1.1.7 Scouts and Girl Guides

The Archdiocese of Mbarara sponsors Scouts (for boys and girls), Girl Guides and Cubs for children. The two associations have nearly identical objectives—to train the youth in life skills, discipline, responsibility and perseverance. The Scouts’ national website describes its goals and purpose:

The mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society. This is achieved by:

- involving them throughout their formative years in a non-formal educational process

- using a specific method that makes each individual the principal agent of his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person

- assisting them to establish a value system based upon spiritual, social and personal principles as expressed in the Promise and Law.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60}Vincent Bagire and Pius Kihumuro, “Young Christian Students’ International Meeting,” \textit{Leadership Magazine}, Kampala, Uganda, No. 464. http://www.leadershipmagazine.org/september/education\_2.html . YCS, for youth who attend school, is established in educational institutions. YCW, for youth who do not attend school, is established in rural parishes. Youth who have completed their education often help the YCW by sharing their knowledge and skills with those who do not get the opportunity to attend schools.

For many years, Scouts and Girl Guides have been mobilized to fight poverty, disease and ignorance. Because of their service, they are respected members of their communities. Both organizations have strong appeal to the youth of the archdiocese.

2.1.1.8 Altar Servers Associations

The Altar Servers Association brings together both boys and girls who are interested in serving at Masses and other Church activities. In the archdiocese, altar servers meet weekly as a group to pursue their common religious interest. In addition to reviewing their roles at Mass, they pray, discuss basic concerns such as the need to keep themselves clean and presentable, encourage one another to attend school regularly and voice their hopes and dreams to their peers.

2.1.1.9 Church Choirs, Music Groups and Sports Groups

Music and sports are magnets for youth. Church choirs, music groups and sports groups are perfect forums for youth to meet and interact. Although some may downplay these activities as mere entertainment or competition, they are useful vehicles for gradually incorporating the values that youth ministers wish to project. Through them, these values become assimilated into the lives of the youth.

2.1.1.10 Youth Alive Group (HIV/AIDS Awareness Group)

The Youth Alive Group (YAG), a national organization, transcends religions, tribal divisions and social classes in order to sensitize as many youth as possible to the realities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Archdiocesan YAG teaches youth in schools and in the rural parishes about behavior changes necessary to prevent HIV/AIDS or, for those who are already infected, to live with it. They spread their message through media most attractive to young people—music, dance and drama. The YAG message of
behavior change has equal value for adults. Such organizations are essential to a youth ministry that aims at building the future generation and keeping them alive and healthy.

2.1.1.11 Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR)

CCR, a dynamic movement popular with many adults, is also open to youth. It strongly encourages young people in schools and in parishes to receive and accept Jesus Christ as their personal savior and to embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit. At weekly prayer meetings, the youth share their personal testimonies and learn from each other how God is working in their lives. Since prayer meetings are conducted by the youth themselves, they speak powerfully in their own terms and situations.

This list of organizations illustrates the rich variety of groups already in place in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, eager to welcome any youth who wishes to become involved. Unfortunately, many of these groups are under-utilized. The present archdiocesan structure, which considers the Lay Apostolate and the Youth Apostolate as one branch, requires the youth chaplain to assume more than one role. The current youth chaplain is also the co-founder and director of the Jesus Is Alive Community center (Yesu Ahurire Community) located a few miles from the main Archdiocesan offices, at Karama, which is the operational base for the archdiocese’s Catholic Charismatic Renewal programs. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has made a great impact on the youth because of the music component used in praise and worship, allowing the youth themselves to serve as animators to fellow youth and the availability of resources through the International Charismatic Renewal connections. Within the Archdiocese of Mbarara, there exist other organizations and individuals reaching out to the youth although they
may not be directly associated with the diocesan youth ministry programs. Below are examples of such institutions.

2.1.2 Institute of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC)

OLGC, a local religious congregation of women in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, is involved primarily with youth ministry in schools, parishes, families and hospitals. The Ninth General Chapter called upon each of the members of the institute of Our Lady of Good Counsel to ignite her zeal in living her spirituality (Cons. Page 128).² Youth ministry and family ministries,³ particularly the Youth Support Group (YSG)⁴ are among their important contributions to youth ministry in the Archdiocese.

The YSG Mbarara, a project begun by the Sisters of OLGC, has had tremendous effect among the youth between sixteen through twenty-two years of age. The 2005 Project Proposals describes the Youth Support Group (YSG) as an initiative of the congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel – Mbarara (OLGC), currently directed by Sisters Louise Tindimutuma and Magdalene Kyamunyogonya, who started the group in 2001. It was registered as an NGO by the NGO board in Kampala on 21st June 2002 for one year and then renewed for another three years. The purpose of this

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³Ibid., 4. Youth and Family Apostolate places particular attention on the afflicted families and vulnerable youth. Every effort is made to reach out to them and minister to them, especially those directly affected by the AIDS scourge.

⁴YSG is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) registered with the government of Uganda, which requires annual reports of their activities. For this reason
youth group is to offer leadership skills and empower young people through the Behavioral Change Program (BCP) for the youth starting from Mbarara Municipality\textsuperscript{65} to the rest of the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

Sr. Magdalene and Sr. Louise, also commonly known as the Twin Sisters, are identical twins and members of the Institute of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Their passion for the youth is impressive. Drawing on their wealth of experiences as teachers, catechists and administrators they have mobilized young people so as to encourage behavioral change through conferences, seminars and retreats. Most significantly, they have opened a residential youth support center where youth, especially the destitute, can come to live, learn and change inappropriate behavior, thus enabling them to become better citizens and learn more about their faith.

The objectives of YSG Mbarara are clearly stipulated in Article 5 of their Constitutions:

1) To coordinate all youths in Mbarara Municipality and other areas where the organization shall operate.
2) To train youth in leadership skills through education for life programmes.
3) To empower the youth and enable them to have life in its fullness through change of behaviour and attitude.
4) To creatively build and strengthen youth bonds in order to re-channel youth energies and make use of their talents through youth creation.
5) To evangelize the youth through;
   a) Education for life programmes (peer education) as an AIDS prevention
   b) Outreach to the target groups (AIDS victims, street youth, orphans and disadvantaged)

\textsuperscript{65}Magdalene Kyamunyogonya and Louise Tindimutuma. “Project Proposal: Completion of the Construction of Youth Support Group Center” (Mbarara, Uganda, March 2005), 3.
Leadership training
6) Laying a humble, strong base for the future group foundation for broader and better benefits of the members and society.\(^66\)

YSG Mbarara goes beyond behavior modification programs, offering training skills and creating jobs for the youth. It includes the empowering of youth in schools and those out of school with skills like typing, sewing, building, carpentry, embroidering, music and drama. Most importantly, the YSG Mbarara is built on prayer and faith.

The annual reports for YSG Mbarara for 2003 and 2005 reveal the extent of the Group’s involvement with the youth. According to the report, between 2002 and 2003, the number of youth involved with YSG Mbarara was 2,459.\(^67\) Its 2005 report is an even greater indicator of the effectiveness of the group’s outreach: the number of youth involved in the program between 2004 and 2005 expanded to 10,772 and 18,772, respectively.\(^68\) The large and continuously growing membership of the YSG Mbarara reflects its popularity. Since YSG is in the Archdiocese of Mbarara and run by a Catholic religious congregation, it does collaborate to some extent with the Youth Office, particularly in receiving endorsement for project sponsorships, periodic meetings and some joint youth awareness initiatives. Nevertheless, as an independent NGO, the YSG does


\(^{67}\)Ibid., 7.

not fall under the full administration and coordination of the Archdiocesan Youth Office, which impedes the operation of a unified youth ministry.

2.1.3 Parish Priests (Pastors) and Curates (Associate Pastors) and Appointed Chaplains in Youth Ministry

The parish priests (pastors) are appointed by the bishop (the local ordinary) to care for the spiritual and temporal goods of the Church. The role of parish priest is defined by the Vatican Council II and canon law: “A parish is a certain community of Christ’s faithful believers stably constituted within a particular Church, whose pastoral care under the authority of the diocesan bishop is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.”69 In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the term for pastor is “parish priest” and the term for associate pastor is “curate,” which differs from the American terms of “pastors” and “associate pastor.” The local ordinary/bishop assigns parishes and educational institutions to either priests of religious congregations or to the diocesan priests. Their different training or formation is reflected in the ways they approach and carry out their ministries. Youth ministry in the archdiocese necessarily must understand the varied pastoral methods employed by diocesan priests and those of religious congregations in order to work together effectively and implement consistency in archdiocesan youth programs.

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69Can. 515 par. 1. This Canon’s definition of a parish and parish priest is reiterated by the teachings of Vatican Council II: “Since it is impossible for the bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his church, he must establish groupings of the faithful; and, among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who takes the place of the bishop…” Vatican Council II, “The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy; Sacrosanctum Concilium,” no. 42, in Austin Flannery, ed. The Vatican Council II Volume 1 The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents (New York, NY: Castello Publishing Company, 1998), 15.
Until recently, few families could afford to send their children to school for formal education. The majority of the children remained at home and received informal education. As a means of catechizing these children, missionaries created a rudimentary system of inviting all Catholic children of about fourteen years and older to leave their homes and board at their local parishes for two to three years. In the local language, this time of catechesis and formation is called Omugigi, translated as “a period of endurance.” These years of catechesis and formation were meant to serve as initiation into Christianity and human development. During this time the youth (the Abaronde, or “the elected”), receive instruction in Church doctrine, lessons in reading and writing and other basic human values from parish priests, curates and catechists. In return, youth are expected to participate in cultivating crops and looking after domestic livestock which in turn constitutes a source of their livelihood at the parish. Their days are characterized by a military-like schedule. Disturbed by this method of catechesis and formation by indenturing parish youth to years of manual labor, I vividly remember questioning this practice with Fr. Thomas Bishanga (now deceased) after my ordination to the diaconate in 1991. His explanation was, “These young people did not go to school to get intellectual knowledge. When we bring them to live here, it is an opportunity to teach them human skills to help them to mature and live productive lives and we teach religious doctrines to guide them in their living as Christians.”

Although he was indigenous, Fr. Bishanga’s response reflects the thinking of expatriate missionary clergy who considered long and

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70Rev. Fr. Thomas Bishanga was one of the first indigenous priests of the Archdiocese of Mbarara together with Fr. Leo Katesigwa and Fr. Paul Ikazire. He was parish priest of my home parish, of St. Thomas Kenyena, for twenty-six years. At the time
laborious periods at the parish as opportunities to enlighten people. Many priests see this time as an ideal opportunity for the preparation of a Christian marriage. For the young couple, however, this means that they will be segregated during the two to three years of instruction and labor at the parish. Even today, the archdiocese still approves the long periods of catechumenate for youth at parishes (*Omugigi*), but fortunately, this manner of exploiting the youth is being systematically eliminated due to the government’s insistence that all youth must attend formal schooling and that catechesis be integrated with the academic timetable. I have always been uncomfortable with the traditional *Omugigi* period because of the intensity of the labor required to grow food and raise animals and the disproportionately small amount of food given to the youth while the parish priests received the far larger proportion. Today, although only about one youth in ten do not attend formal schools and enroll in a parish *Omugigi*, the archdiocese still has a responsibility to treat these young men and women more humanely and create other methods for catechizing them.

On the positive side, over the years this method of catechesis has had a serendipitous side effect. Although matchmaking is not an intentional part of the three-year program, most of the boys and girls cannot help but notice that they are auspiciously surrounded by potential marriage prospects. As a result, after receiving the sacrament of Confirmation and returning to their homes, the majority of youth soon enter into matrimony with an acquaintance of their parish formation years.

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of my ordination to deaconate he was seventy-six years of age.
In today’s parishes, changing life styles require accelerated adjustments in the methods of youth ministry. The youth apostolate groups discussed earlier and Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) are supplanting the remnants of the Omugigi format and continuously are gaining popularity in school and parish youth ministries. The process of incorporating contemporary youth ministry into the parishes, however, depends upon the competence of the chaplains in the schools, of the parish priests and of the curates to whom parish youth ministry is typically delegated. Youth ministry is contingent upon their commitment, energy and creativity to organize a variety of groups and set up inviting and inspiring activities.

Unfortunately, most parish priests do not consider youth ministry a priority. This does not indicate disinterest toward youth, but rather conveys a sense of the many other immediate and more pressing needs that parishes have. Almost all parish priests are struggling with day-to-day survival, trying to maintain basic needs like food, water and health; the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish at large; and the general upkeep of the humble parish facilities. These and other everyday challenges cause many parish priests to push youth ministry to the periphery of parish priorities.

2.1.4 Parish Laity: Religious Men and Women, Lay Ministers and Youth Ministry

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, the ecclesiastical organization provides an ideal framework for disseminating religious values to all its members of the Church. As the head of the archdiocese, the archbishop assigns the leadership of individual parishes to parish priests. Parishes are divided into Eucharistic Centers, which in turn are divided into yet smaller worshiping communities called Hiikas. Finally, Hiikas are divided into Basic Ecclesial Communities (Emigongo), which include families, which in turn are made up of
individuals. Such organization aims at reaching out and encompassing its clergy, members of religious organizations and lay persons to encourage them to become participants as well as shared leaders in the apostolate of living and promulgating the faith. Within the archdiocesan framework of communities, youth ministry can occur at every level. The clergy who struggle to update youth ministry so as to give it meaningful appeal can best achieve this goal through the existing ecclesial structure, which encourages the involvement of the laity. Until recently, lay volunteers were the main personnel used in training catechumens, coordinating youth activities and performing other pastoral ministries, especially in outlying parishes. Recent developments, such as the need to work outside the home, have decreased the number of pastoral volunteers available, warranting remuneration for most pastoral ministers, including religious men and women.

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, religious men and women, trained catechists, and other lay leaders are working wholeheartedly to develop a meaningful youth ministry. Religious men and women work with the youth in the schools, through social work and pastoral ministries. Lay members are central to youth ministry, creating the families where children are born and raised. In addition, they comprise the teaching and non teaching staffs in the schools, providing basic nurturing and socialization. Therefore, youth ministry will achieve its intended goals through understanding,

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As explained above in 2.1.4, the structural division of the Archdiocese is a practical way of reaching every member of the Archdiocese. Youth ministry follows the same structural hierarchy in setting up youth committees and channeling guidelines for the apostolate. However, the Archdiocesan administrative decision to place the Youth Office directly under the Lay Apostolate Office seems to push youth ministry to the periphery while giving priority to adult ministries. I strongly advocate the establishment of an independent youth office with its own self-sufficient budget, directly accountable to the
involvement and cooperation with the religious men and women, along with those members of the laity who manage to devote time to Church activities.

The increasing demand for formal education of children has put a strain on those parents who were once the foremost volunteers but who now must devote much of their time to paying jobs outside of the home. Additionally, many of the religious sisters and brothers who formerly serviced the Church in return for food and basic needs are now teaching in schools, working as nurses and engaging in other paying jobs. Abundant volunteers able to work in pastoral ministry without compensation are a thing of the past. Since involvement of the laity is no less desirable today than it was in the past, church leaders, particularly youth ministers, must openly dialogue with the laity to inculcate in them a renewed sense of their importance to the mission of the Church and to urge their continued involvement, even if it is for brief periods of time.

2.1.5 Schools, Institutional Administrators (Head Teachers, Principals, Presidents, Staff and Student Leaders) and Youth Ministry

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, formal education at primary and secondary levels has become the norm. Nevertheless, many children enrolled in schools do not continue to higher institutions due to their families’ lack of resources. This section

The rate of school dropout is high due to lack of commitment on the part of the government and the families. “… on average at primary school level, half the pupils who enroll in Primary One do not complete Primary Seven in the set time-frame. For instance, records at the education ministry show that only 444,019 pupils sat for the Primary Leaving Examination last year, out of the 890,997 who enrolled in 2003. Thus a total of 446,978 either dropped out or repeated a class.” Canon Busingye, “Uganda Has the Highest Dropout Rate,” New Vision, Special Report, Friday, 9th April, 2010. http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/9/183/715724, accessed 8/8/2011.
focuses on youth from sixteen through twenty-two years of age who have the means to continue with secondary education. In the Ugandan educational system, these students are normally enrolled in secondary schools, vocational schools or universities (hereafter referred to as “Higher Education Institutions,” or simply HEI). Most of these institutions are boarding schools, distant from the youths’ homes and families. Many are a mix of youth from different cultural groups and some are co-ed. Within the school, educational administrators are integral to the development of the youth, often assuming parental as well as educational roles. As the immediate role models for young people, administrators are expected to provide reasonable discipline, encourage a desire for knowledge, and promote the development of personal virtues such as positive work ethics, a sense of justice and respect for others. However, if school administrators are lax in discipline and in disseminating developmental values, their students will not make the best use of their study time and will be deprived of many character-shaping opportunities. Unfortunately, many of the higher education institutions in Uganda, while strong on curriculum and adherence to academic standards, do not place equal emphasis on other areas of human development. This serious omission is detrimental to many youth, since they spend more time in school than in any other societal grouping.

The role of the schools in students’ integral development and maturation needs to be revisited. Youth ministry must establish a working relationship with school administrators in order to promote a partnership among schools, the Church and the families of students so as to encourage greater awareness of their interrelated mission of education. Schools founded on affiliations other than Catholic require particular encouragement to allow youth ministry programs into their institutions. It is important
that the school leadership be led to understand and appreciate the benefits of integrating the Catholic youth programs into their schools. Chaplains and Catholic teachers who work with the youth at schools of affiliation other than Catholic will require the preparation of strategic methods to integrate youth values into the programs of these schools. Through protracted efforts of youth ministers to dialogue with schools’ leadership in explaining and promoting the values of youth ministry, the youth in all schools of formal education can experience the caring embrace of the archdiocese’s youth ministries.

2.2 Some Challenges and Obstacles to the Youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

The youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara face daunting challenges presented by the social, cultural, economic and religious shifts and serious obstacles such as disease, poverty and ignorance. Especially problematic are the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the abuse and neglect of youth, and the presence of inappropriate adult role models. In addition, the youth must deal with the inroads of modern communications and the media, which frequently depict life in a manner contradictory to the message of the gospel. Moreover, the often negative effects of peer pressure can distract young people from the creative, productive life encouraged by youth ministry. Finally, youth ministry programs must provide for youths with disabilities. Youth ministers as well as the young people themselves need to be aware of these challenges and obstacles and must address them in their youth programs.
2.2.1 HIV/AIDS Pandemic and Other Killer Diseases, vis-à-vis Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

More than any other disease in Africa, HIV/AIDS has received worldwide attention because of its origins, nature and international stigma.\(^73\) Despite open and protracted efforts to combat it, the pandemic has struck hard in Uganda and has continued to ravage the nation. The gravity of the problem is reflected in an article by Raymond Baguma and Agencies, “New HIV virus type hits Uganda,” published in the Sunday Vision of September 2010:

Uganda has achieved success in reducing the HIV prevalence from 30% in the 1980s, to the national average of 6.4% by using the ABC strategy which emphasizes abstinence, faithfulness and condom use. However, the HIV prevalence in the fishing communities is at 28%, which is higher than the national average.\(^74\)

While HIV/AIDS continues to kill many Ugandans, the pandemic has been given more attention than other diseases that have claimed many more lives. Professor Laurenti Magesa, for example, in his article “AIDS and Survival in Africa: A Tentative Reflection,” suggests that other diseases trump HIV/AIDS in their negative impact on


\(^74\) Raymond Baguma and Agencies, “New HIV Virus Type Hits Uganda,” Sunday Vision, September 5, 2010. [http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/731040](http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/731040), accessed 9/7/2010. Raymond Baguma and Agencies expose the new strain of HIV/AIDS discovered in the fishing communities of Lake Victoria in Wakiso District, Uganda. Studies of this new strain reveal that people who are already infected with one type of HIV can be infected with another type resulting in a more resistant strain of HIV. This revelation seems compatible with the skepticism some Ugandans have expressed about the seemingly lower current percentages of infection with HIV/AIDS throughout most of the country since in the eyes of the general population, the number of deaths seem to be constant rather than diminishing.
Uganda and points to two distinct tendencies that characterize the discourse on AIDS in Africa:

One tendency caricatures the continent and all but defines Africa in terms of the epidemic. Yet AIDS is not the biggest killer in Africa. According to current statistics, it ranks behind Africa’s classical (and controllable) menaces such as malaria, dysentery, measles and tuberculosis. The other is a more respectful and respectable approach. While it does not in any way irresponsibly underplay the seriousness of the situation, it recognizes that, to use the words of Anne Larson, AIDS is a problem “with social and political causes and hence in theory resoluble.”

Magesa’s observation concerning Africa’s other deadly diseases is certainly valid. Malaria, dysentery, measles, tuberculosis and a host of other diseases have plagued Africa in the past, and continue to do so. But particular attention must be given to HIV/AIDS in Mbarara because of its conspicuously pandemic nature and the devastating effects it has had on the African population. We now know that HIV/AIDS has escalated the spread and intensity of these other diseases, which now more than ever leave their victims with little or no chance of survival.

Directly or indirectly, nearly every family in Mbarara has been affected by illness or death related to HIV/AIDS. It is difficult enough to lose loved ones to HIV/AIDS, especially when the victims are the bread earners of families, but added to this anguish is the social stigma which attaches itself to the surviving family members, ostracizing them from neighbors, friends and extended family and leaving them vulnerable to isolation and ridicule. Ignorant and fearful outsiders point fingers of blame at the

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surviving family members, believing them to be infected themselves and perhaps responsible for the death of their family member as well as capable of spreading the disease. Everywhere the numbers of orphans, widows and widowers increase, and these mourning survivors feel helpless and anxious about their own health and their prospects for the future. The youth are especially affected since they are left orphaned if their parents die, or must live with the disease if their parents passed it to them at birth. Even those with no symptoms of the disease are often at high risk due to the general tendency of adolescents to become sexually active.

Professor Peter Kanyandago captures the emotional situation of the HIV/AIDS survivors:

The wailing of the parents cannot be stopped as they look at tombs that have swallowed their children who have been killed by AIDS, and nobody tells them that TB is killing more people than malaria and AIDS combined. These are some of the cries that may be heard, but there are many more that we may never hear.76

The amicable social gatherings of the past when people freely visited one another, sharing the same drinking straws and cups, and carefree children played together are now events of great caution and precaution. In many places such gatherings have been abandoned altogether. The usefulness of such reactionary attempts at curtailing HIV/AIDS is minimal at best because they do not address the practices responsible for the spread of the virus.


In Mbarara and throughout Uganda, some of the main causes accelerating the spread of HIV/AIDS are traditional cultural marriage practices that continue even today. Common practices that fuel the HIV/AIDS pandemic include multiple sex partners and polygamy (*Okugogora*), which is still permissible and widely practiced among Ugandans. In some instances where women of marriageable age are plentiful, wealthy men have been known to marry as many as six wives. In ATR the number of wives and children is seen as a symbol of wealth and power. In a society that depends on manual labor for work, for food, and for protection, a man with many wives is also assured of many children. Yet another hazardous traditional practice is that of inheriting wives (*Okuhungura*). Should a woman lose her husband, she becomes the inheritance of her husband’s brothers; if there are no brothers or if they refuse to accept her, the father-in-law is next in line to propagate the family of the deceased through her. It is not difficult to imagine how rapidly the HIV/AIDS virus could spread among six women who are sexually intimate with their husbands and their brothers-in-law. These traditional sexual practices combined with ignorance and superstitions regarding the spread of HIV/AIDS have greatly impeded its prevention or control.

Youth ministers assume a leadership role in combating this deadly virus which has directly or indirectly affected the lives of so many. Youth ministry must be proactive, sponsoring educational programs that disseminate medically and morally sound information regarding the contraction, effects and spread of HIV/AIDS. These programs must appropriately and inclusively target the youth, their families, and all interested adults. In addition, youth ministers must be sensitive to the fact that many of the youth who come to them may be children of polygamous families, or victims of HIV/AIDS and in need of
specific health counseling. Finally, youth ministers must serve young people and their families whose lives have been disrupted by HIV/AIDS with sensitivity and compassion.

2.2.2 The Abuse and Neglect of the Youth, and Inappropriate Models for the Youth

In an ideal society, the young are cherished, protected and treated with respect and dignity; in reality that is not always the case. In her discussion of “Child Abuse and Neglect: An African Moral Question,” Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike describes the traditional African concept of children as dearly cherished as the glue of marriage relationships:

In traditional Africa a childless marriage was calamitous or disastrous for the couple, the extended family and the clan. Child-bearing is a sacred duty that has to be carried out by all normal individuals of the society. The woman’s status in the society depended on the number of children she bore, and her entire life was centered on children. Children were greatly valued because traditionally the man’s wealth depended on the number of wives and children he had. The woman was to increase the man’s wealth by begetting a great number of children.

Without children, marriage could not be sealed and the involved become very vulnerable and helpless. But once children were produced, the marriage was sealed and it was rare for such a marriage to break up. Children continued the lineage and prolonged the life of their parents.77

Sadly, as in many societies, many youth of Mbarara are neglected or exposed to inappropriate life styles. Nasimiyu-Wasike offers a useful definition of abuse and neglect of youth:

The working definition of child abuse will be from familiar understanding: “Parental acts which constitute a misuse or exploitation of the right of parents or

caretakers to control and discipline children under their care.” From the societal understanding, child abuse is “seen to embrace many acts or omissions which are structural in nature.” In this perspective children are considered abused or maltreated when their basic needs – food, medical care, shelter, education and security—are denied because of prevailing conditions in society. In summary, child abuse is denying children their rights to decent human life, to enjoy parental care, to receive relevant education, to inherit human culture, to have a moral upbringing and to acquire a name and nationality.78

In addition to this definition, abuse also includes youth with abusive parents, orphans who are dependent on extended families and friends and youth who must be placed in foster homes because their own families are neglectful or too poor to meet their basic needs or to provide them with education. Also included are youth who do not receive even basic traditional training and formation at home because their families are broken by the death of parents, disease or divorce.

Parenting is a moral obligation and a sacred trust requiring sacrifice to provide for children’s physical, social, economic, spiritual and religious well-being. In return, children owe their parents obedience, respect, gratitude, love and even special care when parents grow older. Nowhere in the world does parenting exist in an unblemished condition, and Uganda is no exception. Unfortunately, with Uganda’s transitioning society, in many instances parenting has progressively deteriorated.79 The shift from self-sufficient agricultural living to a monetary economy makes it difficult for parents without formal education or job training to earn enough to provide for even the basic needs of their children. As a result, family frustrations increase and violent behaviors often follow.

78Ibid., 153-154.

79Ibid., 160-163; 165-168.
Increasing numbers of parents seek solace in such vices as alcohol abuse and infidelity, which contribute to the breakdown of families.

Compounding the problem is the spread of HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases, leaving behind numerous orphans or children with single parents. Further, the illiteracy common among parents in Mbarara provides an inappropriate adult model for today’s youth. Most of the uneducated, as well as some educated but staunchly traditional parents, cling to the old ways, failing to understand the importance of educating their children for life in the modern world. These traditional parents are inclined to marry off their sons as soon as they have turned sixteen in order to expand the size of their families, and thereby increase their wealth. They are equally eager to marry off their daughters for the sake of revenue. As a result, parents can become abusive and even violent when their teenagers who have been exposed to more modern lifestyles resist forced marriage. Mbiti rightly reports: “In some parts of Africa, parents choose marriage partners for their children even before they are born.”

He continues with an explanation of the meaning of marriage in African societies: the obligation to bear children; a uniting link in the rhythm of life; the building of a family; remembrance of parents after death; regaining a lost immortality; bringing people together; giving status in society; giving a person completeness; creating good personal qualities. The youth are aware of these traditional viewpoints. Many agree with them, yet the current economic situation makes traditional marriage all but impossible. Youth who find themselves facing a forced marriage often

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81 Ibid., 110-112.
escape to urban areas\textsuperscript{82} or helplessly endure their parents’ physical and emotional abuse until they reluctantly acquiesce. In either case long-term consequences such as despondency, festering anger, resentment and regret are common among the youth of uneducated and staunchly traditional parents.

Youth ministry must be conscious of the realities of increasing abuse and neglect of its youth as well as the growing incidence of inappropriate adult family models. A well crafted youth program will reaffirm the youths’ right to life choices while creating opportunities to enlighten parents regarding these rights. Such considerations are immensely important since these youth are at the threshold of becoming parents themselves and will be the role models for the future generation.

\textbf{2.2.3 Communication, Web Culture, Means of Travel, the Media and Their Effect on the Youth}

The traditional informal method of education lacked the resources for providing youth with international awareness through global communication. Modern education, on the other hand, has introduced technology that permits world-wide communication and a World Wide Web culture with its access to the information highway. Beyond the classroom, improved means of mobility within Uganda and the increasing potential for international travel has helped reveal a panorama of life far beyond the horizons of tribal communities. The modern technology available in many schools is the \textit{modus operandi} for accessing that world.

\textsuperscript{82} Most youth who escape to urban areas are totally on their own without any help from their parents. In most cases, parents make no effort to search for them, because that is an expensive mission. They can only hope, desperately, that their children will in some ways survive. The eloped youth usually find odd jobs in the city and work
Radios, televisions, cell phones, computers and films are growing in popularity, but their overuse or misuse can have negative effects. Constance Banzikiza, a diocesan priest from Kabale, a suffragan diocese of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, a lecturer in moral theology at the Catholic University of East Africa (CUEA) observes: “The importance of mass media in this modern world cannot be emphasized enough as a source of information and development. But there is no doubt that misuse of mass media has contributed to the decline of moral formation in the younger people today.”

Mass media provides communication and entertainment, and expedites the delivery of local and world news. Small transistor radios have become very affordable and many FM stations transmit continuously. Televisions are now commonplace in the urban areas of Mbarara. Cellular phones are by far the most popular form of electronic communication. Despite meager incomes, many adults and youth own cell phones, which are regarded as prized possessions. Computers, common in the urban centers, also appear randomly throughout most of the rest of the archdiocese. Even in rural areas lacking electricity, it is not uncommon to find computer cafes where proprietors have installed small thermal generators to entice computer literate youth with Internet access. Other proprietors offer satellite televisions which receive broadcast soccer competitions and popular programs; and still other proprietors provide movie shelters that show films continuously day and night.

until they are able to raise some money to be on their own and then go home.

As it is everywhere else in the world, modern technology in Mbarara is an important means of entertainment, educational instruction and global communication. But this easy access to technology has a downside, particularly for the youth, if what is transmitted through the media contradicts the message of the gospel. In *Youth, Gospel and Liberation*, Michael Warren discusses some of the issues created by the popular entertainment media:

Influencing young people towards the liberation which the gospel invites us to accept is becoming increasingly difficult in the face of other powerful influences which can effectively propose to them values quite in opposition to Jesus’ way. In a society dominated by electronic images, young people are continually having their lives imagined for them by means of television and film scenarios, depicting for them in vivid terms the sort of life to be pursued most ardently, often enough a life counter to that proposed or imagined for us by Jesus. The problem, however, goes deeper, since not only young people but all those who interact with them – the parents, teachers, youth ministers, Church leaders – are being influenced by the same image culture.\(^{84}\)

The most common types of movies shown in both the rural shelters and the urban areas of Mbarara are popular Hollywood productions that often depict violence, promote promiscuous sexuality, alcohol and drug abuse, and encourage self-gratification. Most of these films do not present messages of respect for self and others, or patience and sacrifice as a means of achieving goals. Those who regularly attend such movies squander time that could be spent in productive work for the support of their families and waste hard-earned money. Frequenting movie shelters can encourage real life violence, alcohol

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\(^{84}\)Warren, *Youth Gospel and Liberation*, 59.
and drug abuse, theft and neglect of work and family.\textsuperscript{85} All of these are incompatible with the message which youth ministry strives to convey.

Radios, televisions, modern means of travel and electronic communication systems such as cell phones and computers are all double-edged swords. While providing entertainment, accessibility to local and global destinations, and multi-faceted educational information, imprudent use of the Internet can have serious adverse effects. When used indiscriminately, modern technologies deflect time and attention from purposeful behaviors or preparation for the future. In the extreme, they can promote the worst of popular culture. Besides encouraging violent behaviors they can also promote pornography, promiscuity and sexual laxity, further accelerating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other health-related problems through the ease of travel.

In order to understand their allure and impact, and be relevant to the youth, youth ministers must familiarize themselves with the various popular technologies. Youth ministers must learn to share the enthusiasm of its youth regarding the advent of modern technology, but it must also take a strong stand in cautioning them to recognize and avoid the darker side of technology and the perilous consequences that accompany its inordinate or perverted use.

\textsuperscript{85} Although violence among the youth cannot be blamed solely on the influence of the media, studies and experience show that there is correlation between actual violent behavior and the violence viewed in the media, especially in films. Although there is no published research corroborating actual violence to media violence in Uganda, studies elsewhere have shown a connection between the two. Craig A. Anderson, Leonard Berkowitz, Edward Donnerstein, L. Rowell Huesmann, James D. Johnson, Daniel Linz, and Ellen Wartella, “The Influence of Media Violence on Youth,” in \textit{Psychological Science in the Public Interest} (Vol. 4. 3, December 2003), 81-105.
2.2.4 Peer Pressure and Its Effects on the Youth

Young people tend to conform to the behavior, dress and attitudes of their peers in order to achieve and maintain a sense of belonging. For youths, peer affirmation can be a positive, supportive influence, but when that pressure is negative, it can result in serious problems that many youth are either reluctant to admit or too shortsighted to recognize. An accurate account of the effects of peer pressure recently appeared on the Internet. The teen author explains:

Peer pressure is a social force exerted by a group or powerful/admired individual within a group. It is generally a pressure to conform to a social norm within any given group. Not all peer pressure is bad. Social norms are very important parts of human interaction and group dynamics. Social norms are expectations that a group has of its members usually related to behavior. Since most social norms contribute to the smooth interaction of individuals within a society, peer pressure that promotes conforming to these norms serves a positive purpose. When social norms become deviant or harmful, or when the social norms in a group are radically different to the generally accepted social norms of a society, then we consider them to be “bad”. When most people think of peer pressure they are thinking of the pressure to conform to a deviant behavior set. Things like drug use, underage alcohol use, promiscuous sexual conduct, violent or aggressive acting out, or criminal behavior are examples of the negative peer pressure associated with teens.\(^\text{86}\)

A traditional social setting in Mbarara encourages peers of the same age and sex to mature and learn their places in life through apprenticeship and other rites of passage. These rites of passage are gradual and unhurried, performed in methodical patterns appropriate to the ages and genders of the youth.\(^\text{87}\) In a traditional social setting

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uncles and other adult males guide boys between the ages of sixteen and twenty-two through the rites of passage to adulthood; aunts and other adult females initiate the girls. The youth commonly team together to work in the fields (*okuguzana*), to pick grass in the hills (*okwahira obunyansi*), to fetch water from the river (*okutaha amaizi*) and to engage in cultural social functions. While working together, the youth tend to share with one another the values and techniques they have learned from their adult mentors. In rare instances where the adult mentors or family members are guilty of exploiting, abusing or neglecting the youth in their care, the youth peers have ready access to other trustworthy adults, and both adults and peers can promptly offer advice and moral support in their combined attempts to right an adverse situation. Among the youth themselves occasions of envious rages against a fellow youth might result in physical injury and being ostracized from the rest of his or her peers. In the traditional society, adult mentors are always conscious of the possibilities of emotional flare-ups among youth of this age and intervene only as necessary to restore harmony.

In Mbarara today, with the cultural shift from informal to formal education, the traditions of initiation with their inherent opportunities for peer pressure based on collaborative efforts are changing significantly. Mbiti succinctly summarizes modern changes and the best of the traditional initiation:

Changes are rapidly taking place in Africa, and the initiation rites are some of the areas of life most affected by modern changes. This is partly because children at that age are going to school; and partly because Christian missionaries and some governments have attacked or discouraged the practices. Yet where initiation rites were part of the traditional cycle of individual life, the practice still lingers on and often with some modifications or in a simplified form. That these initiation rites
are extremely important in traditional life needs no further emphasis. If they are to die out, they will die a long and painful death.\(^8\)

For the most part, peer groups are no longer comprised of close tribal friends or young members of one’s extended family. The peers of today’s youth are classmates, veritable strangers whom they meet for the first time in schools far from home. In boarding schools today, children as young as five years of age, without the companionship of their families, tend to absorb information about culture and social values from their new peers. Since these youth come from diverse families, environments and cultures, they are often confused; some of the values they had learned at home are forever lost. Within the confines of the boarding schools, peer pressure is strong and there is a natural tendency to align with peers of similar economic and social backgrounds. Within each group are positive as well as negative influences. Those from more privileged backgrounds can be influential in helping less fortunate students learn proper dress etiquette and polite, grammatically correct language. Those from humble backgrounds can be motivated to study conscientiously in order to improve themselves as well as the economic situation of their families. Conversely, the youth from wealthy families, who now have firsthand exposure to the poor, may come to a new appreciation of their economic advantages and be motivated to perform well academically in order to carry on the legacies of their families. Just as easily, however, any of the peer groups can encourage vices such as gossip, theft, inappropriate language, smoking and abuse of alcohol, violence and other antisocial behaviors.

\(^8\)Ibid., 232.
Mbarara’s changing economics add further dimensions to peer pressure. In the traditional society, families in their close-knit relationships did not compare themselves to others or compete for wealth and recognition. As long as they had enough for survival, most people were perfectly content. Today the youth from humble backgrounds who attend boarding schools are, for the first time, exposed to peers from wealthy families who can afford fine clothes and expensive watches and who usually perform better academically since their families can provide private tutors. If those peers are proud and flaunt their wealth, they can create resentment. Many poor students tend to lack self-confidence, and if they are treated as inferiors by their privileged peers, their feelings of inadequacy can be exacerbated to the point where their studies are affected, even so far as causing them to drop out of school. To distract themselves from these gnawing feelings of inferiority, these youth are easily lured into joining desperado gangs who steal, fight and find solace in prostitution, alcohol, and other self-destructive vices. Wealthy students fare no better if they squander their money or associate with peers who live as if their wealth is a right rather than a privilege. Despite their prosperous backgrounds, such youth can just as easily be drawn into behavior as destructive as that of their poorer counterparts.

Youth should be taught to realize that, for better or worse, peer pressure generates powerful influences in their lives; they should also understand that peers affect not only social-economic perceptions, but can impact religious values as well. In traditional society, when youth remained at home, religious instruction was provided mainly by parents who taught them prayers and the precepts of moral behavior. Rebellion against religion and morality was almost unheard of. Today, youth who leave home at an early age for formal school education meet peers of different religious backgrounds, as
well as those who do not take religion and morality seriously, including those from dysfunctional families. It is not unusual for students whose religious upbringing may be weak or non-existent to ridicule or refuse to associate with a peer whose behavior reflects religious belief. Consequently, as a way of fitting in, some who have been raised with traditional values will shun church attendance or participation in religious activities that their peers regard as unnecessary or unfashionable. Those susceptible to negative peer pressure can easily be swayed to indulge in any number of immoral behaviors that harm themselves as well as society.

Unfortunately, rapid changes in the fabric of Ugandan society have left families, schools and the churches without guidelines and programs to help youth of ages sixteen through twenty-two cope to with peer pressure and appreciate their self-worth. Even the youth who wish to remain faithful to church and family values have difficulty finding youth programs that are commensurate with their adolescent needs as modern youth. To recognize and attempt to fill this void is yet another challenge for effective youth ministry. Through the appropriation of theological and ecological foundations, which include the urgent issues facing today’s youth, youth ministers can develop practical ways to encourage responsible, moral youth during their maturing years. Such foundations can help them to become responsible, moral adults and valued members of society and the Church through the profession of enlightened faith.

2.2.5 Paths of Least Resistance: Common Choices of Troubled Youth as a Grave Concern of Youth Ministry

When confronted by difficult or unpleasant realities, many youth tend to erect a protective wall of silence, while others lash out in violent protests. In “Young
People, Weapons, Violence and Alternatives,” Michael Warren, while referring to violence
and nuclear war, calls attention to the “submerged consciousness” affecting behavioral
patterns:

It is easy to describe what a person does, but to get to how the social reality
influences that person’s behavior we need to know whose commands the person is
following or whose norms the person has internalized and what sets of goals the
person is trying, often unconsciously, to achieve. Social norms are most powerful
when they dominate a person’s life unawares. Social reality is like the
underground transportation system of a large city. The system is essential but is
for the most part invisible above the ground.89

In Mbarara, many factors induce youths’ silence or elicit their violence.
Among them is Uganda’s recent history of wars. From 1971 to 1979, revolt against the
dictator Idi Amin resulted in war from the Tanzanian border through the lands covered by
Archdiocese of Mbarara. After Amin’s defeat, the postwar elections of 1980 were rigged
and the enraged Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current president of Uganda and native of
the Archdiocese of Mbarara, retaliated by waging a guerilla war against the corrupt regime
in Uganda. Museveni used the area encompassing the Archdiocese as his official base and
recruited soldiers from among the men, women and children (Kadogos) of Mbarara. After
that war ended in 1989, a military government ruled the country until 1996, when
Uganda’s first democratic elections were held.90 This history of violence, still fresh in the
memories of Ugandans, has had a lingering negative impact on social and moral values. In
this area, devastated by recent wars and where so many were recruited into military
combat, spousal separation is common and children are often raised by single parents. If

89 Warren, Youth Gospel and Liberation, 103.
90 http://www.enteruganda.com/about/history.php , (accessed 06/24/10).
parents seek solace in alcohol, their children are deprived of proper parenting. In such families, the outcome is a lack of communication, causing youth to withdraw into self-imposed silence or to erupt in violent behaviors. Although there is peace today in most parts of Uganda, the terrible after-effects of recent war still persist in the lives of many families, thus impacting the behavior of the youth.

2.2.5.1 Silence and Idleness among the Youth

The Archdiocese of Mbarara is transitioning from its long history of illiteracy and the more recent era of violence, not to mention the moral decadence generated by years of war. In the political arena, recognizing that the future of Ugandan democracy rests with its youth has prompted political leaders to reach out and help young people overcome these recent traumas. For the last decade, youth aged eighteen through thirty have been afforded the privilege of having their voices publicly articulated in Parliament. In spite of these efforts to encourage Uganda’s youth to better their own welfare, many remain indifferent, preferring the obscurity of silence and aimless idleness. In his discussion of “The Silence of Young People,” Michael Warren describes a similar situation in the United States:

Young people in our society are not only silent. They are a step beyond silence: they are mute. It is almost as if they have no significant life experience of which they themselves can speak. It is only later as older adults that they are able to look back and speak of the earlier period, the period of silence, and the period of systematic inarticulateness. Even these later accounts are few. Most young people, sad to say, are never able to speak about their earlier experiences.91

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91Warren, Ibid., 27. While Warren may be referring to an existential or psychological silence, the silence of the youth in Mbarara combines with apathy to negatively impact their future. Many youth tend to think of themselves as invincible and superior to adults. The erroneous know-it-all attitude, often coupled with an equally erroneous sense of entitlement commonly result in a self-imposed silence. The self-
In the current society of Uganda, where youth now are given educational and political opportunities to improve their lives and the future of the country, apathy has no place. A comprehensive youth ministry must actively search out those young people who have become shadows of silence in their homes or who associate only with equally withdrawn or idle peers. Effective youth ministry must provide a “safe” atmosphere that encourages youth to open up and share their experiences, anxieties and repressed ambitions. Such an atmosphere is conducive to the discovery of one’s self-worth and an awareness of the personal fulfillment that accompanies active involvement as a contributing member of society.

2.2.5.2 Violence as a Language of the Youth

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, it has become evident that the silence of youth often erupts in violent behaviors, including rebellion at home and strikes in schools. The result, oftentimes, is disruptive conduct in school, which can easily transition to gang violence. In the schools, strikes in the form of violent physical confrontations and the burning of school buildings are becoming increasingly common. These violent behaviors have been attributed mainly to failure on the part of students to communicate issues that trouble them and to those administrators who operate their schools in an autocratic, military-like manner without regard for student input.

conceited attitude and an awkward muteness can quickly reduce these youth to a state of aloofness and idleness. With the help of rehabilitative counseling, the silent youth in Warren’s society may have more opportunities to recover and rejoin society, but the youth of Mbarara are not afforded such opportunity. The youth in both societies, however, are exhibiting silence as a symptom of a sociological and psychological vacuum that if not well
In addition to behavioral eruptions in the higher institutions of learning, there are many unreported incidents of youth violence in families and in the neighborhood communities. In a study explaining the causes of this violence, the Uganda Education Brief cites research from the Network of Uganda which observed that poor school management is increasingly responsible for the rampant school strikes:

The research also indicates that many school heads ignore the students while others keep a great distance from them. Some demands by the students are usually unrealistic but the researchers believe that with proper communication, some of the problems can be avoided.

The ministry of education recently noted that although strikes are not the solution to grievances, they are an eye opener that a problem exists in the school management which needs to be addressed.92

On 17 July 2007, the leading national newspaper, The New Vision, published an article entitled “Uganda: Why are School Strikes Rampant?” The newspaper proposed the following recommendations for dealing with school violence:

Perhaps student leaders need to take part in some aspects of school administration so that they can be a link between school management and the students. This will also make them partners in decision-making and they will at all times be aware of what is taking place in the school and why.

The teachers must also not concentrate on academics only. Quality time needs to be spent with students every now and then to hear their concerns regarding their school.93

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In an article on 4 July 2008, “School Parliament is Good Forum for Peace,” New Vision called upon the families to spearhead the solution and listed tips for parents:

We are all products of homes and as the adage goes, “charity begins at home.” Our parents are the first teachers to give us the skills of conflict resolution. It has been said that conflict in school begins with conflict at home. Do you not agree with this? Here is an opportunity to speak out your mind. …

Silence, idleness and violence are growing problems among youth in Mbarara. There is great need for youth ministry to collaborate with adult family members, church leaders, school administrators and the larger community to initiate and sustain communications between the youth and archdiocesan leadership.

2.2.6 Inclusion of Youth with Disabilities into Youth Ministry

Youth with disabilities are also in need of ministering; they should not be ignored. In Mbarara, only a small percentage of children born with disabilities grow to become adolescents, as many die in infancy. In general, families in Mbarara consider children with disabilities as misfortunes or burdens, and these children are often resented and neglected. Despite changing attitudes, families willing to raise their disabled children lack the skills and resources to care for them properly and to help them become self-sufficient.

Recently, two schools in Mbarara have been established for youth with disabilities: the School for the Blind at St. Helen’s Primary School and the School for the

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Deaf at Rwera parish. Both are operated by the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel.\textsuperscript{95} Despite great enthusiasm and outstanding effort to help these youth, lack of proper scholastic materials, equipment and knowledgeable expertise limit their good intentions. Against all odds, however, some of these youth have demonstrated that they still are capable of accomplishing much. Recently, a student in one of the schools for the blind graduated at the university level with honors and is now lecturing at Makerere University, Kampala. Many others have demonstrated their abilities to create beautiful crafts, and sing or play musical instruments for commercial entertainment. While not all youth with disabilities can achieve so remarkably, with proper care and attention, most can make notable progress. In Uganda, a recently added maxim is “Disability is not inability.” Based on this mindset, a truly inclusive youth ministry must exercise precautions lest those youth who are challenged by disabilities be segregated or disregarded.

Youth with disabilities are no less important than any other young person. They also are created in the image and likeness of God; they are human beings who deserve life, respect, education and the joy of self-fulfillment. A holistic, comprehensive and effective youth ministry would speak for those whose frail voices may otherwise go unheard.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The administrative structure, prevalent youth groups and the challenges and obstacles facing the youth are fundamental to youth ministry in the Archdiocese of

\textsuperscript{95}http://www.sistersofolgcu.org/Pastoral\%20Activities.htm, Accessed 02/05/2009.
Mbarara. The roles of the youth ministers have been discussed, yet they must be put into action for youth ministry to accomplish its intended goals. The challenges and obstacles facing youth are not limited to those discussed in this chapter. Therefore, the choice of content and approach to youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara requires understanding the administrative structure, the prevalent youth groups and the challenges and the context of the youth.

CHAPTER THREE: THE THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY
3.0 Overview of the Explanation to Theological Foundations

This chapter explains the theological foundations of Catholic faith, those things that guide believers in “bringing life to faith and faith to life.” The chapter is based on the revelation of God to human beings. The Catholic faith confesses that God has been revealed to human beings and teaches that there are three channels of revelation: Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Teaching authority of the Church, aspects that are not known in the African Traditional Religions (ATR). Revelation is the fundamental way of understanding God and how God is revealed in creation, in the history of salvation and finally in incarnation (theology), in human nature and in human experience (theological anthropology). In his discussion of the dignity of the human person, Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) explains how Vatican Council II, charged with teaching divine truth, based its deliberation on the Church in the modern world not only on experience but above all on revelation:

The dignity of the human person finds its full confirmation in the very fact of revelation, for this fact signifies the establishment of contact between God and human being. To the human being created in “the image and likeness of God,” God communicates God’s own thoughts and plans. But this is not all. God also “becomes a human being;” God enters into the drama of human existence through the redemption and permeates the human being with divine grace.97

This dissertation considers revelation to be the basic reference for human dignity and an essential tenet for youth ministry in a context where traditional beliefs in


African Traditional Religions (ATR) are in tension with Western influence and a past characterized by war and repressive regimes.

The three channels of revelation—Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Teaching Authority of the Church—are chosen as the Church’s means of teaching God’s revelation. Human response is discussed under sin and grace, sacraments and prayer as well as consecrated lives as a radical form of human response to God. The chapter seeks to bring together African Traditional Religious (ATR) heritage with Christian doctrine, since they are compatible in many aspects. The anthropological aspects of human experience in the ecologies and the paramount experiential sources of revelation are not overlooked by limiting the discussion of this chapter to the above themes, but are discussed in the ecological foundations, which are essentially inseparable from the theological foundations. The final purpose of this chapter is to advocate for inculturation theology by analyzing Christian theological foundations conjointly with ATR heritage in order to reassure African youth, as well as adult believers that many of their traditional religious beliefs are congruent with the Christian faith (see Chapter Five). In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, ATR and the theological foundations of Christian doctrine are the bedrock on which faith is based and from it are raised the pillars of human physical, intellectual, and spiritual development—Christians’ total existence.98

The youth of Mbarara have as their theological foundation a blend of traditional African spirituality99 and Christian theology. They also have experiential


99 Oborji, 77-99.
sources of creation, their environment and their own lives (ecology). The chapter selects the theological foundations from both Catholic and ATR sources because of their significant compatibility; they will be presented accordingly as a viable inculturation model. The chapter is based largely on *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*; with many direct block footnotes because, as explained in the introduction, the *Catechism* contains the most original, up-to-date, and authentic doctrinal teaching of the Catholic beliefs. It also is based largely on John S. Mbiti because his method of research factually documents cultural and religious practices of the African people without personal interpretation or bias. Pope John Paul II’s theology and philosophy, the teachings of Vatican Council II and the writings of other Western theologians provide resources for the theological foundations, explanations of sacraments and application of faith to practical life. Selected African authors like John Mary Waliggo, Peter Kanyandago, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike and others provide resources for ATR and other salient contextual issues that lead to God through faith. The theme in this chapter is prompted by my personal past experiences as an African youth, and as a Diocesan Youth Chaplain in Mbarara, both of which give me a first-hand understanding of the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara and their particular needs outlined for inculturation of these theological foundations into a holistic youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

Examination and appreciation of the intricate relationship between ATR and Christian doctrine is essential to an effective and relevant youth ministry. Both components influence the youths’ worldviews as well as their understanding of God and their response to him. If theological foundations are well explained, they are more likely to be embraced, assimilated and thus inspire a faith that will permeate all aspects of life
and withstand the test of time. As discussed in Chapter Five, youth ministry cannot rely only on didactic theoretical explanations to present Christian doctrine; it must be presented in ways that are practical and relevant to the youth in their context.

Inculturation theology, if correctly presented, will teach the youth how to incorporate theological and ecological foundations practically into their everyday lives and encourage them to appreciate God in revelation and to approach the sacraments as divine assistance for transforming their lives. The importance of conveying the value of inculturation theology cannot be overstated. A youth ministry that successfully leads young people to appreciate the dynamics of this aspect of theology will have accomplished its goal of forming and transforming them.

3.1 God’s Revelation

The first of these theological foundations is that God has taken the initiative to reveal God-self to humankind. David Tracy explains, “For the Christian, God is the one who revealed God-self in the ministry and message, the cross and resurrection, of Jesus Christ. A Christian understanding of God cannot be divorced from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.”

Revelation of God’s love for humanity begins with the biblical creation accounts (Gn 1; 2), continues through a series of covenants and interactions,


101 The book of Genesis introduces the establishment of a relationship between human beings and God. The relationship begins with God’s initiative to create human beings and their ecological surroundings. After the fall of the first human beings
culminating in the incarnation of Jesus Christ (CCC 54-66), by the power of the Holy Spirit. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sums up how humans come to understand God’s divine revelation and care:

By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (CCC 50)

The initiative of divine revelation is freely given, motivated not for any selfish purposes, but by pure love. The Catechism cites *Dei Verbum*: “His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh in the Holy Spirit and thus become sharers in the divine nature” (DV 2; Eph 2: 18; 2Pet. 1:4). Revelation is part of the natural and fundamental relationship between God and humanity. God is the origin, sustainer and final goal of human beings, who are creatures and yet free subjects.  

102 Joseph Ratzinger describes divine revelation as “a living reality that requires a living person as the locus of its presence.”  

103 Divine Revelation is to be understood as a comprehensive unity of human existence, human experience and the recorded acts of


through their disobedience, God initiates a series of covenants, which are repeatedly broken by human beings yet faithfully renewed by God until the final fulfillment in the incarnation of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

102 Rahner, 93-97.

God’s revelation. Joseph Ratzinger, in *God’s Word: Scripture-Tradition-Office* elaborates:

For revelation signifies all God’s acts and utterances directed to man; it signifies a reality of which Scripture gives us information but that is not simply Scripture itself. Revelation goes beyond Scripture, then, to the same extent as reality goes beyond information about it.\(^ {104}\)

The apostolic tradition, sacred scripture and *Magisterium*\(^ {105}\) (the teaching office of the Church)\(^ {106}\) are three of the channels of divine revelation. While revelation is not limited to Scripture, Tradition and the Teaching Authority of the Church, these are key to understanding how it is presented, proclaimed, and preserved, and how human beings respond to God, who maintains a direct relationship with them through creation,\(^ {107}\) salvation, inspiration and animation (reality of human life). Stressing the three channels of revelation does not underestimate the value of life experience, since it provides the practical experience of the manifestation of God in individual lives. If the youth truly understand revelation and allow it to work in their lives, its fruits will be manifested through their active participation in the evangelical mission of the Church; reformation of their lives to conform to God’s ways; and expression of their faith by frequent church attendance, reception of the sacraments and working for justice and peace in society. If

\(^ {104}\)Ibid., 51.


\(^ {106}\)Richard Gaillardetz, *By What Authority?: A Primer on Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Sense of the Faithful* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 1-145.

young people can be helped to understand these principles, the work of youth ministry will have accomplished its goal of illuminating the basics of revelation as the theological foundation for youth ministry.

Theological foundations emphasize that out of divine love, God shares divine benefits. “By divine Revelation God wished to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will concerning the salvation of mankind. He wished, in other words, ‘to share with us divine benefits which entirely surpass the powers of the human mind to understand’” (DV 6). God has revealed God-self for the sake of human beings and their salvation, a concept that is not only Christian, but is generally held by African traditional religions as well.  

Both Christianity and ATR teach the revelation of God in Creation: that God created the world and all things, sustains all life and is the destiny of all creation. They differ, however, in the ways that this faith is expressed. Christianity maintains that God is Trinity, cooperating in the divine mission of Revelation. ATR holds that revelation

108 Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, 39-48. Drawing upon his research concerning religious practices among traditional African societies, John S. Mbiti explains the works of God that reveal divine initiative to create, to sustain and to provide for humanity. He emphasizes Africans’ appreciation of God’s work through creation, providence and sustenance. He notes how all the traditional religious people acknowledge God’s involvement in governance and affliction in human history, challenging humans to demonstrate their faith through prayer, worship, sacrifice, and other forms of appreciation. Mbiti also discusses this theme in Introduction to African Religion, 45-70. The same theme is reiterated by Francis Anekwe Oborji in Toward a Christian Theology of African Religion: Issues of Interpretation and Mission (Kenya, Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Triple Spearhead No. 173-175), 13-28.

is communicated through the sub-deities or spirits that are the active agents of God in peoples’ lives and in the world. Christianity holds that Jesus Christ is the eternal Word of God (see Jn 1: 1-6) and the climax of revelation and salvation (DV 1-6; Col 1:15; 1Tim 6:14). ATR advocates the pre-Christian idea of salvation and the security of life, expressed by recognizing the divine in sacrifices, libations and other forms of worship; strong faith in life before and after physical birth; and after physical death as the living-dead.

Many youth of Mbarara have limited understanding of the theology of divine revelation, yet most are aware of the manifestation of God all around them. This recognition is the ideal basis for presenting the revelation of God through life experience and for helping youth ministers effectively communicate other means of divine revelation. The integration of divine revelation into its content is yet another measure of a comprehensive youth ministry. Further, by incorporating the salvation economy of ATR with Christian faith, youth ministers can offer a properly integrated understanding of revelation.

3.1.1 Sacred Scripture

Catholic teaching maintains that God is the author of Sacred Scripture. *Dei Verbum* elaborates on the source, inspiration, authorship and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures:

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Ibid., 31. ATR recognizes the revelation of God in creation and human experience which existed before the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God is acknowledged through creation and is honored by creation as the creator, sustainer and destiny of all creation.
The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For Holy Mother Church relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (see Jn 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:19-21; 3:15-16), they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself.

Seeing that, in sacred Scripture, God speaks through men in human fashion, it follows that the interpreter of sacred Scripture, if he is to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind … (DV 11, 12).

Effective youth ministry, therefore, will generate an appreciation of sacred scripture and its relevance in everyday life.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* emphasizes: “Holy Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 81, DV 9). It further elaborates that in order to reveal God to humankind; God condescends goodness by speaking to humanity in human words. As it is, the words of God, expressed in the words of human beings, are in every way like human language. Just like the word of the eternal Father who took on himself the flesh of human weakness and became like human beings (CCC 101, DV 13). Catholic teaching clarifies the reasons for cherishing sacred scripture, yet it must be noted that Christian faith is not a “religion of the book.” It is the religion of the “Word” of God, not a written and mute word, but the incarnate and living – Our Lord Jesus Christ. “If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must through the Holy Spirit, “open [our] minds to understand the scriptures” (CCC 108, Jn 1: 1-18, Lk 24:44-45). Finally the Catholic Church affirms: “For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord’s Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life,
taken from the one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body” (CCC 103, DV 21). In this context and framework sacred scripture should be presented—as a personal message and gift of the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, to be received with joyful appreciation and incorporated into each person.

Theological foundations stress the teaching of sacred scripture as the content of systematic theology, so as to make it relevant to the complexity of living out faith. In African tradition, however, religious content is transmitted orally. The elders make it their obligation to propagate traditional religious values through folk stories, proverbs, and music. All aspects of life are connected to divine action while taboos and religious chastisements are attached to human flaws in relation to the religious obligations. To this day few written copies of the Bible are available, and there are no public libraries. Those youth fortunate enough to go on to Higher Education Institutions (HEI), may encounter opportunities to study scripture. However, in most cases Bible study is done following the government syllabus of Christian Religious Education (CRE) which presents limited quotes as a means of promoting acceptable moral behavior associated primarily with social issues. The youth, therefore, need Bibles and guided scripture interpretation in order to apply sacred scripture to their own lives.

Biblical interpretation requires appropriate guidance. In the archdiocese, youth have few opportunities to learn how to read scripture in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church. As many leave their rural environments for formal education in urban and mixed schools, the youth are exposed to a variety of aggressive Protestants and Evangelical/Pentecostals in the schools and streets of Mbarara. The Pentecostals advocate fundamentalism, which considers the Bible as the sole source of
salvation (sola scriptura). Dr. John Mary Waliggo, a Ugandan biblical scholar contrasts the Protestant approaches (Anglicans, Episcopalians, Pentecostals and Evangelicals), of presenting the Bible as a “magical book,” to the approach of Catholic missionaries who center evangelization on the Catechism:

Some Christian traditions in Africa have emphasized the role of the Bible in Christian evangelization to the extent of making Africans regard the Bible as a “magical book”…. Under such a “magical” approach a mere touching or possession of the Bible is considered liberative and able to effect change in the person.

....

The aim of Christianity is to make people know the liberative message of God and to live it….The Catholic evangelization of Africa has been mainly based on the catechism and oral transmission.\(^{111}\)

Waliggo advocates for inculturation and a liberative approach to evangelization. He criticizes the Protestant method that considers the Bible as a magical book, but neither does he totally approve the Catholic approach based on the catechism. He challenges the Church to present the message of God in ways that will help people understand its liberative essence – presenting God through the word in an inculturated style with emphasis on justice. Nevertheless, there is no better source for theological foundations and faith than the original sources of sacred scripture, the Catechism and other church writings, if they are to be presented in a practical way and to be adapted to the African context. The people of Uganda cherish authority because of their traditional

\(^{111}\)John Mary Waliggo, “Bible and Catechism in Uganda,” in Bible in African Christianity: Essays in Biblical Theology edited by Hannah W. Kinoti and John M. Waliggo (Kenya, Nairobi: Action Publishers, 1997), 179-191. Waliggo indicates not only a contrast between Catholic and Protestant approaches as observed, but also what is apparently his own argument for preaching a “liberative” message as an alternative to both. I totally agree with him.
understanding of the hierarchy of authority, which may explain the success of the
Catechism and authority-based approach of the Catholic Church versus the purely biblical
based teaching of the Protestants. Christian churches have made the serious mistake of
attempting to totally detach people from what is dear to them – their traditional values.
While the totality of ATR may not be entirely compatible with the beliefs of Christianity,
there is more consistency than previously thought. The people of Mbarara (traditional and
Christians) are entrenched in their traditional ways. In their villages and homes many
youth are exposed to a kind of syncretism called Bacwezi Bashomi, an amalgamation of
the ATR and Christian beliefs: Bacwezi are the mystical original people (Bacwezi dynasty)
according to traditional myths. They are believed to have been tall, steadfast, gallant
warriors who disappeared into the lakes, rivers and mountains when new peoples invaded
Nkore. The Bacwezi are believed to appear during the night in those places where they
are believed to have disappeared.

The word Bashomi means “believers,” particularly Christians. So, Bacwezi Bashomi accept Christian beliefs, but continue to adhere to the practices of ATR, which
they believe give them supernatural powers, such as the ability to heal or to render
effective curses. The Church has viewed Bacwezi Bashomi as problematic because its
practices are inconsistent, random, and arbitrary, tending to create confusion with
established Christian religious beliefs. For example, common in the practice of Bacwezi
Bashomi are home altars on which people place both ATR and Christian religious articles.
The bible, the rosary and the scapular are regarded as magical items and can be found on
Bacwezi Bashomi altars next to traditional objects like milk gourds (ebyanzi), spears,
shields and herbal medicines. Although the Catholic Church in Mbarara has urged the
removal of these home altars, the *Bacwezi Bashomi*, with their strong emotional ties to ATR, do not regard their traditional practices as incompatible with professing the Catholic faith. For them, sacramental objects like the Bible, the cross, the rosary and scapular have the same value as the traditional objects such as milk gourds, spears, shields and herbal medicines which are traditional objects: milk guards for food, generosity and wealth; spear and shield for strength, service and defense; herbal medicines for good health. In the final analysis, a better understanding of ATR may reveal that these practices may not be as detrimental to Christian life as previously thought. Certainly there is need for explaining the differences between sacramental objects and a good luck charm or talisman, particularly as a matter of clarification for the youth. More important is the need to educate the youth in the true significance of the Bible because of their frequent exposure to many and often confusing approaches to sacred scripture. Making scripture study materials readily available is a significant approach to introducing Bible studies in all archdiocesan youth groups.

Sacred scripture is the Word of God – Jesus Christ. Karl Rahner states, “It is the word of God that is present in Jesus because there is nothing to say beyond it, because God has really and in a strict sense offered *himself* in Jesus.” Thus sacred scripture should be approached with a reverence reaching “beyond the positive sources of Scripture and tradition, to their inner source: the revelation, the living word of God, from which Scripture and tradition both spring and without which neither can be grasped in the

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112Rahner, 280.
importance they have for faith.”113 Presentation of the content of sacred scripture needs to
be appealing and relevant to the youth through parables and symbolic language, the
traditional styles of storytelling common among families. Master and peer apprenticeships
(mentoring) can form Bible study groups that integrate elements like oral tradition and
storytelling that sacred scripture and ATR share, and so increase attendance at Bible
study groups and heighten listening skills. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara some popular
independent Protestant churches promote oratorical eloquence, music, healing stories in
the gospels and miraculous cures, leading some people to expect “magical” healings.
Young people should be taught to be cautious about evangelical and Pentecostal churches
that use such flashy, popular devices to attract and maintain membership. In cooperation
with the Pastoral Office, the Archdiocesan Youth Office should design parish programs
aimed at educating all believers to read and study the Bible as the word of God, not to use
it as a magical instrument. In schools, the study of scripture should be broadened to
include youth ministry’s emphasis of the Bible as the word of God to be read, pondered
and discussed. By appreciating the word of God, both youth and adults can come to
embrace the message of the scriptures in their lives.

3.1.2 Tradition of the Church
The apostolic tradition is a channel for transmitting divine revelation in the
Church. Like the other channels of revelation, it derives its validity from ancestors in
faith, the covenants God made with them in history and the incarnation of God into human
life in Jesus Christ. Youth ministers, youth mentors and youth themselves need to

113Ratzinger, 50.
understand that revelation, sacred scripture, and sacred tradition are an inseparable unity.

The first two are transmitted and preserved through sacred tradition:

God desires all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4) that is, of Christ Jesus. Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach to the ends of the earth: God graciously arranged that the things he had revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations (CCC 74).

Knowledge of the divine source and lineage of transmission of the tradition of the Church should ground the theological content of youth ministry.

In a world of religious pluralism and diverse Christian teachings, it is essential that the youth understand that sacred scripture and sacred tradition originate from the same source (God). As channels of divine revelation so closely bound, they have equal revelatory importance and should never be separated:

Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move toward the same goal (DV 9).

Sacred Scripture is the written speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the Apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal reverence (CCC 80, 81, 82; DV 9).

The Church teaches that God reveals God-self in Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The divine mystery of revelation has come down to the present through sacred tradition, as mandated by Jesus Christ through the apostles:

Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of the most high God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline (CCC 75; DV 7).

The diversity of religions and sects—particularly those among Christians—makes belief in the unity of sacred scripture and sacred tradition complicated and confusing for the youth. Although some churches maintain that the truth of Christianity lies in written scripture alone, in keeping with the Lord’s command the gospel has been handed down both orally and in written form. The authority that Jesus gave to the apostles to preach the gospel has been handed down in a continuous line through the bishops (CCC 76, 77; DV 7). Since divine revelation originates with God and is transmitted through human beings by word and action, it never depends upon human efforts and intelligence alone. It depends upon God’s power through the Holy Spirit.

Those already familiar with the African tradition of transmitting the legacy of knowledge, cultural heritage and religious worship through oral communication and the hierarchy of authority in ATR readily understand the concept of apostolic tradition, if it is related to their own tradition:

This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, “the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes” (DV 7). “The sayings of the holy Father are a witness to the life-giving presence of the Tradition,
showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayers” (CCC 78; DV 8).

The concepts of the hierarchy of authority, family, and socialization discussed in Chapter One emphasize the importance of tradition in the transmission of cultural and religious heritage in the traditional society of Mbarara. The intertwining nature of the divine and cultural heritages in the process of transmitting and adhering to tradition will form the foundation for discussing Christian sacred tradition. ATR teaches that the content of traditions, as explained in the hierarchy of authority is God (see Chapter One) and Christian tradition attests that the origination and propagation of sacred tradition is God in the Holy Trinity.

However, the concept of God as the Trinity is new to traditional Africans. Therefore, Trinitarian cooperation in the origination, transmission and preservation of sacred tradition even to this day requires careful explanation. In sacred tradition, the Father’s self-communication through his Word in the Holy Spirit remains present and active in the Church. “God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church – and through her in the world – leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in all its riches” (CCC 79, DV 8; Col 3:16). All members of the Church through baptism are entrusted with the responsibility of safeguarding and promulgating sacred traditions. Those who receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders acquire sacramental character or “seal” (CCC 1121), empowering them to share in the evangelical mission of the Church, including safeguarding and communicating the apostolic tradition. The hierarchy of the Church
through the succession of popes from St. Peter, the consecration of bishops as true
successors in the lineage of the Apostles, the ordination of priests by the bishops in the
ture lineage of Christ and the baptism of the faithful by the priests and deacons who share
in the lineage of the traditional family of Jesus Christ may be likened to the African
traditional tribe, clan and family lineages. The values and legacy of the African traditional
family are carried on through their cultural heritage much like the Church’s tradition
carries on her heritage. Like the call given by Christ to the Apostles and their posterity in
faith, members of the Church, by words and actions, are summoned to transmit the
message of Jesus Christ.

3.1.3 Teaching Authority of the Church (Magisterium)

The Church derives its teaching authority—it’s mandate—from the final
command of Jesus Christ. In his apostolic exhortation, “On Catechesis in Our Time”
(Catechesi Tradendae), Pope John Paul II reminds the faithful that: “Before Christ
ascended to his Father after his Resurrection, he gave his apostles a final command – to
make disciples of all the nations …. He thus entrusted them with the mission and power
to proclaim to humanity what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what
they had looked upon and touched with their hands, concerning the Word of life” (CT 1,
Mt 28: 19-20).

The sacred deposit of faith (the deposit fidei) in sacred scripture and in
tradition (DV. 2, CCC 84) made for the whole Church is protected, interpreted and
transmitted by the teaching authority of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit
according to the command of Jesus Christ:
“The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.” This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome (CCC 85, DV 10).

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church is empowered by the authority of Jesus Christ to interpret the word of God and to protect and propagate the integrity of the contents of sacred scripture and sacred tradition. This authority also ensures the unity of the Church, proclaims dogmas, and administers sacraments for the spiritual growth of the whole Church.

The youth aged eighteen through twenty-two are in high school, colleges and universities. With the introduction of UPE and USE in Uganda, many youth will have opportunities to enroll in secondary education and beyond. In their history studies these students will encounter questions about the abuse of Church authority. Protestants usually take opportunities to over-emphasize the negative concerning the Catholic Church. Indeed, in the history of the Church, there have been instances of exaggerated use of power and erroneous positions that have invited challenges to the authenticity or infallibility of the Church’s teaching authority. Such instances—the East and West Schism (1054-1954); the Western Schism (1378-1417); the eight Crusades (1095-1101, 1145-47, 1188-92, 1204, 1217, 1228-29, 1239, 1249-52, 1270); the Inquisitions (12th and 13th Centuries); and the Reformation (1517) must be put into proper perspective. Other such examples include the condemnation of scientific innovations (Galileo Galilei [1564-1642]);
and more recently the Church’s questionable\textsuperscript{115} stands concerning the slave trade and the Holocaust, or her reluctance to support the emancipation of women around the world and other marginalized groups. Those who challenge the legitimacy of Church authority often focus on a mistaken notion of infallibility that does not distinguish between the \textit{ex Cathedra} teachings of the Church and the personal opinions of some Church leaders. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, as members of the Church the youth will likely be confronted with situations that may question infallibility of the teaching authority of the Church. Offering them insights into the human element of the Church better equips them to distinguish between personal opinions and infallible teaching, an essential background for responding to those who seek to challenge the faith and their own allegiance to the Catholic authority. In assisting the youth to become informed members of the Church, youth ministry will encourage a deeper understanding and respect for the teaching authority of the Church and its guidelines for true Christian living.

3.2 Human Response to God

Despite God’s initiative of love, on their journey of faith human beings struggle with temptations to sin but are lifted up by grace. The reality of sin and God’s gracious support are the basis for understanding and appreciating the sacraments as divine intervention for human beings who seek to live lives worthy of their status as children of God. God’s grace is not confined to the seven sacraments; it is ultimately available only

\textsuperscript{115}Some question whether the Church actually stood against these evils, took a “weak” or “lukewarm” stance, or failed to stand them at all.
through God’s offer. The “magical” notion that sacramental rituals themselves bring grace through the “right” words and gestures must be avoided. Chapter Three emphasizes that the seven sacraments make grace available, enabling those who accept God’s gift to live prayerful, consecrated lives—the practical manifestation of faithful living (praxis\textsuperscript{116}) and witnessing to God. Response to God’s initiative is a fundamental spiritual obligation, not a weighty external imposition. It is a liberating internal discovery by human persons of who they really are\textsuperscript{117} and how to exercise their human dignity responsibly.

3.2.1 Sin and Grace

Grace is a gift from God. Colman E. O’Neill explains, “When the Christian church speaks of grace, the gift of God’s love, it relates to this primitive revelation and understands it to be a continuation of the primary gift of God which makes more profound the original likeness to the Creator.”\textsuperscript{118} The primitive revelation is the original revelation of God creating humanity in his own image and likeness, gifted and blessed. The authentic human values articulated through Christian teaching cannot be ignored except at the peril of humanity itself. These values stem from one underlying reality—God has created humanity in his own image and likeness (Gn 1:27). Because contemporary culture minimizes sin and guilt, adequate instruction regarding the Church’s teachings on grace,

\textsuperscript{116} Warren, Seeing Through the Media, 15.

\textsuperscript{117} Karol Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1993), 23. Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) explains, “A person is an objective entity, which as definite subject has the closest contacts with the whole (external) world and is most intimately involved with it precisely because of its inwardness, its interior life” (emphasis in original).

\textsuperscript{118} Colman E. O’Neill O.P., Sacramental Realism: A General Theory of
sin and redemption is all the more important. Roger Haight describes succinctly the relationship of grace, sin and redemption:

Speaking generally the notion of God’s grace refers to God’s goodness, graciousness, and benevolence toward human beings. Grace is God’s love for human existence. But this grace is always understood against the background of a human dilemma. In relation to human sinfulness God’s grace appears as mercy and forgiveness. Against the background of human finitude and death, God’s love appears as a power unto ultimate salvation in eternal life.  

Grace is of the nature of God extended to human beings through creation; the abundance of grace, God’s gratuitous gift, is integral to the nature of human beings. Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) explains the Church’s views of the trans-utilitarian dimension of human activity and existence: “Grace, in the final analysis (as well as in the primary and basic sense), is a disinterested gift of God to human beings …” Additionally, in God’s original plan, human beings were created in a state of grace, that is, in union with God and all creation: 

Revelation makes known to us the state of original holiness and justice of man and woman before sin: from their friendship with God flowed the happiness of their existence in paradise (CCC 384).

Grace remains the first and foremost gift of the Spirit who justifies and sanctifies despite the fall from grace by Adam and Eve, the first parents of humanity. There are many gifts of grace: sacramental graces, gifts proper to the different

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sacraments; special graces or charisms; and graces of state that accompany the exercise of responsibilities of Christian life and ministries (CCC 2003, 2004). ATR acknowledges the moral attributes of God as eternal, omniscient and omnipotent, and that God’s will governs all creation.\textsuperscript{121} ATR further appreciates God as the creator, sustainer and provider of all.\textsuperscript{122} Therefore, all good intentions, actions and achievements are attributed to the goodness of God. Although the English word \textit{grace} is not specified, it is clearly evident that traditional people acknowledge God’s hand in all they are, do, and aspire for in life and after human life. Prayers, sacrifices and other forms of seeking divine interventions reveal belief in God’s grace within ATR.\textsuperscript{123} The youth, who in their humanity struggle with trials and failures on their journey of faith, can derive strength from knowing that “The grace of the Holy Spirit has the power to justify us, that is, to cleanse us from our sins and to communicate to us ‘the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ’ and through Baptism” (CCC 1987). The relationship between justification and grace may be explained in these terms: when one has sinned, grace is the means to return to God. Good works are also integral to living in accord with the justification granted. “According to Catholic understanding, good works made possible by grace and the working of the Holy Spirit, contribute to growth in grace, so that the righteousness that comes from God is preserved and communion with Christ is deepened.”\textsuperscript{124} Put

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{121}] Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 30-38.
\item[\textsuperscript{122}] Ibid., 39-47.
\item[\textsuperscript{123}] Ibid., 58-74.
\item[\textsuperscript{124}] The Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church, “Joint
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simply, good works are the fruits of justification. God’s grace sustains people in living holy lives; when they falter or fail, God graciously offers many opportunities to return to the state of grace and the fullness of human nature.

The doctrines of sin and grace provide the foundation of theological anthropology, a Christian conception of human existence. The conflict between sin and grace, good and evil attests to the dualism of human nature and the discord and strife that human beings have confronted ever since the fall of Adam and Eve (CCC 385). The human tension between good and evil is a perennial source of intellectual speculation. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical “Reconciliation and Penance” (Reconciliatio et Paenitentia) notes: “to discern the ferments of good and evil has long caused many people to direct to man and the world a questioning gaze. It is the gaze of the historian and humanist, poet and mystic: Above all, it is the gaze, anxious yet full of hope, of the pastor” (RP 1). Presenting the concepts of sin and grace to the youth requires an understanding of the dual realities of human living—the unavoidable challenges presented by sin and the abundance of grace readily available to counteract human weakness.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines sin as “before all else, an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him (LG 37); it has to do with what is right and what is wrong; good and evil (LG 12, 13). At the same time it damages communion with the Church” (CCC 1440). Pope John Paul II elaborates, “Sin, in a

[125]Haight, 78.
proper sense, is always a personal act, since it is an act of freedom on the part of the
individual person and not properly of a group or community” (RP 16). The intellectual
superiority of the human person above all other creatures and the effects of human activity
testify to human dignity. As Pope John Paul II explains, human purpose is intimately
connected with truth and goodness because a human being is a rational being and good is
the proper object of free will by grace imparted at creation. Sin is an act of individual
choice. The exercise of human freedom in sinful acts and the consequence of sin
jeopardize the relationship between human beings and God, their creator, sustainer and
destiny. In addition, sin harms relationships among human beings. God created human
beings in a state of rectitude but human beings were enticed by the evil one to abuse their
freedom, thus distorting their dignity (GS 13; Gn 3:1-19). The decisions youth make have
greater consequences than the ones made by children, and the consequences of sin require
their mature discernment.

The original status of human beings is grace; created in the image and
likeness of God, they are very good works of God (Gn 1:26-27). What, then, is the
source of evil and sin in the world? The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers these
reflections:

God is infinitely good and all his works are good. Yet no one can escape the
experience of suffering or the evils in nature which seem to be linked to the
limitations proper to creatures: and above all to the question of moral evil. Where
does evil come from? “I thought whence evil comes and there was no solution,”
said St. Augustine, and his own painful quest would only be resolved by his
conversion to the living God. For “the mystery of lawlessness” is clarified only in
the light of the “mystery of our religion.” The revelation of divine love in Christ
manifested at the same time the extent of evil and the superabundance of grace.

126Wojtyla, Person and Community, 177-180.
We must therefore approach the question of the origin of evil by fixing the eyes of our faith on him who alone is its conqueror (CCC 385).

The essence of sin is a product of decisive human action: disobeying God’s command not to eat the forbidden fruit. God gives human beings directives for living in accord with God as they make their deliberate choices in life. Human decisions against God’s directives or refusal to participate in God’s plan create discord and alienation from God and community. Wojtyla observes, “The central problem of life for humanity in our time, perhaps in all times, is this: participation or alienation.” In his encyclical, “The Splendor of Truth” (Veritatis splendor), he emphasizes the responsibility of the human person, as the subject, in exercising the gift of freedom of choice:

By his fundamental choice, man is capable of giving his life direction and of progressing, with the help of grace, towards his end, following God’s call. But this capacity is actually exercised in the particular choices of specific actions, through which man deliberately conforms himself to God’s will, wisdom and law. It thus needs to be stated that the so-called fundamental option, to the extent that it is distinct from a generic intention and hence one not yet determined in such a way that freedom is obligated, is always brought into play through conscious and free decisions. Precisely, for this reason, it is revoked when man engages his freedom in conscious decisions to the contrary, with regard to morally grave matter (VS 67).

Sin is a result of misusing human freedom to choose what is not in conformity with human dignity. Sin can be categorized as personal or social, venial or mortal (RP 14, 16 and 17). Christianity emphasizes human culpability in the commission of sin and the need for God’s action to restore the sinner to the state of goodness. In “Man as Being Threatened Radically by Guilt,” Karl Rahner in chapter three of his

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127Wojtyla, Person and Community, 179-207.
Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity, offers these insights:

Guilt and sin are without doubt a central topic for Christianity. For it understands itself as a religion of redemption …. Christianity understands man as a being whose free, sinful acts are not his “private affair” which he himself can absolve by his power and strength. Rather, however much man’s free subjectivity is responsible for them, once they are done they can be really overcome by God’s action. To that extent any introduction to the idea of Christianity would be deficient if it did not discuss man’s guilt and forlornness, the necessity of deliverance from radical evil, redemption and the need for redemption.¹²⁸

Scripture testifies that God loves human beings first in creating them and then sustaining them in life, which obligates a human response to seek God’s intervention in the struggle to live holy, good lives. Belief in the abundance of God’s love and forgiveness assists humans in making rational moral decisions and bolsters their confidence to petition God’s grace should temptations to sin arise.

Pope John Paul II describes young adulthood as a time of learning to rely on individual conscience and assume responsibility for one’s own destiny. In his catechetical teaching on human development, he highlights the period of puberty and adolescence as a time of greatness and dangers. During this period, the youth discover themselves and their personal inner worlds; it is the time of generating plans for the future; the time when the feeling of love awakens together with the biological impulses of sexuality; the time of the desire to be together and to experiment; the time of particularly intense joy connected with the exhilarating discoveries of life. He cautions, however, that it is also the age of deeper questioning, frustrated or even anguishing searching; of certain

¹²⁸Rahner, 90.
mistrust of others and dangerous introspection; the age sometimes of the first experiences of setbacks and of disappointments (CT 38). Emphasizing the need for the youth to understand the responsibility that comes with puberty and adolescence, Pope John Paul II exhorts:

> With youth comes the moment of first decisions. Although the young may enjoy the support of the members of their family and their friends, they have to rely on themselves and their own conscience and must ever more frequently and decisively assume responsibility for their destiny. Good and evil, grace and sin, life and death will more and more confront one another within them, not just as moral categories but chiefly as fundamental options which they must accept or reject lucidly, conscious of their own responsibility (CT 39).

The pope’s candid reflection on puberty and adolescence underscores the necessity for adults to be attentive to the youth during this challenging period, a critical point of development of conscience and moral growth even as they deal with the need to make present and future life decisions. Conscious of adolescents’ special needs, ATR conducts intense training and initiation for the youth entering the years of puberty and adolescence. Due to the societal shifting discussed in Chapters One and Two, the apprenticeship and oral methods used in traditional society have been rendered mostly superfluous, since most youth spend these transitional years in boarding schools. Ministerial outreach to students of this age group is even more essential since it must often substitute for their traditional moral training.

> Despite a necessary emphasis on sin and guilt, at the heart of the theology of sin and grace is a positive mentality, which Coleman E. O’Neill succinctly captures:

> This is an optimistic theology since it is turned to the initiative of God; the counter-balancing pessimism of the theology of sin, though it introduces a dialectic into Christian thinking, is not to be allowed to develop into despair or into the kind
of Christian activism that refuses to recognize the hand of God wherever the human ideal is being realized. Authentic humanity in spite of its fragmentary achievement at the individual and social level is a manifestation of a loving God.\(^{129}\)

Naturally, the human response to God calls for appreciation of individual responsibility and culpability, which are fundamentally related to freedom.\(^{130}\) Genuine human response to God requires a serious consideration of the ontological identity of the human being as subject, and at the same time a unity of body and soul (CCC 382, GS 14). A faith-filled approach to comprehending human nature invites an appreciation of God, the divine creator and sustainer of all things, including human beings. Acknowledging the realities of good and evil, sin and grace requires dependence on the initiative of God’s goodness, love and gratitude that finds expression in prayer and a committed life.

Those with an ATR background have a certain cultural familiarity with the concept of grace, which is expressed in many common sayings. In everyday life, the people of Mbarara use common expressions such as: “Embabazi za Ruhanga nizo zituhikize aha” (“We have come this far by the grace of God”); “Rukundo ya Ruhanga nekutwara ehu embabazi ze zirikukuhwera” (“God’s love takes you where his grace supports you”); and “Ruhanga nyamba, nagawe oteireho” (“God saves those who make efforts to save themselves”). The same familiarity is reflected in common names like “Neema” (“Grace”) or “Mbabazize” (“God is gracious”). ATR aphorisms and names like these convey their belief in the copiousness of God’s grace and encourage cooperative human response. Such insights are compatible with Christian beliefs that God, the author

\(^{129}\)O’Neill O.P., Sacramental Realism, 23.

\(^{130}\)Rahner, 97-106.
of life, who invites human beings to everlasting life, is ever present to sustain the faithful with saving grace. This understanding is essential for youths’ development of true Christian character that accepts responsibility for personal actions and consequences while reaching out in confidence for the mercy and grace of God in their common human struggles.

3.2.2 The Sense of Catholic Sacramentality

Modern Catholic Church teaching embraces the sense of sacramentality that includes the Church itself as a sacrament. Vatican Council II explicitly states: “The Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all human beings” (LG 1). Michael A. Fahey explains: “As Israel and Jesus himself had been visible expressions and signs of God’s loving kindness, so now, it was reasoned, the church itself is a sacrament or ‘mystery’.”

The sacramental nature of the Church’s identity is expressed by Fahey: “… it is clear that the church when celebrating any sacrament, but especially at the memorial of the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist, achieves an intensity of its being that is quite central to its identity.” Through guidance in understanding the sacramentality of the Church, the youth, the Church’s vibrant present and future, can be encouraged to practice and live the sacramental life of the Church and thus be living witnesses of the faith.

The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, instituted by Christ, are signs and means of God’s saving grace. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, “The

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131 Fahey, 38.

132 Ibid.
sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament” (CCC 1131). They are the ongoing interaction with God for those on the journey of faith. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, youth of ages sixteen through twenty-two make up about half of the Church faithful. Ordinarily, members of this age group will have received the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist and the sacraments of healing: Penance prior to First Holy Communion and the Anointing of the Sick, if needed. The catechetical instructions for the sacraments include all the seven sacraments of the Church (CCC 1113), with an emphasis that “Sacraments are means of sanctification. Through them ‘faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification is brought about.’” (Canon 840) The youth must be taught to examine the sacraments from their maturing points of view so as to suggest how they might appropriate them into the contexts of their lives.

The youth are an essential part of the present life and the enduring future of the Church. The faith of the youth, like the life of the Church itself is acquired, rejuvenated and propagated through the sacraments. In his essay on sacraments, Regis A.

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133 Council of Lyons II (1274): DS 860; Council of Florence (1439): DS 1310; Council of Trent (1547): DS 1600 – 1601.

Duffy states that the “Life of the Church [is the] source of sacramental definition” and “the Church itself is defined in terms of its liturgy as ‘the witness and participant of the saving event of Christ.’” Therefore, sacraments are presented in their ecological context, the setting of the liturgical life of the Church.

Sacraments are both a means of sanctification for individuals and for the Church as a whole. The Second Vatican Council explains, “The purpose of sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct” (SC 56; CCC 1123). Familiarity with ATR practices allows the youth of Mbarara to recognize the spiritual importance of sanctifying people, and building a spirit of community. Just as the “Church constantly clarifies its own identity in the ‘doing’ of the gospel and thus clarifying its sense of mission,” the African traditional religion (society) does the same in performing rituals, ceremonies and festivals to initiate and ground their members in community. For the traditional people of Mbarara, life is a continuous liturgical celebration that recognizes the presence of God in

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136Ibid., 184.


138Duffy, 213.

every place, event and action. Because of their traditional beliefs, the youth can better understand the sacraments of the Church as:

a presence-filled event in which God gratuitously enables us to welcome the message of salvation, to enter more deeply into the paschal mystery, and to receive gratefully that transforming and healing power that gathers us as the community of God’s sons so as to announce the reign of God in the power of the Spirit.\textsuperscript{140}

In the sacraments, God’s initiative invites human beings into life, personal spiritual growth and the building of community.

3.2.2.1 Baptism

Holy Baptism is the basis of Christian life, the gateway to life in spirit (\textit{vitae spiritualis ianua}), the door to the other sacraments (CCC 1213). At Baptism, the Church claims the believer for Christ and the newly baptized begin his or her initiation into the life of Christ. By incorporation into the Church, the Body of Christ (CCC 1267), the baptized becomes one of the “living stones,” a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people (CCC 1268; 1Pt. 2:9). In African societies, as well, a child is initiated into society through ritual. “Nature brings the child into the world, but society creates the child into a social being, a corporate person.”\textsuperscript{141} Both the Church and the African traditional society receive the newborn with joy,\textsuperscript{142} they give a name,\textsuperscript{143} and they perform rituals of incorporation into the community (SC 64-70).

\textsuperscript{140}Duffy, 185

\textsuperscript{141}Mbiti. \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 110.

\textsuperscript{142}Mbiti, \textit{Introduction to African Religion}, 87.

\textsuperscript{143}Ibid., 92.
In the African tradition, the celebration of a new life begins with the first announcement of the pregnancy but the rituals for that new life are performed at the birth and the naming of the child.\textsuperscript{144} Birth is celebrated with elation. The new member of the community is received amid celebratory communal rituals and jubilations, which include feasting on goats and cows. Prominent in the initiation ceremony is the naming ritual. In both Christian Baptism and traditional initiation rites the child is given a name, thus adding importance to the names children bear. In the Western world, children take on “family names” for their last names, but in Mbarara, it is customary to give circumstantial “last names” or “given names” at birth. In Africa, naming is designed to integrate the baby into the community and help shape the child’s character. A common Runyankore proverb, “Eiziina rishusha nyinaryo,” means “The name resembles its bearer.” “Nearly all African names have a meaning”\textsuperscript{145} based on the prevailing circumstances at the time of birth and designate a mission. For the people of Mbarara, names are often circumstantial. They may reflect the feelings of the parents, names such as Tinkatumire, which is translated “God give me a child to send”; and Twinobusingye, which means “we are at peace.” Some names relate to the time of birth like, Rwanyekiro, “born at night,” or Nyanjura, “born during rain storm.” Still other names express religious sentiments, such as Asiimwe (“thanks to God”) and Ahimbisibwe (“may God be praised”).\textsuperscript{146} Teaching youth the

\textsuperscript{144}Mbiti, \textit{Introduction to African Religion}, 90-95.

\textsuperscript{145}Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 118.

\textsuperscript{146}Mbiti, \textit{Introduction to African Religion}, 92-95.
religion and relating the traditional initiation rituals to

For the most part, the baptismal names given to Catholic children in

Mbarara have been “Christian,” often those of saints, and children are encouraged to emulate the lives and particular virtues of their patrons. The Bible presents many examples showing that giving or receiving a new name, or changing the pronunciation of a name signifies the establishment of a relationship or the awarding of a trust. Examples include Abram to Abraham (Gn 17:5); Jacob to Israel (Gn 32:29); God revealing his name to Moses (Ex 3: 13-14); God calling Samuel three times by name (1Sm 3: 4-6); Jesus changing the name of Simon to Peter (Mt 16: 17-18) and Saul’s name to Paul (Acts 13:9).

The naming at baptism is significant as a symbol of incorporation into the Church. In the same way, the naming in Traditional African Religion is significant for both the individual and the community. The name is meant to shape the individual even as the individual contributes to the shape and growth of the community. Objectively, the initiation sacrament of Baptism and the traditional African initiation rituals do not contradict each other; rather, both aim at shaping the characters of the children. In the African tradition, naming includes circumstantial names that describe the prevailing birth circumstances, or that express prayers and mission in life. The naming in Christian Baptism is a sacramental identification, emphasizing the Christian mission and charging the individual with the responsibility of Christian living for the benefit of the individual and the community of the faithful. In “Reasons for Living Religious Education and Young People’s Search for Spirituality and Identity,” Graham Rossiter emphasizes identity as central to thinking
about culture and ethnicity and identity development as relevant to education. Proper explanation of naming in both African initiation rituals and learning the meanings of their own names will help the youth to appreciate the traditional rituals of naming and the Christian sacraments of initiation as they seek personal identity and self-understanding.

3.2.2.2 Eucharist

Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper as a memorial of his death and resurrection; the Eucharist also serves to maintain the presence of Jesus Christ present in the world (SC 9). As the center of Church life (SC 7:6), it is the sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, filling minds with grace, and a pledge of future glory (CCC 1324; SC 47). The Catholic youth of Mbarara have been receiving the Eucharist since childhood, but as young adults they need a more mature understanding of the sacrament to appreciate its centrality to their spiritual lives. Once again, African traditional rituals can serve to deepen understanding of the Catholic faith and provide the means of sharing this understanding with others, thus fulfilling the Christian mission.

The Eucharist is a Paschal banquet, a communal meal and a sacrifice. Understanding of this definition can be enhanced by experiences of traditional African rituals that involve communal meals and food offerings. John Mutiso-Mbinda describes their symbolism:

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A meal is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love and unity. Food and drink taken in common are obvious signs that life is shared. In our African context, it is unusual for people to eat alone. Only a witch or wizard would do that. A meal is always a communal affair. The family normally eats together. Eating together is a sign of being accepted to share life and equality.148

The people of Mbarara express the importance of sharing meals in proverbs such as “Obuzare n’enda,” “true relationship is in eating together.” For them partaking in any meal is a sacred act accompanied by rituals. Since there are no forks or spoons, all meals begin with washing hands with water at the entrance of the house as an invitation even for passersby to wash and join in the meal. Meals are communal. Anyone who arrives at a home where food is being served is automatically included. Traditionally, there are three different levels of meals: home meals shared by the nuclear family, family meals shared by the extended family, and community meals shared by the whole community during times of harvest, calamities or thanksgiving. Each of these meals is presided over by a leader: the head of the household for home or family meals and ritual leaders (traditional priests, medicine men and women or diviners) for community meals. Departed members (the living-dead) and the sub-deities are believed to be present and are acknowledged through libations and ritual prayers at the beginning and end of each meal. Because meals are regarded as rituals, they are accompanied by elaborate gestures and strict adherence to rules.

Engaging inculturation theology to incorporate familiar traditional meal rituals with the celebration of the Eucharist can help the youth appreciate the Eucharist, 148

first as a sacramental gift of spiritual nourishment but also as a means of community building that will lead to an understanding of its Paschal dimension. The Eucharist is a communal sacrament of the body of Christ, living and present in his Church and each member of the faithful. Consecration brings about the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. The Church teaches: “Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body, and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity”\(^\text{149}\) (CCC 1413, Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651). Young people may better understand the reality of Christ’s presence if they can relate it to the traditional belief among the people of Mbarara that the living-dead especially that the spirits of deceased heroes remain as protectors. Again, referring to the Eucharist as food will help the youth understand this sacrament as nourishment for their souls, solace for those in sorrow, medicine for all types of sickness, as well as a life in union with the triune God.

Presenting the Eucharist in connection with the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ through his death by crucifixion is a challenging concept since there are no instances of human sacrifices in the traditions of the people of Mbarara. The youth can better comprehend this selfless act if it is related to their knowledge of heroes who willingly offer their lives to prevent their people from perishing at the hands of enemies. Mbarara folktales abound with stories of war heroes who have sacrificed their own lives for their communities or who have offered their own lives as ransom in exchange for the lives of

\(^{149}\)Council of Trent: DS 1640; 1651.
others. Such analogies can help the youth understand and appreciate the salvific self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ celebrated in the Eucharist.

An even more problematic concept for the youth of Mbarara is the Catholic belief that in receiving the Eucharist, the faithful consume (eat) the body of Christ and drink his blood. The mere connotation of cannibalism is repugnant and abhorred by the traditional people of Mbarara. Yet, Jesus’ words at the Last Supper are unequivocal: “Take and eat; this is my body.” … “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood ….” (Mt 26: 26-28). Also he said, “He who eats my flesh and drinks by blood abides in me, and I in him” (Jn 6: 56). The dogma of the real presence has been a doctrine of the Church since its earliest days. Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: “As the Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me” (Jn 6: 57). In this promise the youth can come to understand that in partaking of the body and blood of Jesus through the Eucharist they are receiving the vital life-force of their savior. The dogma of transubstantiation, which testifies to the real presence of Jesus Christ, must be explained sensitively but resolutely. The incorporation of familiar traditional experiences can help the youth overcome barriers to understanding the Eucharist. Reminding them of the traditional blood pact (omukago) where friends consumed each other’s blood will help them comprehend and accept the act of consuming the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Finally, the Eucharist must be understood as Jesus’ lasting gift of himself to his Church and as a thanksgiving sacrifice to the Father as expiation of the sins of the world. At the last supper, “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving to his disciples said, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’” Then he took a
cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins’” (Mt 26: 26-28). The Eucharist is a commemoration and a reality of Jesus’ sacrifice for the salvation of all as well as a celebration of his resurrection and a promise of eternal life.

For the youth of Mbarara a more mature appreciation of the Eucharist includes the belief that Jesus himself invites them to partake of the Eucharist. Accepting that invitation requires an act of faith that what they receive under the appearance of bread and wine, they embrace as a gift of the whole person of Jesus Christ whose love for the Church unifies, nourishes, sustains all who believe unto life everlasting.

3.2.2.3 Confirmation

The youth of ages sixteen through twenty-two will either be going through the catechumenate in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation or they will have recently been confirmed. Their understanding of the sacrament will be based on the

*Catechism of the Catholic Church:*

The reception of Confirmation is necessary to complete baptismal grace. By the sacrament of confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed (CCC 1285; GS 11; OC Intr. 1-2).

In Mbarara, the age of eligibility for Confirmation coincides with the time of traditional initiation of adolescents into adulthood. Both the sacrament and the traditional rites of passage mark this significant transition. A holistic ministry that incorporates traditional experiences with life in the Church will assist the youth to more fully understand the sacrament.
The traditional preparation that leads to maturity in the community takes place over a period of two to three years. During this time adolescents receive intensive instruction in their traditional heritage. Additionally, they are taught individual skills befitting young ladies and gentlemen that are soon to be married and become heads of households. Girls are trained by their aunts in cooking, weaving, personal hygiene, herbal remedies, sex education, child-bearing and the rearing of children. Boys are trained by their uncles in the traditional masculine skills of fighting, hunting, care of animals and household responsibilities, and are initiated into the deep mystical secrets of the family (see Chapter One). The rite of passage training concludes with the newly initiated demonstrating knowledge of their traditional heritage and exhibiting the skills of mature members of the community. The girls prepare an impressive meal and present some of their handmade crafts while the boys are required to hunt for meat or present prized animals that they have raised specifically as food for the ceremony. A ritual blessing completes the ceremony as community leaders lay hands upon the youth, calling on God, the sub-deities and departed members of the family to bless them. John S. Mbiti adds even more depth to the importance of the acceptance into community, explaining: “A bond is made with the community and with the divine; it is a gateway to marriage; it is a bridge between youth and adulthood; a mark of unity with the people; education in tribal matters; returning home is like a new birth and it brings people together.”

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150 The percentage of first marriages has diminished drastically because of the reasons discussed in Chapter One. Nevertheless, more than half of the youth in the Archdiocese of Mbarara are entering into marriage for the first time.  
Properly presented, a comparison of the traditional coming of age ceremony with the time of the catechumenate and eventual reception of the sacrament of Confirmation can generate in the youth an in-depth understanding regarding their initiation as adult members of the Church. The role of the bishop and the Church community correspond to those of the tribal leaders and the tribal community. The sacrament of Confirmation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, gives a new sacramental character and challenges recipients to be active in building community. Additionally, Confirmation increases and deepens baptismal grace; it roots us more in the divine filiations which makes us cry, “Abba! Father!”; it unites us more firmly to Christ; it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit; renders our bond with the Church more perfect and gives us special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend faith (CCC 1303).

Confirmation completes the sacraments of Christian initiation (CCC 1306), and seals the confirmed with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They are united more firmly to Christ and receive an increase in the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: “wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord” (CCC 1831). According to St. Paul and the tradition of the Church, the newly confirmed are gifted with the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: “charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity” (CCC 1832; Gal 5: 22-23). The effect of the Holy Spirit upon those anointed recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus when his cousin John baptized him in the Jordan, a sign that he is the Messiah, the Son of God (Mt 3: 13-17; Jn 1: 33-34); the repeated promise of Christ that his followers would receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Lk 12: 12; Jn 3: 5-8; 7: 37-39; 16: 7-15); and the fulfillment of Christ’s promise at Pentecost (Jn 20: 22; Acts 2: 1-4).
The immediate effect of the Holy Spirit is observed in the Pentecostal energy of the Apostles who, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, began to proclaim “the mighty works of God” (Acts 2: 11; 2: 17-18; 19: 5-1; Heb 6: 2). Thereafter, “…in fulfillment of Christ’s will, [the Apostles] imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism” (CCC 1288).

Like the other sacraments, Jesus Christ instituted Confirmation for the benefit of the Church. Its outward sign of anointing with sacred chrism and the accompanying words, “Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit” imprints a spiritual seal; the laying on of hands by a bishop signifies inclusion into the fold of Christ – the Church. Following the two to three years of preparation, by the power of the Holy Spirit, those who are confirmed enter into a firm unity with the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ (LG 11). Similar to the youths’ traditional acceptance as mature members of the community, the sacrament of Confirmation declares them as adult members of the Church and equips them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, empowering them to participate in the full life of the Church.

3.2.2.4 Penance and Reconciliation

All those initiated into the Church, including the youth, participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance. Young people should come to understand Penance, also known as Reconciliation, as the sacrament of healing. Its sacramental focus should be “The suggestive biblical image of God, and eventually of Christ, as the medicus (the doctor) [who] focuses the complementary dimension of penance. The medicus
attends to the wounds of sins and heals.”¹⁵² In this sacrament, God heals through Jesus Christ, restoring and making the members of his Church whole. Penance is indispensable to forming the individual holiness and community unity that are essential to the mission of the Church. As Pope John Paul II explains, the Church has the mission of proclaiming reconciliation and as it were of being its sacrament in the world. The Church is the sacrament, that is to say, the sign and means of reconciliation in different ways which differ in value but which all come together to obtain what the divine initiative of mercy desires to grant humanity.

She is a sacrament in the first place by her very existence as a reconciled community which witnesses to and represents in the world the work of Christ. She is also a sacrament through her service as the custodian and interpreter of sacred Scripture, which is the good news of reconciliation ....

Finally, she is a sacrament by reason of the seven sacraments which, each in its own way, “makes the Church.”¹⁵³

Reconciliation empowers the recipients, in this case the youth who are the present and future of the Church, to become active participants in building the faith-community and to be at the core of the mission of the Church. Because many question the necessity of the sacrament of Penance, the youth must understand that it offers spiritual healing and new life in Christ for all those who “carry the new life of Christ in earthen vessels” (2Cor 4: 7; Col 3: 3). That new life can be weakened and even lost by sin. While still in their “earthly tent” Christians are subject to suffering, illness and death (2 Cor 5:1). They are in need of Jesus Christ, the physician of souls and bodies who forgives sins and


¹⁵³John Paul II, Reconciliation and Penance, No.11.
makes them whole through the Holy Spirit (CCC 1420, 1421). Reconciliation is presented to human beings as a gift, an initiative on God’s part that takes concrete form in the mystery of Christ the redeemer, the reconciler, and the liberator of humanity from sin in all its forms\(^{154}\) (Rom 5:10; Col 1:20-22; 2Cor 5:18-20). As the Second Vatican Council Fathers state:

Those who approach the sacrament of penance obtain from God’s mercy pardon for having offended him and at the same time reconciliation with the church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, example, and prayer seeks their conversion (LG 11).

Because of its long history of conflicts and war, Mbarara has great need for peace and reconciliation through conflict resolution. As maturing adults and through the graces of the sacrament of Reconciliation young people can be effective agents of positive social change. Their traditional background gives the youth some understanding of making peace through penance and reconciliation, important concepts among the traditional people of Mbarara, as well as in other African societies.\(^{155}\) Peace and harmony lie at the heart of tribal relationships and personal offenses require immediate interventions, as illustrated in names like \textit{Okugarukana}, meaning “getting back together in forgiveness”; \textit{Empongano}, meaning “the token given as a symbol of forgiving and being forgiven”; \textit{Okwehonga}, which means “Go back and reconcile with the offended”; and \textit{Okucucuka} or \textit{Okwatura} which translates as “Open up and confess the faults committed.”

\(^{154}\)Ibid., No. 7.

In the event that one person has offended another, the elders listen to both sides and help them reconcile. As a symbol of reconciliation, the guilty party is asked to give *empongano* as a sign of peace between the two parties. *Empongano* involves restitution for damage, but most importantly, it requires that both parties share a fraction of the value of the damages with the whole community. According to traditional belief, an offense against even one member affects the community as a whole and can stir the malevolence of the sub-deities and the living-dead, resulting in the wrath of God upon everyone. Certain offenses require the intervention of diviners and medicine men or women to appease the spiritual world. Since conflict between individuals disturbs the harmony of the whole community, the reconciliation of those individuals calls for celebration by the whole community. In the context of Mbarara, the modern view of marriage is creating tensions between parents and children; HIV/AIDS victims and suspected carriers of the virus are stigmatized and hated; peer pressure and silence explode into violent strikes in schools and the wounds of political and religious divisions are deep. There is much need for reconciliation and healing. A well-inculturated presentation of the sacrament of reconciliation and traditional ATR reconciliation will help the youth see the similar objectives and beneficial outcomes of both the sacramental and traditional approach to spiritual, personal and communal healing. Both approaches aim at restoring broken relationships and establishing peace between individuals and the community; both employ religious leaders as intermediaries; and both recognize the need for asking pardon and the value of public, visible forms of penance such as community service.

The youth who have been led to an understanding of the sacrament of Penance through catechetical training and comparisons with ATR reconciliation
procedures can accept the sacrament of Penance as designed to heal an individual’s relationship with God and the whole Church community. The meaning of “reconciliation” derives from the Greek word *metanoia*, the inmost change of heart under the influence of the word of God in the perspective of the kingdom. It also means changing one’s life to correspond with the change of heart so as to bear fruits. It is putting the old person off and putting on the new (Eph 4: 23f); the conversion that passes from heart to deeds and then to a Christian’s life as a whole. Reconciliation is a radical break with sin, a transformation or conversion. The tradition of the Church emphasizes the importance of disclosure or confession of sins to a priest since by the priest’s sacramental absolution, God grants the penitent “pardon and peace” and imparts to sinners the love of God who reconciles (2 Cor 5:20; Jn 1:8) (CCC 1424). Through absolution, the penitent gains the spiritual consolation of remission of eternal punishment, peace and serenity of conscience, and an increase in grace as spiritual strength for living Christian life.

The youth can achieve a more mature understanding of Penance and Reconciliation by appreciating the similarity between concepts from their traditional background and the teachings of the Catholic Church. In presenting Penance and Reconciliation, emphasis should be placed on the sacrament as a means of rooting out the causes of sin, division and conflict and as a source of grace to help the youth live as peacemakers in the Church and in their communities.

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156 Duffy, “Penance,” 244.

157 John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance*, No. 5. This implies that reconciliation is the result of the conversion, or its necessary goal.
3.2.2.5 The Anointing of the Sick

Christ instituted the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick to strengthen those being tried by illness (CCC 1511; Mk 6: 13; Jas 5: 14-15). God is the healer of individuals and the community. The Anointing of the Sick is a sign of Christ’s compassion toward all people, especially the sick and those in any kind of danger of death. Duffy explains:

The perennial image of Christ as physician provides the theological context for this brief analysis of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick: “When the Church cares for the sick, it serves Christ himself in the suffering members of his Mystical Body. When it follows the example the Lord Jesus, who ‘went about doing good and healing all’ (Acts 10: 38), the Church obeys his command to care for the sick (Mk 16: 18).”\(^{158}\)

Special care must be taken to ensure that the sacrament is not misunderstood as a form of “magic,” but rather as a demonstration of Christ’s compassion toward all people, especially the sick and those in any danger of death. That said, understanding of the sacrament can be enhanced by comparing it to certain traditional beliefs and practices regarding the healing of the sick.

Traditional people believe in a hierarchy of authority, with God at the apex as the Creator (Ruhanga), the Provider (Rugaba), the Eternal One (Nyakubaho), the Healer or One who Makes Whole (Nyamukiza), and other names derived from divine attributes.\(^{159}\) Since the religious experiences of the youth have been formed by the

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intertwined beliefs of ATR and Christianity, their understanding of the Anointing of the Sick will reflect their traditional holistic views of an existing harmony between the spiritual and the physical worlds. Fr. Bonaventure Turyomumazima, a priest-theologian of the Archdiocese of Mbarara explains this concept:

Traditional African society hardly dichotomizes life: the “spiritual” and the physical worlds form one universe; life is reverenced in its entirety. What is true of life in general, also concretely applies to health as well. Traditional African society has a vision of reality where several aspects interpenetrate each other, but with religion at the center.\textsuperscript{160}

According to traditional beliefs, individuals or groups who do not observe societal norms or religious rituals upset the balance between the spiritual and the physical world and lead to personal misfortune, illnesses and even widespread calamities. Mbiti notes: “The ontological balance must be maintained between God and man, the spirits and man, the departed and the living. When this balance is upset, people experience misfortunes and sufferings or fear these will happen.”\textsuperscript{161} Those familiar with these traditional views can be invited to perceive the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick as a physical and spiritual benefit for an individual person and for the whole Church community.

The priests and the faith community play an important role in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The holy oils used to anoint the sick are blessed by a bishop, as the local ordinary and shepherd of the diocesan faith community – on Holy Thursday in the presence of the priests and the faithful. St. James exhorts: “Is anyone among you

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 82.

\textsuperscript{161} Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 59.
sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven” (Js 5: 14-15). Traditional African belief holds a direct correlation between illness and individual and community sins, between the role of the community and the role of “Specialists” in bringing about healing. A sick person is a sign of disharmony with the physical and spiritual worlds and is in need of “Specialists.” Oborji further explains, “In a bid to pacify and recapture the lost personal and cordial relationship between human beings and God, the traditional African through his/her religion (ATR) now appeals to the mediation role of the intermediaries: ancestors and deities, rituals and medicines.”

These Specialists (Abahangu), mediums between the physical and the spiritual world who also lead the healing rituals, include priests (Banyakatagara), diviners (Abarangi, Bakarebi), medicine men and women (Abafumu, Abaraguzi), rainmakers (Abaigi b’enjura), and kings and queens. More about the call and role of the Specialists

162 Turyomumazima, 88. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, 60; 166. Mbiti explains the difficulty of naming the people with special skills, knowledge and abilities especially in religious matters. So he calls them “Specialists,” a title used throughout this work. Specialists are believed to have been called by God or the spiritual world. For example, in a family most male and female seniors would play the role of Specialist in family prayers, invocations, offerings, thanksgiving and other rituals. Because of their seniority, such persons are believed to be closer to the Living-dead and God. In some instances, young members of the family are chosen or set apart by the spiritual world to play the role of “Specialist.” These are called Abahangu, “divinely chosen.” They come to be chosen in a mysterious way, manifested through being possessed by the spiritual world, by communicating with the spirits and thus having the ability to answer the spiritual questions of the community.

163 Oborji, 5.

164 Ibid., 166-193. In ATR, kings and queens (the royal family) are believed
will be discussed under the sacrament of Holy Orders, but in this section their role in healing is significant. African youth who are familiar with the function of Specialists in restoring wellness and harmony can easily adapt that understanding to the role of the consecrated bishops and the ordained priests who act on behalf of God and the Church community when administering the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Finally, an explanation of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick must include the reality that not everyone who receives the sacrament will physically recover. More importantly, however, the special graces of the sacrament unite the sick to the passion of Christ (CCC 1532), strengthening them on their final journey and giving them courage to face death. There are ATR rituals for warriors about to enter into battle and for anyone on the verge of death. The tribal Specialists anoint those about to pass over to the world of the living-dead with a smearing of herbs and soil for the removal of their sins and restoration of harmony with God and the spiritual world. There are striking differences, however, between the ATR preparation for death and the Anointing of the Sick. This sacrament completes our conformity to the death and Resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. It completes the holy anointings that mark the whole Christian life: that of Baptism which sealed the new life in us, and that of Confirmation which strengthened us for the combat of this life. This last anointing fortifies the end of our earthly life like a solid rampart for the final struggles before entering the Father's house (CCC 1523).

to be anointed by God to lead the community spiritually since politics and religion are inseparable. In some communities, they are considered divine.
The “Christological aspect”\textsuperscript{165} of the Anointing of the Sick assures sick persons that their suffering “contributes to the Church and the good of all…for whom the Church suffers and offers herself through Christ to the Father” (CCC 1522), and that this union with Jesus Christ who suffered, died and rose from the dead offers the promise of eternal life. A complete understanding of this sacrament must acknowledge the similarities as well as the striking theological differences between the Anointing of the Sick and ATR rites of healing and preparation for dying. Such understanding will deepen appreciation for the sacrament and empower young people as informed believers.

3.2.2.6 Holy Orders

Holy Orders is bestowed by an ordained bishop on those chosen for the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of the Church. Theirs is the task of representing Christ – the head of the Church – before the assembly of the faithful and acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the entire community, above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice (CCC 1552; SC 33N; LG 10). The appearance of many off-shoot Christian religions like African independent Churches with their own “priests” and “bishops,” as well as the current tendency toward relativism and secularism has created an urgent need for clear explanation of the hierarchical ministry of the sacrament of Holy Orders. Only “validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders” (CCC 1576; 874).

\textsuperscript{165}Turyomumazima, 202-213.
Christ himself chose the apostles and gave them a share in his mission and authority. Raised to the Father's right hand, he has not forsaken his flock but he keeps it under his constant protection through the apostles, and guides it still through these same pastors who continue his work today. Thus, it is Christ whose gift it is that some be apostles, others pastors. He continues to act through the bishops (CCC 1575).

Holy Orders is a sacrament of ministerial service to the Church and the people of God. Through it, “the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry” (CCC 1536). The Catechism further explains the origin of the term “Orders.” “Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. Ordinatio means incorporation into an ordo” (CCC 1537). This explanation easily correlates with the role of traditional Specialists (discussed under the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick), who by virtue of their calling are separated and distinguished as God’s chosen ones for service to God and the people. Mbìti explains that, like the ordained ministers of the Church, “Specialists in the African Traditional Religions also assert that they are called by God…in dreams, visions or in waking to become medicine men” and must endure rigorous training befitting their calling. They are always at the service of the people as

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Msìti, African Religions and Philosophy, 167.

Turyomumazima, 118-121. Turyomumazima explores the training of the Specialist in traditional Mbarara society when noting the distant locations such as Bwamba and Bukonjo, located in the Rwenzori mountains; Karagwe, located beyond the river Kagera in Tanzania; and Buganda, located among the distant tribe of Buganda, the biggest kingdom in Uganda. The divine powers are associated with ability to travel long distances, cross rivers and forests and climb up in the mountains without any means of modern transport, underscoring the work of the spirits in manifesting on the Specialists the rank of consecration or ordination. Additionally, Specialists observe a discipline of purity that includes celibacy, not consuming alcohol, and staying in isolation from other people.
the mediators between the people and God, the deities and the living dead. For Christian youth who retain their African culture, a comparison of certain similarities between ordained priests and the traditional Specialists can provide a helpful point of reference for the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Nevertheless, traditional religious Specialists and ordained Catholic priests differ in significant ways. Those called to Holy Orders are consecrated for service to Jesus Christ. In “the Ecclesial Service of the ordained minister… Christ himself …is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth” (CCC 1548). Additionally, through “the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of believers” (CCC 1549). Only the ordained priest “‘acting in the person of Christ’, brings about the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people” (LG 10). Only ordained priests can forgive sins through the sacrament of Penance, administer the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, and, when delegated by a bishop, administer Confirmation. Holy Orders may be conferred only by consecrated bishops. Although traditional Specialists, like ordained ministers of the Church, intercede between the people and God, offering sacrifices on their behalf, they have no Christological dimension. Catholic ordained ministers act on behalf of Jesus Christ himself, who is present to his Church as “Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth” (CCC 1548).

The perennial need for ordained ministers to serve the faithful is a compelling reason to urge young men to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider serving the Church as ordained priests or deacons. Prerequisites for Holy Orders include reception of
Baptism and Confirmation, firm belief in the Catholic Church, and good moral character. Those called to Holy Orders will have to commit themselves to years of study; a celibate, chaste life; and dedicated service to the people of God. Those who do not feel called to the priesthood, an understanding of Holy Orders can inspire greater respect for the sacrament and for those upon whom Holy Orders has been conferred. In ATR, although certain people (Specialists) are divinely chosen, the community as a whole participates in the spiritual world during communal worship, sacrifices and celebrations, wearing their talismans and presenting themselves together with their offerings. Likewise, the Catholic Church maintains that while the sacrament of Holy Orders can be conferred only on its ministerial and hierarchical members, all the faithful are called to the common priesthood. St. Peter proclaims: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation a people of God’s own, so that you may proclaim the virtues of the one who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light” (1Pt 2:9). All members of the Church, “the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of the bishops, priests, and the common priesthood of the faithful,” participate “each in its proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ” (CCC 1547; LG 10 par. 2). All youth--boys and girls alike--can rejoice that through Baptism, they are called to priestly participation in the life of the Christ.

Youth can greatly increase their sense of self-worth by gaining an understanding that Christ has made his Church “a kingdom of priests for his God and Father” (Rev 1:6) and that each of them is called to be part of a priestly people, building up the Church of Christ and continuing the priestly ministry of Jesus. As stated above, the significant differences between ATR roles of Specialists and those of Catholic priests must be emphasized, particularly the Christological basis for the sacrament of Holy Orders.
While the priest remains a member of the Body of Christ, through the sacrament of Holy Orders, his consecration to Christ sets him apart; by correlation, through God’s calling ATR Specialists are also set apart, but not in the Christological sense within Catholicism. The sacrament of Holy Orders divinely confers upon a consecrated priest the unique authority to celebrate the Eucharist and to administer other sacraments. Additionally, the sacrament of Holy Orders authorizes him to preach in the name of Christ and guide the faithful by leading and shepherding his Church. Youth need to understand these essential differences in order to appreciate fully the significance of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

3.2.2.7 Matrimony or Marriage

The sacrament of Matrimony or Marriage is a covenant between a man and woman, who in the presence of a priest and witnesses of the Church community freely vow to remain faithful to one another as long as they both shall live and to perform their exclusive duties as a married couple. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines marriage as a:

covention by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life… by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC 1601: CIC, can. 1055 par. 1; GS 48 par. 1).

Youths of ages sixteen through twenty-two are at the threshold of marriage; in fact, some who have not had the opportunity to attend school and thereby delay marriage, already will have embarked upon married life. For these reasons understanding a valid matrimonial covenant, and the permanency and insolubility of sacramental marriage is imperative.
In traditional Mbarara society, as in all African communities, “marriage is at the center of human life,”¹⁶⁸ and every African is expected to get married and beget offspring.¹⁶⁹ Africans believe strongly in the permanent and insoluble bond of marriage. To these traditional beliefs, the teachings of the Church add that the marriage bond has been established by God (CCC 1640); that it is sealed by God himself (CCC 1639); and that it perfects the couple’s love and strengthens their indissoluble unity (CCC 1641; 1644). Love of spouses for one another presupposes freedom of choice in selecting a marriage partner. Mbiti notes that in traditional society, the youth often enter into a parentally arranged marriage, but a truer traditional custom allows “the young people themselves find the person they wish to marry, and then inform their parents or other relatives.”¹⁷⁰ The detailed description of the traditional process of marriage has been covered in Chapter One. Both the ATR marriage and the Church’s sacrament of Matrimony are based on freedom of choice and love between the couples. Pope John Paul II declares that choosing to form a marital communion presupposes freedom and love,¹⁷¹


¹⁷¹Wojtyla, Love and Responsibility, 73 – 100. Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) analyzes love metaphysically, psychologically, and ethically. He gradually reveals the feelings and tendencies that come with what many call “love,” culminating in commitment of freedom and the continual education of love. This book is highly recommended for the youth, since it clarifies the errors that surface when attempting to establish relationships with members of the opposite sex and guides them in the process of looking for partners and preparing for the sacrament of matrimony.
in that “the only ‘place’ where the personal value of conjugal love, fertility, and procreation can be preserved is marriage. Marriage is a freely chosen lifelong commitment of two spouses to one another and to any children God would give them.”¹⁷²

Because it is a lifetime commitment, Matrimony requires in-depth preparation. African societies have always viewed marriage as a process, an essential element of the extensive coming of age preparation, requiring formality between engaged couples. In African tradition, the period between engagement and the actual marriage is ceremoniously protracted. It begins with the involvement of the whole extended family and other members of the community, and with the exchange of gifts between the families.¹⁷³ The process is sealed by the birth of the first child, which underscores the inseparability and fecundity of marriage.¹⁷⁴ In some African societies divorce was permitted in instances of sterility or barrenness. Among the traditional people of Mbarara, however, even though a childless couple might be despised or called derogatory names like “good for nothing,” they would not be permitted to divorce. Rather, if the husband was sterile or impotent, his brothers would act as his surrogate in order to continue the family lineage. If the woman was barren, she would actively assist her husband in finding a second or third wife to produce offspring. These were some of the extraordinary circumstances under which polygamy was allowed in ATR. Because of this traditional


background, youth who are preparing for the sacrament of Matrimony require special instruction, not only in the openness to fertility (CCC 1652; 1653), but also in monogamous fidelity of conjugal love (CCC 1646).

For the youth, many on the verge of marriage or already married, religious instruction on Matrimony is imperative. Many influences are detrimental to the sanctity of a chaste, monogamous Christian marriage. Among these are the sexual licentiousness promoted by the pornography industry, the increased availability of clinical abortions, and the multiplying numbers of young people opting for childless marriages or same sex unions. Cohabitation has also become common among the youth, particularly with those who have moved to urban areas and been either influenced by Western practices or, as explained in Chapter One, have failed to raise the money to arrange a proper traditional marriage. Informed youth are better prepared to avoid such detrimental influences. Guided by teachings of the Church, youth can better embrace the vocation of marriage as informed adults and appreciate the sacramental graces that can help them face the challenges of married life and reap the blessings of happy and permanent marriages.

3.2.3 Prayer and Consecrated Lives

Prayer and consecrated lives are exemplary ways of embracing the love of God. They are faith put into practice. To understand the place of prayer in Christian life, the youth first must realize that all people, including themselves, are called to holiness. Pope John Paul II’s farewell message in France on May 31, 1980, affirms the importance of prayer: “I conclude by encouraging you to be men and women of prayer, because the Spirit of God must be the soul of your apostolate, permeate your thoughts, your desires,
your actions, purify them, elevate them.”¹⁷⁵ Before an audience of lay persons, mostly young people, he evokes the message of the Second Vatican Council:

Like priests and religious, lay people are called to holiness; prayer is the honored pathway….I learn with great pleasure that there has been a revival of prayer which translates into, among other things, a flowering of prayer groups, but which also, I hope informs the life of your movements. God be praised.¹⁷⁶

Pope John Paul II speaks of the transformative quality of prayer in daily lives and encourages young people particularly to be people of prayer so as to remain in intimate communication with God through the Holy Spirit (ET 43). As people of God, everyone including the youth have an intrinsic need for prayer in their daily lives.

3.2.3.1 Prayer (Individual and Communal)

Prayer is communication with God. It is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God in praise, thanksgiving and petition. Prayer is the petition of good things from God in accord with God’s will. Christian prayer is the personal and living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is infinitely good, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts. Vatican II describes prayer as, “The discovery of intimacy with God… the fruitfulness of prayer, in which God reveals himself to the spirit and heart of his servants” (ET 43). True prayer is born of God through the Holy Spirit, the Master of Prayer.¹⁷⁷ Although liturgical celebrations,

¹⁷⁵ Pope John Paul II, Farewell Message in France, May 31, 1980


especially the sacrifice of the Eucharist (SC 1) accomplish the work of redemption, holiness must be cultivated through personal prayer. As the Council Fathers explain:

The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with others, but he must also enter into his bedroom to pray to his Father in secret (Mt 6:6); furthermore, according to the teaching of the apostles, he must pray without ceasing (1Thes 5:17). We also learn from the same apostle that we must always carry around in our bodies the dying of Jesus Christ, so that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal Flesh (2Cor 4: 10-11) (SC 13).

Adolescents need to pray as they struggle with their physiological, psychological and spiritual transitions. At a time when it is normal for youth to assert their independence, they need to recall that God created them out of love and provides everything for them, including the air they breathe. God’s initiative of love deserves acknowledgment and appreciation that is the basis of prayer. That individual prayer grows out of true humility may be a difficult concept for young people, but it will help them to realize that if they are humble before God, they will be exalted (Lk 18:9-14). Prayer does not have to be complicated. It can be as simple and effective as the experience shared by St. Therese of Lisieux: “For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love embracing both trial and joy.” 178 Sharing their prayer experiences with one another can be a faith strengthening experience both for the adolescent and his or her peers.

Prayer plays a central role in traditional African society. Turyomumazima, citing Mbiti and Zahan, notes that religion permeates the traditional society of Mbarara:

178Therese of Lisieux, Manuscrits autobiographiques, C 25r.
The Banyankore are known to be quite religious people; traditionally, religion intermingles with all aspects of life. Religious meaning is attached to every aspect of life, every happening or event. “In practical terms, all African peoples are profoundly [Mbiti uses ‘notoriously’] religious,” says Zahan. In traditional society, everyone, without making an individual choice, becomes a member of the religion by virtue of his or her birth and upbringing and remains a member of the religion until his or her death.\footnote{Turyomumazima, 85. Also D. Sahan, The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 14;}

The people of Nkore implement prayer into every aspect of their lives. The names they give their children are often expressions of prayer. For example, Asiimwe means “thanks to God”; Ahimbisibwe means “praises to God” and Akunda means “God loves.” Exclamations like Ee Ruhanga wangye! (Oh my God!), invocations like Ruhanga akurinde! (God watch over you!) and everyday salutations reflect prayerful awareness of the pervasive presence of God.

Christian expressions of prayer take many forms. The \emph{Catechism of the Catholic Church} enumerates three: vocal prayer, meditation and contemplative prayer (CCC 2721). Through vocal prayer (CCC 2700 – 04), God speaks to human beings and human beings speak to God, prayer thus taking flesh. Meditation is a “quest” of the mind to understand the Christian life and “respond to what the Lord is asking” (CCC 2705 – 08). Contemplative prayer, commonly but not exclusively communal, is a silent “‘hearing’ the word of God” and an “unconditional acceptance” of God’s Will (CCC 2709 – 19; 2721; 2724). Each of these categories includes a multitude of specific prayers. In Blessing and Adoration (CCC 2626 – 28), there is an encounter between God and the human being while the human being acknowledges God as the creator and a human being
as a creature. In Prayer of Petition (CCC 2629 - 32), the human being asks, beseeches, pleads, invokes, entreats, cries out and even “struggles in prayer” (Rom 15:30). Prayer of Intercession (CCC 2634 – 36) takes place when a human being—like Jesus—intercedes for all (Rom 8:34, 12:5; Heb 7:25). Through Prayer of Thanksgiving (CCC 2637 – 38), individuals offer personal prayers of thanksgiving; this form of prayer is particularly characteristic of the prayer of the Church in the celebration of the Eucharist. Prayer of Praise (CCC 2639 – 43) recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for God’s own sake and gives glory. Finally, the variety of devotional prayers such as the rosary, the way of the cross and novenas also strengthen intimacy with the Triune God through partnership with the Virgin Mary and the Saints.

Like the call to holiness, the call to prayer comes with challenges. Prayer “is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort…. prayer is a battle” (CCC 2725). Even the saints had times of inner dryness (CCC 2731), when they seemed to find no connection with God or motivation to pray (CCC 2729), or when external distractions thwarted their desire to pray.

Contrary to an old stereotype, one’s prayer life is not synonymous with spirituality…. spirituality is a person’s whole way of life lived with a faith perspective; spirituality is faith at work. Yet, a regular prayer life, both personal practices and communal worship, is an essential provision for the spiritual journey. Like any loving relationship, ours with God is deepened by good communication.\(^\text{180}\)


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Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1; 46; 76.
Those who find that their usual methods have become monotonous or otherwise unsatisfactory can be encouraged to revitalize their prayer lives by trying any of the countless other expressions of prayer.

Realizing the rich and varied types and expressions of Christian prayer, both individual and communal, will enable prayer-centered lives in response to God’s call to holiness and witness to the world of their belief in the loving God who is creator and redeemer of all humankind. It must be noted that ATR also cherishes many similar types and expressions of prayer. In *African Religions and Philosophy*, John S. Mbiti describes the African forms, expressions and places of prayer. There are no contradictions between ATR forms of prayer and Christian forms and expressions of prayer. In fact, the two traditions would blend into each other well through diligent inculturation. In developing their expressions of prayer, the youth will benefit from an understanding that there are more similarities than differences between the ATR and Christian concept of God and their concept of prayer. Theological and pastoral investigations will greatly facilitate inculturating ATR forms and expressions of prayer into youth ministry.

3.2.3.2 Consecrated Lives (Religious Men and Women, and Associates)

Those who live consecrated lives include religious men and women who in response to God’s love dedicate their lives to the service of Jesus Christ. In the introduction of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II describes consecrated life:

> The Consecrated Life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of God the Father to his Church through the Holy Spirit. By the

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profession of the evangelical counsels the characteristic features of Jesus – the
chaste, poor and obedient one – are made constantly “visible” in the midst of the
world and the eyes of the faithful are directed towards the mystery of the Kingdom
of God already at work in history, even as it awaits its full realization (VC 1).

Consecrated life enhances the life of the Church; it is a gift of the Church
and for the Church; it is at the heart of the Church as a decisive element of her mission
(VC 3). Consecrated life begins with a free choice, a response to God’s call and a desire
to witness to God, in a radical way through the public profession of the evangelical
counsels of consecrated chastity (ET 13-15), consecrated poverty (ET 16-22), and
consecrated obedience (ET 23-29). It is lived ordinarily as a member of a particular
religious group bonded together by similar goals and aspirations. In a special way, those
who embrace consecrated life personify the evangelical counsels that Jesus Christ
advocated to his disciples (Mt 5: 1-16). Poverty and obedience are common requisites of
the consecrated life as well as a free acceptance of the obligation to practice chastity
through celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom (CCC 915). While all the faithful believers
are called to a life of charity, the youth easily can be led to understand that the response to
dedicate one’s life entirely to God is the perfection of charity.

There are important differences between consecrated life and the sacrament
of Holy Orders. Consecrated life is a state of life constituted by the profession of
evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church (CCC
914). Those who live consecrated lives are not ordained and therefore do not enter the
hierarchy of the Church as deacons, priests and bishops (cf. 2.2.2.6).

It should be noted that some people living consecrated life may choose to
join their hierarchical priesthood thus combining two charisms. In that situation the
sacrament of ordination takes precedence and the person is recognized as an ordained priest. As explained in 3.2.2, ordination is a sacrament that receives the recipient into Holy Orders and imparts the sacramental authority to preside over sacraments. Therefore, one who chooses to join the ranks of ministerial service as an ordained minister is elevated from the common priesthood to the ministerial priesthood of Holy Orders.

The Church acknowledges many ways of living a consecrated life. These include monastic life, the orders of virgins, hermits and widows, institutes completely devoted to contemplation, apostolic religious life, secular institutions, and societies of apostolic life. From time to time, additional expressions of consecrated life arise, inspired by new spiritual and apostolic impulses. Their vitality must be subjected to the authoritative scrutiny of the Church to establish their authenticity of purpose. Men and women drawn to monastic life leave behind the world, seeking and dedicating themselves to God “preferring nothing to the love of Christ” (VC 6). Orders of Virgins, hermits and widows are men and women consecrated by their diocesan bishop to a life of service to the Church while financially supporting themselves and remaining in the world. Either alone or in association with others, they constitute a special image of the Heavenly Bride and of the life to come when the Church will at last fully live her love for Christ the Bridegroom (VC 7). Members of the Institutes completely devoted to contemplation, also known as contemplatives, are men or women drawn by an irresistible attraction. “Held in God’s grasp [they] abandon themselves to the sovereign action of God in preparation for eternal contemplation” (ET 8). *Vita Consecrata* explains, “In solitude and silence, by listening to the word of God, participating in divine worship, personal asceticism, prayer,
mortification and the communion of fraternal love, they direct the whole of their lives and all their activities to the contemplation of God” (VC 8).

In Mbarara, there are many examples of those living consecrated lives. In Mbarara, there are many examples of those living consecrated lives. An Institute completely devoted to contemplation is the Poor Clare Sisters located at Nyamitanga. These sisters constitute the “power house” or “physical plant” for the Church because they dedicate their lives to praying for the Church. “Apostolic religious life is exemplified by men or women who renounce the world, consecrate themselves to God through the public profession of the evangelical counsels in accordance with a specific charism and in a stable form of common life for the sake of carrying out different forms of apostolic service to the People of God” (VC 9). In addition to witnessing to God through the apostolic life, in the Archdiocese of Mbarara there are a number of Societies of Apostolic Life, secular institutes composed of men and women “seeking to live out their consecration to God in the world through the profession of the evangelical counsels in the midst of temporal realities; they wish in this way to be a leaven of wisdom and a witness of grace within cultural, economic and political life” (VC 10).

In addition to Specialists, ATR includes prominent individuals dedicated to specific spiritual duties in families and communities. These include medicine men and women, family prayer leaders, civil leaders and even herbalists. While the Church officially recognizes individuals and communities of consecrated life, until recently in ATR, those whose lives were dedicated to the community performed their services publicly, yet some others were often recognized only by their families and immediate

\[182\] See Chapter Two (2.1.3) for a complete list of the Missionaries and
communities. Informed awareness of the contributions of consecrated life to the vitality of
the Church and society can help young people expand their understanding of their own call
to Christian life. Moreover, exposure to examples of freely chosen consecrated life
practiced in the Archdiocese may inspire many to consider a commitment to some form of
consecrated life as a means of furthering their own sanctification and for the advancement
of the Kingdom of God.

**Conclusion**

Theological foundations for youth ministry deal with God’s initiative to
love, create and save human beings as revealed in the three channels of revelation: sacred
scripture, sacred tradition and the teaching authority of the Church (*Magisterium*).
Parallel teachings from the African Traditional Religious heritage can be useful because of
their inculturation value in teaching Christian theological foundations to the youth of
Mbarara. Human beings’ response to God’s initiative in understanding sin and grace,
receiving sacraments, living committed lives in prayer and consecrated lives are ways of
living out the theological foundations. Finally, because theological foundations are the
basic components of Christian faith, they are essential for youth ministry.
CHAPTER FOUR: ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUTH MINISTRY

4.0 Overview: the Ecological Foundations for Youth Ministry

In this chapter, ecological\textsuperscript{183} foundations flow from the theological foundations and theological anthropology upon which previous chapters are based.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{183} Warren, \textit{Youth Ministry and the Future of the Church: Ministry with Youth and Young Adults} (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 6. Warren uses the term “ecological” in relation to holistic youth ministry. I use “ecological” to
Ecological foundations refer to the nature and nurture of youth, the environment and the content of the civilization of love.\textsuperscript{184} Ecological foundations are existential and relational factors and contexts that naturally, spontaneously, or deliberately affect human development, human relationships and human assent to God. The meaning of ecology transcends the natural environment to include existence, growth, education and formation by numerous entities. Church and African Tradition point out that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and have received the world from the hands of the Creator with the task of shaping it in that same image and likeness, because all that exists constitutes their ecology. Therefore, the argument herein is that, all people, particularly the young, must come to appreciate their status as “human beings, individuals and persons,”\textsuperscript{185} created by God along with their fellow humans, animals, plants, rocks, include as well as the nature and nurture that determine the relationship of human beings with their nature or anatomy and the natural world, and in so doing may also define what they are, how they live, what they have, what they are capable of doing and becoming. The genesis, responsibility and the nature of the youth are explored to establish their responsibility for the universe they live in and its safety.

\textsuperscript{184} John Paul II, \textit{Letter to Families from John Paul II: 1994 Year of the Family} (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 1999), No. 13. John Paul II expands upon the phrase “Civilization of love” that Paul VI used in his homily for closing the year December 25, 1975. “The phrase \textit{is linked to the tradition of the “domestic Church” in the early Christianity}, but it has a particular significance for the present time. The word “civilization,” derived from “\textit{civis}” —“citizen”— emphasizes the civic or political dimension of each individual’s life. But the deepest meaning of “civilization” is not political, but human. Civilization belongs to human history because it fulfills humanity’s spiritual and moral needs. Created in the image and likeness of God, human beings have received the world from the hands of the Creator, together with the task of shaping it. Fulfilling this obligation is the nature of civilization, which is actually the ‘humanization of the world.’”

water, air and all other elements of the universe. God saw that all creatures are good, and called all to live harmoniously (Gn 1 and 2); this is the first and most important element of an ecological foundation. The second is a comprehension and an appreciation of the universe as home (oikos)\textsuperscript{186} and a “common good,”\textsuperscript{187} shared with all creation.

This chapter seeks to integrate aspects from the context of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, theological foundations, and the ecology of youth ministry into what I call ecological foundations. In an effort to present an analysis of the ecological foundations as understood in this dissertation, the chapter begins with the basis for harmonious living—creation, the nature of the human being, and their relation to God as the creator. The writings of Pope John Paul II, as well as authors in theological anthropology and environmental ecology serve as sources of this section. The chapter proceeds to discuss the elements of ecology for birth, growth, education and other nurturing under the family, Church, school and society. John S. Mbiti, John Mary Waliggo, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike and other African authors are sources for much information about the traditional African societal setting, while some Western authors like Michael Warren enrich the work with international views on ecological foundations.

\textsuperscript{186}Varghese explores the philosophical and historical development of the term “person,” including related terms such as “human being,” “individual,” and “individualism.”

\textsuperscript{187}Clifford, “From Ecological Lament to A Sustainable Oikos” in Don Brandt, ed. God’s Stewards, the Role of Christians in Creation Care (Monrovia, CA: World Vision, 2002), 51-64. Derived from Greek, oikos, meaning “household” or “home.”

\textsuperscript{187}See John XXIII, Mater et Magistra: Mother and Teacher No. 74. “The common good embraces the sum of total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organization to achieve complete and effective fulfillment.”
Ecological foundations are closely related to theological foundations since all that exists is God’s creation and depends on God for sustenance. Ecological foundations will find their true meaning in the appreciation of their creator and of each other as dignified cohabitors of the universe, living in a mutually reliant relationship and destined to their maker. Therefore, the discussion of ecological foundations begins with the basis for harmonious living: understanding personal responsibility, that is, the relationship between human beings and the world (stewardship), ecological persons and each other as sexual beings, and the natural distinctiveness of each individual. The larger elements of ecology include the family as a domestic church and nuclear community (GS 52), the Church as the Eucharistic Community (LG 1-17), the school as a formal educational context, and society as a natural environment for growth. This study aims to enhance young people’s sense of ecological consciousness and to enhance young people’s sense of ecological consciousness and to

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inspire their respect for and protection of every aspect of creation. Finally, the chapter argues for the need to incorporate ecological foundations into youth ministry.

4.1 The Basis for Harmonious Living

4.1.1 Stewardship (Gn 1:28-29)

Stewardship is a divine call for harmonious living through respect, support and enhancement of the human family and all creation, in order to generate a sustainable future for humanity and all creation. Pope John Paul II earnestly pleads: “Theology, philosophy and science all speak of a harmonious universe, of a ‘cosmos’ endowed with its own integrity, its own internal, dynamic balance. THIS ORDER MUST BE RESPECTED. The human race is called to explore this order, to examine it with due care and to make use of it while safeguarding its integrity.”

Stewardship is a fundamental obligation of all human beings. True stewardship requires freedom, moral responsibility, recognizing private initiative and property, and protection of the environment. In 2005, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, explained stewardship:

Freedom and the capacity for moral decision making are central to what it means to be human. Stewardship – defined in this case as the ability to exercise moral responsibility to care for the environment – requires freedom to act. Significant aspects of this stewardship include the right to private initiative, the ownership of property, and the exercise of responsible freedom in the economic sector. Stewardship requires a careful protection of the environment and calls us to use our intelligence “to discover the earth’s productive potential and the many different ways in which human needs can be satisfied.”


193 USCCB, “Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and
The youth, free and responsible human beings who are themselves part of creation, must come to understand the danger that lack of respect for and irresponsible use of the ecosystems poses to the future of humanity.\textsuperscript{194} Nahoshon W. Ndungu cautions, “The future of humanity rests on how best it handles the environment.”\textsuperscript{195} The youth must be educated to confront responsibly the reality of the ecological crisis and its moral dimensions.\textsuperscript{196}

Stewardship requires that the youth assume responsibility for helping to sustain creation. Stories of creation’s origin and importance abound in the oral folklore of the traditional people of Mbarara.\textsuperscript{197} Unfortunately, early missionaries labeled these stories as “pagan myths,” an attitude still held by some youth ministers. Christopher Uhl, an environmental scientist, affirms the value of such myths: “Myth is the ancestor of science: it is our first fumbling attempt to explain how things happen. It is also the forbearer of philosophy and religion in that it tries to explain why things happen.”\textsuperscript{198}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item John S. Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 92-99.
\item Christopher Uhl, \textit{Path to a Sustainable World: Developing Ecological}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Judeo-Christian creation story can be understood best through comparison with Near East myths such as the Babylonian epic poem *Enuma Elish* and earlier motifs from Egyptian creation stories. These traditional creation myths and the four Judeo-Christian accounts of creation in the Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomic and Priestly Traditions bear obvious similarities. Traditional Africans also have creation myths. Meaningful youth ministry will encourage young people to grasp the essential message in traditional myths and in the Judeo-Christian accounts of creation: God created all things and human beings, portrayed as holding a position of responsibility as intellectual beings created in the divine image and likeness, are charged by God to be responsible, harmonious cohabitants with all creation.

Stewardship emphasizes human responsibility toward God and toward the universe, creates ecological consciousness, and a spirit of social activism toward...
protecting the ecosystems. A starting point for youth to learn about their role as stewards of creation is the Book of Genesis:

> God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

> God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.”

(Gn 1: 28-29)

Some misinterpret this passage as sanctioning the selfish and irresponsible exploitation of creation. In “Creation and Ecology,” Anne M. Clifford cites an essay by the late 1960s historian Lynn White, Jr. to demonstrate this misconception:

> Western world has determined that nature exists in order to serve humans….By emphasizing the dominion of humanity over nature, Christianity has sanctioned an exploitative ethic….Christianity has thereby fostered science and technology as instruments of that exploitation. Since both pose manifold threats to the environment and possibly even to the existence of the planet, it follows that Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt for our ecological crisis.

Ndungu views those who exploit nature irresponsibly as demonstrating abuse of the biblical message and calls human beings to responsible environmental stewardship:

> The Genesis account portrays humanity as having been mandated by God to have “dominion” over the rest of creation. This biblical view of humanity’s supremacy has been abused and has contributed to the destruction of both fauna and flora

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204 Uhl, *Path to a Sustainable World: Developing Ecological Consciousness,* 322-330.

over the years. In view of the environmental crises facing humanity, this doctrine is being interpreted anew to imply that human beings were expected by God to be “responsible stewards of the environment.”

Involving youth in activities on how to read the vital signs of the Earth can help them understand critical ecological concerns and inculcate in them a greater desire to be good stewards and healers of creation. Christopher Uhl proposes monitoring the health of important life-forms such as forests, trees, and songbirds, and tracking changes in soil and water. Uhl connects the health of the environment directly with human health.

Good stewardship begins with understanding that the future depends on present actions. Pope John Paul II issued this forceful warning: “WE CANNOT INTERFERE IN ONE AREA OF THE ECOSYSTEM WITHOUT PAYING DUE ATTENTION BOTH TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH INTERFERENCE IN OTHER AREAS AND TO THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

Basing his message on convictions drawn from Revelation, John Paul II adds:

These biblical considerations help us to understand better THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN ACTIVITY AND THE WHOLE OF CREATION. When man turns his back on the Creator’s plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of created order. If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace: “Therefore the land mourns and all who

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207 Uhl, Path to a Sustainable World: Developing Ecological Consciousness, 126.

dwell in it languish, and also the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and even the fish of the sea are taken away.”

As integral members of creation, human beings cannot ignore the call to be stewards of the earth. With the ubiquitous signs that the planet is ailing comes responsibility. Christopher Uhl reports that the best science has established that Earth is in the early stages of mass extinction, a crisis that calls for sharing information. He calls on humans to speak up for other-than-human beings that have no voice. He urges that the habitats of Earth’s species be preserved in order to protect biological diversity. He advocates a rapid shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy resources in order to avoid further disruption of Earth’s climate. He urges industrialized nations to stop producing chemicals that may cause cancer or disrupt endocrine systems to preserve human health and the well-being of the biosphere.

Nations worldwide convene regularly to discuss the viability of the planet and its inhabitants. The youth, like other citizens everywhere, must be aware of anything and everything they and their families can do to preserve, conserve and reuse the gifts of the earth. They should realize that even their smallest efforts, when added to those made by hundreds of others, can make a difference in preserving the Earth’s resources for their fellow men and women and for all living things, as God charged human beings to do.

209 Ibid., No. 2-5.

210 Uhl, Path to a Sustainable World: Developing Ecological Consciousness, 179-200.

211 Ibid., 220.
Responsible stewardship aims at promoting an understanding of the reciprocal relationship among God, human beings and all creation. God’s example of goodness should motivate each person to share goodness with his or her fellow human beings and with all of creation; this is the message of the “Our Father.” The call to stewardship is a call to harmony with all creation, including human society. In his “Prayer for Peace,” “The Canticle of the Sun,” and “Mother Earth,” St. Francis of Assisi, Patron of Ecology, suggests how all creation is a family—a unity of humanity, the earth and the cosmos. Their everyday surroundings provide young people with a living example of relating to the environment and awakening in themselves ecological consciousness and moral responsibility toward sustainable stewardship and a peaceful society. Uhl offers a helpful personal insight into the relationship between the everyday environment and society:

Over the years, I have come to see that how I perceive the world and my place in it determines, to a significant degree, my actions. For example, if a tree is simply a resource—a commodity to be harvested—then I will treat it shabbily. If on the other hand, I perceive the tree as a fellow being with its own unique life force and integrity, I will be more inclined to treat it with the same respect that I expect to receive from others.


214 Ludwig, 179-181.


216 Uhl, Path to a Sustainable World: Developing Ecological
A holistic view of stewardship includes awareness that the universe and its resources have been created for the common good. The call to stewardship, therefore, is a call to work for justice and peace. The Second Vatican Council II teaches that true peace in the world “results from the harmony built into human society by its divine founder, and [is] actualized by men as they thirst after ever greater justice” (GS 78). Social justice promotes the solidarity of the human race as a common family:

The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.217

Learning about being good stewards of creation, includes learning how “love for others, and especially for the poor, is made concrete by promoting justice.”218

Human poverty and abuse of the natural environment are often directly linked; addressing one problem is vital for addressing the other. For example, in the Archdiocese of Mbarara about 90% of the population do not have electricity and depend on firewood for cooking and heating. It is difficult to tell them to preserve trees, since that is their only source of fuel and building materials. Poverty leads people to fight each other, making them

Consciousness, 105.


218 John Paul II, Centesimus Annus: One the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum, No. 58.
vulnerable targets for opportunists who benefit from their impoverished situations. It is for this reason that in most countries of Africa, many wars are proxy wars. Greed leads people to be segregated by color, sex and religious affiliations. War, poverty, racism, lack of employment opportunity, or lack of access to resources are divisive and immoral. Unfortunately, they are all too familiar to the youth of Mbarara.

Stewardship calls for an understanding that every person who lives on Earth depends upon it, and that their relationship to one another requires them to promote basic human dignity through social justice. It calls for transparent solidarity motivated by love and charity to build the world as a common family. Pope John Paul II calls for breaking up the structures of sin in society:

The world divided into blocs, in which instead of solidarity imperialism and exploitation hold sway, can only be a world structured in sin. Those structures of sin are rooted in sins committed by individual persons, who introduced these structures and reinforced them again and again. One can blame selfishness, shortsightedness, mistaken political decisions, and imprudent economic decision; at the root of the evils that afflict the world there is – in one way or another – sin.219

Some question whether ecology and stewardship belong within systematic theology and youth ministry or whether they are in the realm of science. Anne Clifford finds no contradiction between science and theology; she considers the two as partners that must take each other seriously. She maintains that “creation theology will likely require both reflection on scientific cosmology and create praxis that incorporates socio-political goals to use science and technology to replenish renewable resources for the

219 John Paul II, Solicitudo Rei Socialis: On Social Concern, No. 36.
benefit of humans and of life forms.” Therefore, the call to stewardship includes different approaches to creation, whether through philosophy, theology, or social science and history. Studying ecological foundations leads young people to understand and commit themselves to God’s bidding as stewards of creation. Stewardship includes the promotion of social justice in order to bring about the well-being and solidarity of the human family. This includes a just sharing of resources for the common good, particularly among the poor and downtrodden. Through prayerful and thoughtful discussion, the youth—individually and together—can safeguard the treasures of Earth and ensure that all creation glorifies and praises their Creator and that all people are enabled to join in that glorification and praise as members of a just and peaceful society.

4.1.2 Human Dignity: Body and Soul; Male and Female (Gn 1: 27; 2:18-25)

Human beings, male and female, are created in the image and likeness of God. Gender is integral to the natural ecology of human existence and survival. This fundamental element of theology magnifies the meaning of the human person as propounded imago Dei. Moral, ethical and social activities must reflect the distinct dignity of men and women. The concept of imago Dei, has a teleological and eschatological dimension which defines a human being as homo viator, oriented to the parousia and to the consummation of the divine plan for the universe as it is realized in history of grace in the life of each individual human being and in the history of the human race.

220 Clifford, “Creation,” 246.
The doctrine of *imago Dei* has been challenged throughout Western intellectual history. Secular humanism tended to separate the human and the divine. Post-Hellenistic interpretations of the nature of human, rationalism and empiricism generated philosophical speculation that denied the relationship between the human person and God. Because these philosophical influences continue, youth ministers must help youth to understand their inherent dignity as human beings made in the image of God. Sacred scripture and Church tradition demonstrate that human beings, in communion with the Trinity, are called to share in God’s governance of creation. For Christians, the Old Testament presentation of human beings as having been created in the image of God (Gn 1:27f) is completed in New Testament teaching. The Old Testament is fulfilled with the *imago Christi*, the perfect image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb 1:3). The International Theological Commission affirms that “human persons are created in the image of God in order to enjoy personal communion with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and with one another in them, and in order to exercise in God’s name, responsible stewardship of the created world.” The Commission further emphasizes that “both man and woman are human beings to an equal degree, both are created in God’s image.” Both man and woman are commissioned to pass on that image of God, to be “fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it” (Gn 1:28). Human beings are to live out the reality that “the Creator entrusts dominion over the earth to the human race, to all

221 International Theological Commission, No. 4.

persons, to all men and women, who derive their dignity and vocation from a common
‘beginning.’”

The message of equal human dignity, regardless of gender, is not familiar in
traditional African cultures, although their natural understanding of ecology recognizes
that human beings are male and female and must live together in respect. The past attitude
that valued female children less than male children still persists. Most of the youth in the
Archdiocese of Mbarara have been raised to believe that male children, even those born
intellectually impaired or physically challenged, are superior to women. Ugandan
intellectual and Bible scholar, John Mary Waliggo declares, “The inequality,
marginalization, oppression and systematic discrimination imposed on women especially
the African women by culture, society, religion, laws and constitutions and the oppressive
patriarchal system, has greatly haunted me.” He has researched the three tools used to
repress women: the family, the tribe (culture) and the church (Catholic). Waliggo
documents the mistreatment of women in traditional culture: they are not allowed to be

223 Ibid.


225 Ibid., 1. I call the three—the family, the tribe (culture) and the Church (in our case the Catholic Church)—the three arms of female repression because traditionally these have been the hardliners in denying women their rights. Up to this day they have not fully realized that women deserve their rights to participate fully in all aspects of their (the three arms of women repression’s) lives. If women are to gain their rights and dignity, the three have to make greater efforts to accept and promote the change.
heirs of their families; they do not become heads of clans or chiefs; they are obliged to kneel when they greet men; barrenness is blamed on women, even when there is proof to the contrary; rights of widows are violated by their fathers-in-law, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; and heroic women are not remembered. Waliggo notes that colonial rulers, Christian missionaries, and local chiefs have marginalized women through “… inaccessibility to higher education; exclusion from economic and political leadership; failure to courageously and prophetically dismantle the oppressive cultural practices, customs and traditions which greatly oppressed women and failure to empower women in the Church, society and family circles.” The youth must be made aware that women are as no less gifted than men, and since all have been created with equal human dignity, women must be treated with equal respect and afforded their due rights in the family, in the Church and in society.

226 In the traditional Mbarara society, girl children are not allowed to inherit their fathers’ or paternal uncles’ property. If a man dies without a boy child to inherit the property, it will be given to the sons of the deceased’s brothers. If there is no boy in the family, they will enlist a total stranger (a friend’s boy child) to take the inheritance, leaving the blood girl children with nothing.

227 In traditional Mbarara society, when a male spouse dies, the brother is supposed to inherit the sister-in-law. In case the deceased does not have a brother, there have been cases where the fathers-in-law will inherit their own daughters-in-law (see Chapter One). For the most part, such struggles are concerned with the distribution of family property owned by the deceased’s family. There have been cases, supported by traditional customs, where widows have been defrauded of their property and sent away in cases where the widow did not have children with the deceased, or if the widow refuses to be inherited by the father-in-law or the brothers-in-law, or if the family is greedy and just wants to take the widow’s property.

228 Waliggo, Struggle for Equality: Women and Empowerment in Uganda, 74-75.
Truly harmonious living in the Archdiocese of Mbarara and in the world depends upon support of women’s emancipation as part of the prophetic mission of the Church, which would appear as an alternative, reformed community of women and men in the Church and society. Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike offers tacit signs of hope that the voices of African women are gaining momentum in securing their rights to participate fully in the struggles to restore to humanity its integrity, peace and justice. Nevertheless, she is also mindful that African women, like others in the Third World, face numerous injustices, including gender discrimination, ethnocentrism, racism, economic exploitation under the guise of cost sharing and structural adjustment programs, and manipulative strategies by which unjust regimes retain political power. She illustrates the suffering and horrific situations that many women and children are forced to endure. Waliggo encourages women everywhere to be like prophets of the Old Testament and our Lord Jesus Christ; he urges them not to keep silent in the face of injustice, but to continue raising their voices to change the Church and the society. He echoes a similar plea to African Catholic women:

My appeal to all Catholic women in Africa is to aspire for unity, solidarity and knowledge as powerful tools for empowerment. Once African Christian women refuse to be sidelined by any one and confront every problem and challenge with womanly courage like women heroines mentioned earlier, they will succeed in

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230 Nasimiyu-Wasike, “Prophetic Mission in the Church,” 190-196.

231 Ibid., 190-196.
every endeavour and transform the Catholic Church and society. This is a challenge to every woman, every Christian and every person of good will.  

Through formal education, the youth are learning that in many countries, women are treated with respect and equality. The influence of Western culture on Ugandan society at large has prompted both the youth and many adults to consider discriminatory and demeaning treatment of women as a grave injustice. As a result of these contemporary influences, the government of Uganda has given women a voice in politics by creating in every constituency parliamentary positions that must be filled by a woman. Additionally, the ministry of education has formally acknowledged that for too long, girls have received a substandard education. Affirmative action has been taken to remedy this situation by admitting girls into universities at lower scores than boys. These steps to counteract ingrained social injustice against women in Uganda also provide hope for the youth who are especially quick to perceive injustices and are eager to promote their youthful ideals. Such prototypes encourage the youths’ belief that despite their cultural longevity, social injustices can indeed be remedied.

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234 Ibid., article 32.
Waliggo proposes creating opportunities for debates on local customs and traditions that need to be modified, replaced, abolished, preserved, or promoted.\textsuperscript{235} Youth must be encouraged to work for positive change.

African youth and children are the real pillars of this 21st century. They should clearly understand these values of social justice, equality of human dignity and rights and the obligation to anyone in any position of leadership to create equal opportunities for all. It is these who should fully know in mind, soul and practice the option for the poor, the vulnerable and the oppressed is a must for a just society.\textsuperscript{236}

As the custodian of justice, the Church must address the segregation and sometimes repressive attitude toward women. By involving women in decision-making discussions and administrative roles, the Church will acknowledge their dignity as equal members. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, positive steps have been taken. Women have been accepted to train as catechists, to head faith communities, to become chairpersons at parish councils, and to act as representatives on all Archdiocesan committees.

Men and women are made for one another in body and in spirit. Created in the image and likeness of God but wounded by sin and in need of salvation, they seek wholeness through conformity with Christ, the perfect image of the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{237} Their role as human partners in creation is enhanced by the physical, intellectual and spiritual gifts that are meant to be shared with one another. Understanding

\textsuperscript{235} Ibid., article 5.


\textsuperscript{237} John Paul II, \textit{On the Dignity and Vocation of Women}, No. 25.
the dogma *imago Dei* and recognizing that they and all members of the human race are created in the likeness of God can empower them to nurture and protect all forms of life, both environmental and human. As they enter the adult world, the youth must accept their duty to eliminate the repressive elements of traditional culture and the oppressive policies of civil societies, wherever they exist. As members of the Body of Christ, they must understand that they are called to a stewardship that respects and advances the equality of all human beings, regardless of color, gender or social status.

4.1.3 The Physiological and Psychological Characteristics of the Youth

Ecology is a major factor in the nature and nurture of adolescents. At that stage of development young people aged sixteen through twenty-two face significant challenges as they transition from childhood to adulthood. The journey from puberty to maturity can be the most difficult and confusing of life’s passages. Eunice Karanja Kamaara, an East African theologian explains that “puberty, which is the physical indication of the onset of youth, is experienced at different ages in different parts of the world, due to differences in climate and diet.”

She details the physical, emotional and spiritual changes characteristic at this stage of life:

Both boys and girls grow big and tall. They also develop pubic hairs around their genitalia and under their armpits. Boys begin growing a beard too. Girls develop breasts, enlarged hips and they also begin to have monthly menstruation, accompanied with inner physical and hormonal changes. Boys on the other hand develop bigger muscles, enlarged penis, break their voices and begin to experience wet dreams. [They] become aware of their transition to adulthood, thus they begin to imagine that they are ready to indulge in sexual

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activities. At this stage, these adolescents also experience mental re-awakening of personal independence from people in authority such as parents, teachers and other figures of authority. The adolescents become rebellious and prefer to be independent to make personal decisions.

[They] … may experience various emotional changes such as attraction to the opposite sex. They may feel over confident and to the extreme, shy.

[They] begin to ask themselves the ultimate questions of human existence namely: Where did I come from? What is my purpose in life? What is my ultimate destiny? They also become critical about the meaning of life.\footnote{Ibid.}

Kamara’s observations about changes during adolescence apply to the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. Generally, African youth mature within the same age range as do other young people in the Western world. The challenges of the developing world such as the lack of basic necessities like safe water, food and other amenities plentiful in developed countries does not affect maturation. Typically, youth aged sixteen through twenty-two are going through adolescence.

Craig Dykstra, an experienced American youth minister acknowledges that often, “Adolescence involves struggle, sometimes quite serious struggle.”\footnote{Craig Dykstra, “Agenda for Youth Ministry: Problems, Questions, and Strategies,” in Michael Warren, ed. \textit{Reading and Resources in Youth Ministry} (Winona, MN: St. Mary’s Press, 1993), 72.} The tensions that young people experience as they search for adult identities, often find outlet in rebellious attitudes, emotional storms, and expressions of territoriality or unrealistic confidence. Unseemly or inappropriate behavior cannot be sanctioned, but it must be understood within the ecological context of adolescent upheaval. Parents, especially, need to be aware that adolescence is not “the end of the world.” During this stage, challenging
questions and behavior must be accepted as a normal part of life, no different from
crawling, walking or any other experiences characterized by trial and error. As Michael
Warren warns, “An easy way to escalate a crisis into a disaster is to blow it out of
proportion.”

Therefore, he proposes:

If we are to understand the general behavior problems of the young people with
whom we deal – their idiosyncrasies, fads and moods – we have to keep in mind
that they are in a process of growth. They are on their way to somewhere. The
key question is: where are they going? I believe that they are on their way to
maturity. This road to maturity, however, is never even; it has its ups and downs.
This fact is known to all of us, but too often we do not apply what we know to the
situation of the young people with whom we deal.

At this time of life the youth are developing a deeper identity, a conscious
relationship with themselves as well as with others. They are becoming aware that as
individuals they deserve privacy, independence and respect. They are becoming both
conscious and self-conscious of their sexuality and feel the urgency for social-cultural
definition in areas of gender, character and dominion. In traditional Mbarara society,
parents, aunts, and uncles were always available to answer the adolescents’ questions and
offer advice. Today, since so many attend schools far from home, young people rely on
their peers for advice and answers to their problems. Although today’s adolescent youth
may not ask for help, most appreciate nonjudgmental adults as mentors in their search for
adult identity and new understanding of their relationships to others.

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242 Ibid., 40.
4.1.4 The Distinctiveness of Each Individual Youth

Human responsibility requires that the youth must come to understand themselves as unique, autonomous individuals who are responsible for their actions. They must recognize who they are in their ecology as members of the human race, but that they are unique in the eyes of their Creator. Each was born an individual and is saved as an individual, distinct from family members, peer groups, Church members and society in general. Christian anthropology affirms the uniqueness of each human being. It encourages the individual to realize his or her personal potential through character development and the use of individual talents for the betterment of all. Such knowledge will encourage in youth a greater sense of responsibility for their lives and a deeper understanding of their human and spiritual destinies.

At this time in their lives, many youth tend to measure self-worth in terms of how well they fit into groups of their peers. The adolescent who acts as an individual runs the risk of rejection by the group. The youth must learn to appreciate that human dignity does not depend on the opinions of others. Although each person has social, intellectual, economic, physical, and even spiritual limits and possibilities, he or she is “a free moral master of action.” Young people, who are naturally introspective and self-reflective, must be encouraged to feel comfortable with who they are—individuals created body and soul in the image and likeness of God. They are “derived from God and indestructible” (CCC 1699-1715), that is, inalienable in a sense that it can never be lost

\[^{243}\text{Ibid., 49-67.}\]
and they are capable of self-determination\textsuperscript{244} and self-fulfillment\textsuperscript{245} through their moral and physical actions.

Youth must appreciate their uniqueness and autonomy, but not lose sight that they are meant to live as part of a larger human community.\textsuperscript{246} The Second Vatican Council Fathers exhort education toward responsibility and participation:

\begin{quote}
To achieve a greater fulfillment of their duties of conscience as individuals toward themselves and toward the various groups to which they belong, [adolescents] may have to be carefully educated to a higher degree of culture through the employment of the immense resources available today to the human race. Above all we must undertake the training of youth from all social backgrounds if we are to produce the kind of men and women so desperately needed by our age – men and women not only of high culture but of great personality as well (GS 31).
\end{quote}

Traditional culture has provided Mbarara young people with a strong basis for understanding their dual nature as individuals, yet as members of a corporate community that includes the spiritual and the physical. They are members of the spiritual world of God, deities, the living-dead, the living and those not yet born. John S. Mbiti explains this view:

\begin{quote}
In traditional life, the individual does not exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group. The physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society. The final stage is reached when he dies and even then he is ritually incorporated into the wider family of both the dead and the living. … Only in terms of other people
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{244}Wojtyla, \textit{Person and Community}, 187-195, 228-232.

\textsuperscript{245}Ibid., 232-236.

\textsuperscript{246}Ibid., 136-158.
does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities toward himself and toward other people. … What happen to the individual happens to the whole group, and what happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: “I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.” This is a cardinal point to understanding the African view of man. \textsuperscript{247}

The youth of Mbarara who have left home to be educated or who are working in urban areas away from their families are exposed to an increasing emphasis on individual needs and personal self-satisfaction. To the uninformed, these attitudes may seem appealing, but they offer only the emptiness of a self-centered life. Therefore, adolescents struggling to transition into adulthood need to understand their true purpose in life. It is essential that they receive guidance that will enable them to integrate their traditional views of the human person with Biblical revelation. They must be empowered with the knowledge that they are a unique and integral part of God’s plan of creation. Therefore, they must be encouraged to discover personal psychological, intellectual, emotional and spiritual endowment by learning how to put their talents to use as stewards of themselves, their physical surroundings and their fellow members of the human family.

4.2 The Family and the Youth

4.2.1 A Nucleus Community

The family is the nucleus of human life. It forms the ecology of human generation and propagation. It is a community of persons and the smallest social unit. \textsuperscript{248}

\textsuperscript{247} Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 108-109.

\textsuperscript{248} John Paul II, \textit{The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World},
Within the family, human beings are born, nurtured, and develop early character formation. Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) explains the theology of the family that forms the foundation of youth ministry:

The organic development of the theology of the family consists in deeper understanding of the interrelation and inter dependencies that occur between the reality of human procreation, or the transmission of life and the community of persons that ought to form around this reality, a reality that is in each stance extra-ordinary and yet in another sense very ordinary.\(^{249}\)

In traditional Mbarara culture, the family unit has always been revered and its members cherished as necessary partners for survival. Yet, social, cultural and economic shifting, and the influence of new religions has begun to unravel traditional family life.\(^{250}\) Modern attitudes challenge traditional values such as the permanence and indissolubility of marriage. Single parenthood is becoming common. Economic pressures force some parents to leave their homes for jobs in urban areas, resulting in long periods of separation from their families. The recent urban migration trend among job-seekers has generated social pressures previously unknown in the tribal family experience. Those accustomed to rural living with their kin are now exposed to a multitude of new social groups and a mixing up of different tribes, resulting in lack of emphasis on any of them.\(^{251}\)


\(^{250}\) See Chapter One (1.3.1). The traditional Mbarara family is not “perfect,” but it has values like the bond between family members, respect of children for the elders, especially their parents, informal education and training of children in social, cultural and religious values.

\(^{251}\) Nehemiah M. Nyaundi, “The contemporary African Family in Light of
With the growing trend toward formal education, children often leave their homes at an age when families ordinarily would have been teaching them the traditional values of their culture. Parents and other family members are experiencing an intellectual gap between themselves and their formally educated children. This contrast becomes even greater when children become proficient in the use of TVs, radios, and the Internet, and are well-traveled.

Socio-economic, religious and political shifting has presented the traditional family in Mbarara with a multitude of challenges. Summarizing some of them in “The Contemporary African Family in Light of Rapid Social Change Theory,” Nehemiah M. Nyaundi concludes that the African family is experiencing a “population increase, tendency toward secularization, rise in literacy rates, growth of individualism, the rise of urban living, advancement of communication infrastructure and the growth of industries.” All of these external influences are degrading the traditional concepts that once defined the role of the family.

Although societal changes may impact family life, the fundamental reality of what constitutes a family remains unchanged. Preservation of family life is a part of God’s divine plan. The family plays a fundamental role in bringing human beings into

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252 Ibid., 73.

the world. Within the family, members learn about God and experience communion(187,832),(856,848) through cooperation, intimacy and the giving and receiving of love. The family is the most basic component of social life, the fundamental cell of society and the first school of life. Families nurture, build character and integrate their members into society. Youth need to value and uphold the ideals of family life. They must learn what it means to participate fully as a member of a family, in anticipation of the time when they, too, may be called to create and nurture families of their own.

4.2.2 The Role of Parents in the Family

Parenthood is fundamental to family life. As co-creators with God, bringing new life into the world and cooperating with God’s plan, parents ensure the continuity of the human race. Parental responsibilities include loving, nurturing and teaching their children. These duties are explained in the *Compendium Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

Parents, in virtue of their participation in the fatherhood of God, have the first responsibility for the education of their children and they are the first heralds of the faith for them. They have the duty to love and respect their children as persons and as children of God and to provide, as far as is possible, for their physical and spiritual needs. They select for them a suitable school and help them with prudent counsel in the choice of their profession and their state of life. In particular, they have the mission of educating their children in the Christian faith.

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255 Ibid.

As teachers of their children, parents are to give good example (CCC 2223) and initiate them into the faith (CCC 2226). Inherent in these tasks is the obligation of husband and wife, as parents, to live a life of marital fidelity and committed love. As the Compendium notes, their lives are to reflect the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons.\footnote{257} The role of parents is never easy and many good parents must overcome numerous obstacles. In his exhortation, The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World: Familiaris Consortio, Pope John Paul II identifies conditions that trouble families:

These include particular circumstances like families of migrant workers; the families of those obliged to be away for long periods, such as members of the armed forces, sailors and all kinds of itinerant people; the families of those in prison, of refugees and exiles; the families in big cities living practically speaking as outcasts; families with no home; incomplete or single-parent families; families with children that are handicapped or addicted to drugs; families of alcoholics; families that have been uprooted from their cultural and social environment or are in danger of losing it; families discriminated against for political or other reasons; families that are ideologically divided; families that are unable to make ready contact with the parish; families experiencing violence or unjust treatment because of their faith; teenage married couples; the elderly, who are often obliged to live alone with inadequate means of subsistence. (FC 77)

Unfortunately, this description of dysfunctional life characterizes many families in the transitioning society of the Archdiocese of Mbarara.

Parents are the heads of the family, a community of persons. These include the husband and wife, their children, and their extended relatives. The first task of parents is to ensure that their family faithfully lives the reality of communion in a constant effort to

\footnote{257} Ibid., No. 18.
develop an authentic community of persons. Parents seek to foster a smooth interaction among all family members and just as importantly, a smooth relationship of the family with the school, the Church and the community. To deal effectively with youth aged sixteen through twenty-two, the parents must recognize that young people’s cravings for independence and emancipation are normal, and must guide them to understand the responsibilities that accompany adult freedoms. In keeping with their youths’ imminent maturation, parents must help them discover appropriate modes of adult-like interaction with family members, the Church and society. Pope John Paul exhorts parents:

You must therefore help adolescents discover, through appropriate formative programs, the new and different perspective of a freedom called to love in truth. You must yourselves be a living sign that true happiness consists in responding to the divine call and giving yourselves without reserve to God and to your brothers and sisters. (Trieste, May 1, 1992).

Finally, as children’s first and most fundamental teachers, parents communicate more effectively through actions than through words. Ideally the role of parents should be facilitated by the willingness, cooperation and obedience of the youth themselves. But parents must not relinquish their responsibilities to teach and nurture, even if challenged by their adolescent children’s outspokenness and newly-emerging independence. At stressful times, parents’ steadfastness provides the youth an enduring lesson on the meaning of parenthood and assures them that their parents, like God, will never give up on them. Mothers and fathers never cease being parents. Whatever their

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258 Ibid., No. 18.

259 John Paul II, Private Prayers of Pope John Paul II: Words of Inspiration, 143.
children’s adult social status, parents never stop seeing them as their sons and daughters. Against challenging social influences, parents provide bulwarks that protect the family’s sacredness. They guide first steps and continue to nurture their children to become responsible, productive adults whose own conduct will attest to the values of family life.

4.2.3 The Influence of Siblings

Brothers and sisters who share the same parents and family environment are integral to one another’s personal development. They should be guided to love and respect one another and appreciate one another as immediate companions, playmates and partners in family life. Siblings who respect one another internalize the dictum that “filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters” (CCC 2219). Although born to the same parents, each sibling makes a unique contribution toward building family communion. Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla) attests, “In a certain sense, every human being is a ‘world’ – microcosm – unto himself or herself … because of the human being’s own unique finality, or autoteleology, which characterize the level and dynamism of a personal being.”

While affirming the rationality and freedom of the human person, Wojtyla emphasizes the family’s function as “a place in which each human being appears in his or her own uniqueness and unrepeatability.” Siblings are called to a community of love and life – the social reality of the human family. The home is incubator of virtuous behavior which in turn forms society at large.

\[260\] Wojtyla, Person and Community, 317.
In traditional African society, siblings are responsible for teaching one another the basics of life: the necessary everyday skills and the practice of love and forgiveness. They openly discuss issues concerning family life and learn to listen to one another with mutual respect. From childhood they are taught the reality that family life is an initiation into life in society (CCC 2207). During childhood, brothers and sisters learn that their siblings are imperfect human beings. Sibling rivalry is as old as the Bible (Gn 4: 3-10); playful roughhousing can escalate to aggression, and perception of unfair treatment can pit one sibling against another. Through calm, understanding, and impartial parental interventions, children learn how to restore and maintain family harmony. As the principal school of social values, the family teaches siblings solidarity, sustainable fraternity and sorority, conflict resolution and forgiveness. These are the benchmarks for harmonious family life and for productive adult life in society.

4.2.4 The Role of the Extended Family and Home Environment in Shaping the Youth

The extended family includes, in addition to the nuclear family of father, mother and children, grandparents, uncles and aunts and their children and grandchildren, and other blood relatives. The extended family provides the nuclear family with additional role models, teachers and benefactors.

In traditional Mbarara society, the extended family plays a vital role in the raising of children. Extended families and friends of the family take on the responsibility of caring for orphaned children. They are either supported in the home left to them by their deceased parents or, if unable to live by themselves, the children are taken into their

\[261\] Ibid., 316.
own homes and raised with their own children. Members of the extended family, including friends as well as blood relatives, are given the same respect and importance as those of the nuclear family. Through stories, riddles and taboos, African children learn which punishments befall those who fail to respect the extended family’s members. On the other hand, to be worthy of respect the elders must be caring and appropriate models. This concept is reflected in the saying, “Ekitinisa ky’Omukuru akyehereza omu bato”, or “The respect expected by the elder must depend on how he or she respects the young.” As explained in Chapter One, extended family members act as fountains of knowledge, historians, and counselors, while aunts and uncles play vital roles in the rites of passage and initiation. Grandparents and great-grandparents not only shower the children with gifts, but they also use every available opportunity to share their wealth of wisdom and life skills. In some cases where Catholic parents have become lax, extended family members have taken the initiative to have the children baptized or to assume their catechesis to prepare them for First Communion and Confirmation. In such instances, these extended members act as the family conscience through their living witness to the faith.

Finally, as Wojtyla notes, “The strength of a family bond has a natural character” and the interactions of the extended family can be indispensable in promoting the purpose of the nuclear family, which he extols: “No other existing or possible social bond has such a basic and strong claim in the areas of procreation, personalistic and communal function as the family.” Wojtyla’s observations apply to the traditional

\[\text{\textsuperscript{262}}\text{Ibid., 342.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{263}}\text{Ibid.}\]
society of Mbarara as they do to all societies, since human beings—except in highly irregular circumstances - are born and raised in nuclear families, at least up to the ages when they begin to attend school. Nevertheless, the societal shifting taking place in the Archdiocese of Mbarara indicates that many other forces have come into play concerning human character formation.

Families shape their children’s moral, intellectual and religious character. In the nuclear as well as in the extended family, the youth first experience a balanced society and are initiated into association with their fellow human beings in civil society and as members of the people of God.

4.3 The Church and Youth Ministry

4.3.1 The Eucharistic Community and the Youth

As the soul of human society, the Church has the right and responsibility to proclaim the way of salvation and teach its members how to attain the fullness of life, thus forming the ecology of religious growth. In the education of youth, the Church is a partner with the family, the schools and society. Catechesis is the educational method utilized by the Church since its beginning. The Vatican II Council Fathers underscored the function of the Church in education as the:

In the exercise of its functions of education the Church is appreciative of every means that may be of service, ....catechetical instruction....educational media which belong to the patrimony of men and which make a valuable contribution to the development of character and to the formation of men. These it seeks to ennable by imbuing them with its own spirit. Such are the media of social communication (Decree on Mass Communication 13-14), different groups devoted to training of mind and body, youth associations, and especially schools (GE 4).
The Church can reach the youth effectively through youth ministry. Catechetical instruction and other applicable learning measures promote the moral and religious education of the young. Vatican Council II exhorts, “the Church is a mother under an obligation, therefore, to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ” (GE 3). It promotes a well-balanced human personality; it creates a spirit of liberty and charity; and it acknowledges the wisdom of educating children through partnership with families (GE 7, 8, 11).

4.3.2 The Church Hierarchy and Their Relation to the Youth

The Church hierarchy includes bishops, the head shepherds of the local Churches, assisted by the priests and deacons who minister to the people of God in parishes, schools and other environs. Youth ministry should be a priority for the hierarchy because the youth are the vibrant promise of a future and if they are lost, the Church loses its promise and growth. Every parish and institution where youth gather should be assigned a chaplain. In their words and deeds, the clergy must exemplify Jesus Christ, who has called them to a priesthood of service. The youth must be taught to respect the members of the hierarchy and understand their role in promoting the social, intellectual, moral and religious development of young people.

Unfortunately, adolescents often resent authority, and may fail to appreciate or respect the hierarchy. Furthermore, they may avoid the liturgy because they find church services are boring and irrelevant. As mentioned in Chapter Two, because many parishes and their priests are struggling for survival, youth ministry is not given a high priority. These attitudes may reflect the failure of some members of the hierarchy to adjust to the times. Many clergy view the youth as troublesome and do not appreciate
what they might contribute to the faith community; they may remain aloof and even refuse to implement youth ministry programs in their parishes. However, as Pope John Paul II explains the organic link between the civilization of love and the family, “If the first ‘way of the Church,’ is the family, it should also be said that the civilization of love is also the ‘way of the Church.’”

The clergy are called to promote the dignity of every human person as created in the image and likeness of God. Members of the hierarchy are obligated to create a communion of love and truth among the people of God, including the youth, the present and the future of the Church. Through cooperative and interactive education with families, schools and the community, Church leaders of the Archdiocese of Mbarara can empower the youth to discover their personal gifts and use them to promote the life of the Church.

4.3.3 The Religious (Men and Women) and the Youth

In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, religious men and women (sisters and brothers) serve the Church community as teachers, physicians and catechists (see Chapter Two) and do form an ecology of growth for the youth. Most importantly, from the perspective of this dissertation, many of them are engaged in the noble work of educating the youth and shaping their lives.

Religious brothers and sisters head and staff most of the Catholic educational institutions in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, and therefore have direct contact with many of the adolescents. As educators they provide the youth in their care with

intellectual, moral and religious instruction. They also schedule the curriculum and extra-curricular activities, and provide other resources through the schools. Their commitment to education provides young people with lifelong benefits. In the hospitals, health centers and clinics of the Archdiocese, religious men and women work as physicians, nurses and counselors. Many of the youth seek them out for treatment and advice. Chapter Two detailed the activities of the Sisters of Our Lady of Good Counsel and other organizations that operate the dispensaries and clinics as well as archdiocesan Formation Centers. In houses throughout the archdiocese, many religious men and women work as farmers, social workers and parish catechists. During their school holidays, some students work for these religious to earn pocket money or tuition.

Some of the religious men and women ministering to the youth work independently from the Archdiocese Youth Office. As collaborators in youth ministry, these brothers and sisters need to coordinate their efforts with Archdiocesan guidelines in order to achieve maximum effectiveness. The Archdiocese needs to value their efforts and seek to draw upon the best of their approaches, too. Cooperation among all who work with the youth will ensure a consistency of theological and ecological foundations in pursuing the one goal of helping the youth achieve self-fulfillment as individuals and as members of the Church and society.

4.3.4 Trained Catechists and Lay Extra-Ordinary Ministers in the Growth of the Youth

Catechists and lay extra-ordinary ministers are married men and women who serve the Church faithful. Catechists, regarded as leaders in their communities, are an
essential component to the ecology of youth development. They must have at least a secondary education and be in good standing with the Church. At St. Kalemba Catechists’ Training Center, they spend months—sometimes years—studying theology, liturgy, scripture, homiletics and pedagogy. They also receive training in sociology, philosophy, anthropology and practical skills like music, social organization, and even manual work. This training prepares them properly for approaching youth ministry in the ways that this dissertation is advocating. In other words, catechists and extra-ordinary ministers are being formed in comparable theological and ecological foundations and will seek to apply the knowledge to the youth.

As leaders in the practice of the faith, catechists have direct bearing on the ecology of religious formation for the youth. Depending on their level of training, they may preside over services in parishes, Eucharistic Centers and Hiikas, Emigongo (Basic Ecclesial Communities). In addition to presiding over Sunday services, catechists offer counseling and attend the poor, the sick and the orphaned where they are assigned (see Chapter Two).

Extra-ordinary ministers are trained at the parish level to assist catechists with distributing Holy Communion, mobilizing the faithful, and instructing the catechumens. Catechists and extra-ordinary lay ministers affect the youth at every level of their lives. They instruct those preparing for the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation and even Matrimony. During routine visits to families and schools they interact with the youth. Because of their frequent contact with the youth, catechists and extra-ordinary lay ministers can be an effective means of communicating the significance of the theological and ecological foundations in young people’s lives. As married people,
often raising children of their own, they have an added advantage in being able to relate to
the youth. Most importantly, the actions and words of catechists and extra-ordinary lay
ministers provide living models of faith in action and witnesses of effective adult service to
the Church.

Finally, in reality, the lay faithful are involved in the lives of the youth more
than clergy. Also in these times when the clergy are few and must devote much of their
time to sacramental and administrative duties, youth ministry would benefit if the
archdiocese trained Catholic teachers to become catechists with a vision of making them
school chaplains. The youth office must work with the teacher training colleges and the
catechist training college to ensure that the programs for school chaplains include themes
for youth ministry focused on inculcating theological and ecological foundations. In
enrolling and training teachers to be youth chaplains in schools, the archdiocese and youth
ministry office in particular, will offer opportunities to teachers who are already trained in
instructional skills to apply them in ministering to the youth. As for the youth, they will
have access to chaplains in their schools who know how to communicate with them. The
lay teacher chaplains would refer sacramental issues and other pastoral problems that they
cannot resolve to the priests who come to the schools to administer the sacraments.

4.4 The Schools and Youth Ministry

4.4.1 Formal Educational Context and the Growth of the Youth

Schools contribute to the ecology of education for the youth by
encouraging intellectual, social and physical development. In the Archdiocese of Mbarara,
most adolescents are enrolled full time in Higher Education Institutions (HEI), Tertiary
Institutions, Teacher Training Colleges and Universities or are working toward their Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE). Higher Education Institutions (HEI) nurture intellectual faculties and develop capacity for sound judgment while encouraging an atmosphere of friendly and natural interaction between students of different beliefs and economic backgrounds. Additionally, they provide accommodations for physical activities and improving physical fitness, as well as centers for training teachers, parents, guardians, church and civil leaders.

4.4.2 School Administrators and Instructors as Fundamental in Shaping the Youth

Schools administrators and instructors collaborate to develop, implement and evaluate school curriculum and extra-curricular activities. They are responsible for creating an atmosphere that promotes the best possible ecology for student learning. As explained in Chapter One, many children in Mbarara, some as young as five years old, leave home for full-time formal schooling. Under these circumstances, school administrators and instructors have more contact with the students than their families. They provide moral and behavioral counseling and role modeling in place of parents, extended families and Church leaders. Discipline, a necessary element in family life, is essential in maintaining a well-run school, a positive learning environment and safe surroundings. The Council Fathers of Vatican Council II exhort those preparing to be instructors:

Teachers must remember that it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic Schools achieve its purpose. They should therefore be prepared for their work with special care, having the appropriate qualifications and adequate learning both secular and religious.

They should also be skilled in the art of education in accordance with the discoveries of modern times....
Possessed by charity both toward each other and toward their pupils, and inspired by an apostolic spirit, they should bear testimony by their lives and their teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ. Above all, they should work in close cooperation with the parents (GE 8).

To be effective, however, discipline must be applied with reason, compassion and consistency with the nature of the offense.

The quality of the students’ education and personal growth, for the most part, corresponds to the quality of school personnel. Administrators and instructors that have balanced intellectual, moral, and cultural values transmit a valuable legacy to their students. Quality education, “in nurturing the intellectual faculties which is its special mission, develops a capacity for sound judgment and introduces the pupils to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations” (GE 5).

4.4.3 The Academic Curriculum and Shaping the Youth for the Future

All schools in the Archdiocese of Mbarara follow a curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education of the government of Uganda. Included in the Higher Educational Institutions described in section 4.4.1, the archdiocese is home to Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Kakoba University, Kampala International University in Bushenyi, and the newly opened Saint Joseph University at Nyamitanga, Mbarara. In addition to these, are teachers training colleges, nurses and midwives training schools and vocational training centers like the institutes of public and business administration and seminaries. The rigorous curricula for all of these institutions aim at producing the best possible administrators, teachers, business persons, vocational artisans, parents and church ministers. Because the Ugandan school curriculum is purely academic, it does not address issues prevalent in society, such as the study and comparison of
religions, practical ways to provide safe water, and other elements that contribute to the circle of poverty in the developing world. This dissertation will also include a call for revisiting a school curriculum to address such issues, which affect youth ministry.

4.4.4 The Extra-Curricular Activities in the Educational Formation of the Youth

The curriculum designed by the Ugandan government is primarily academic, but it allows extra-curricular activities such as clubs, societies, sports, and community events. Extra-curricular activities further students’ physical, emotional and intellectual development while promoting character building through cooperative teamwork, and self-confidence and sportsmanship through competition. Cultural appreciation and civic responsibility are enhanced through music festivals and cultural events such as Independence Day and Heroes’ Day. Leadership skills can be honed in the organization of school events such as Career Days and Graduation Ceremonies.

In Uganda, prayer is still permitted in the schools and students may develop their faith during extra-curricular activities and youth apostolate groups. Such activities can be instrumental in students’ spiritual development under the leadership of well-prepared teachers and through visitations by youth-friendly chaplains.

Extra-curricular activities are essential to a holistic education. Through them, school administrators and instructors reach out to a diverse student population in the widest possible activities and programs. For students, these activities promote

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http://www.agakhanschools.org/uganda/akhs/curriculum.asp In the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) Curriculum, students select three academic subjects and General Paper. In Tertiary Institutions, Colleges, and Universities, students specialize in one purely academic subject or area through which they qualify for a profession.
relaxation, fellowship, self-confidence, leadership, and the kindling of previously untapped talents.

4.4.5 The School Location and Atmosphere and the Shaping of the Youth

The physical location and atmosphere of schools are important components of an ecology of learning and transformation. Mbarara is mainly rural, but most schools, especially boarding schools, are located in urban areas. Since civil administrative headquarters, churches, and trading centers are located in urban areas, the cities have amenities not found in rural areas. These include electricity, treated drinking water, good roads, telecommunication facilities, media centers and medical centers. Understandably, schools that offer a modern education must be located where such conveniences are available.

The same locations that attract schools and other important facilities also draw less desirable influences. Lured by jobs, thousands of people come to urban centers for work and recreation. Cinemas have sprung up, along with bars, discos and night clubs. School age youth inevitably come in contact with urban dwellers and their recreational activities. Many students find the atmosphere so attractive that they take every opportunity to explore urban lifestyles. Some even manage to sneak out of school and clandestinely participate in urban night life.

A small number of schools are located in the rural areas without electricity, running water and good roads. In Uganda, students are assigned by the heads of HEI to specific schools based on examination results and overall academic achievements. Those who score highest are most often posted to the best performing schools while those with lesser academic promise may find themselves in less performing schools. Some of the best
performing schools are rural. While the influences surrounding rural schools are totally unlike those of the city, many of the students who attend rural schools bring urban influences with them from the city. Some are negative, but many help to enlighten rural youth about urban life.

Whether urban or rural, school locations influence the lives of school age youth. Urban schools offer up-to-date facilities and a modern education. Although urban life can distract impressionable youth, students in urban schools benefit from being close to media centers, churches and medical facilities. Students from rural areas witness how businesses and government institutions operate, and can explore the job possibilities that await them after graduation. Students who attend rural schools do not have these same advantages, but they, too, benefit from their surroundings. Urban youth posted to rural schools often focus better on their studies.

The very settings of urban and rural surroundings teach students to evaluate and adjust to their surroundings. For the youth of Mbarara, attending school in an unfamiliar location teaches them that the world is a bigger place than the neighborhoods they came from and that just as their surroundings have an impact on them, through their education, they can have an important impact on their surroundings.

4.5 The Society: A Natural Environment for Youth

4.5.1 Culture, Tradition and the Youth

Culture and tradition define a society. Culture embodies the beliefs and values of a particular social group while tradition includes the methods used to transmit those beliefs from one generation to the next. Chapter One presented the role of culture
and tradition in Mbarara, specifically how social, religious and cultural heritages affect attitudes toward Church and civil authority, family and kin. This section explains how native culture and traditions form the ecology of socialization for people, especially the youth, and how such cultural forces are being threatened by Western social influences.

Culture and tradition have always been deeply ingrained in the lives of Mbararans. In the 1800’s, despite sustained attempts by colonizers and missionaries to eradicate traditional African culture and traditions, the culture managed to survive. Today, native African culture and traditions are once again threatened, this time by Western culture, particularly its impact on African youth. Most youth are educated and learn to interact socially in schools where Western culture is dominant. Increased literacy and exposure to a world outside Mbarara, and greater mobility has generated economic growth and wider socialization. Nevertheless, as Nehemiah M. Nyaundi points out in his theory of social change, if “the dynamism of society tends to move faster than some people can cope with, they become disenchanted and in a way feel ‘lost.’” Such changes can bewilder youth, who must straddle the traditional and modern worlds. In contemporary Africa, theologians, historians and anthropologists study local cultures to discover which practices, customs and traditions need preservation and promotion, modification, substitution, or total abolition. At the forefront of these efforts is inculturation theology.

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267 Ibid., 73.
Inculturation theology seeks to reinterpret the Christian message in terms of the cultural context and historical experience of the African people.\(^\text{268}\) It has successfully spearheaded the study of African culture and traditions, and their integration into the practices of Christianity. The positive tone of inculturation theology has helped to mitigate the intolerant and uncompromising attitudes of some distorted Christian views of traditional African culture. Today, many African scholars concentrate on African religions in order to generate a positive and inclusive understanding of African culture and traditions.

Historically, African culture and traditions regulated the dynamics of Mbarara society and were essential factors in the holistic formation of the youth. Today, despite Mbarara’s transitioning society with its modern technology and formal education, the cultural and traditional value of the family is still invaluable.\(^\text{269}\) Parents retain their roles as the first teachers of their children, and in their early formative years the youth are still shaped by the traditional cultural dynamics of interpersonal relationships with members of the extended family, neighbors and friends, and by their traditional religious beliefs.

4.5.2 Politics and the Youth

Politics is a way of organizing and leading the ecology of living and socialization for human beings, to ensure justice, peace and sustainable development. In Mbarara, politics and religion have shared a long but not always positive history. In its

\(^{268}\) Chepkwony, 45.

\(^{269}\) Ibid., 79-80.
colonial history, Mbararan converts to Anglicanism were favored with appointments to political positions. Converts to Catholicism or those who continued to practice the African traditional religion were considered unfit for political life. As Chapter One demonstrates, Catholic missionaries and colonialists strove to eradicate native cultural traditions deemed incompatible with Christianity. Professor Peter Kanyandago, a native of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, explains that some African scholars view politics and Christianity as two tools of Western civilization that push particular exploitative and dehumanizing agendas:

Despite this theology’s assertion that all human beings are equal and created in the image of God, this same theology has in theory and in practice marginalized Africans. When Africans and Westerners start from the same point that we are all created in the image of God, we reach a different conclusion at the end as to how Africans should be treated. Secondly, I would like to consider Western Christianity as a product of Western culture and civilization. For this reason, Churches may not be held responsible for the harm done by colonialism to Africa. Some people say that that was the work of the politicians, but the reality is not as dichotomous as it is presented.270

Non-Africans may question Kanyandago’s statements, yet in the first-hand experience of many African Church leaders and the faithful, they are resoundingly accurate. The fact that Western politics and Christianity were simultaneously and inseparably introduced to Africa causes many Africans to view both as tainted Western structures. Kanyandago’s statement that “Churches may not be held responsible for the harm done by colonialism in Africa” is still questionable, since in most cases religion was complicit in the decisions of

the colonialists and did not question the injustices inflicted on African culture and people. With today’s efforts at fostering inculturation theology, progress in the religious reaffirmation of African culture may well trickle down to affect attitudes towards African politics.

The formally educated youth today are qualified to enter the world of politics competently. However, improved local and international communications has led many youth to be disenchanted by the exploitive, unethical behaviors of many politicians. The youth who feel that their lives or their families’ lives have been harmed by unscrupulous politicians realize that political tyranny and exploitive political policies are perpetrated not only by dishonest politicians but also by politically ignorant or apathetic constituents. The youth must learn to value their education, religious upbringing and youthful ideals, which are effective tools for becoming active proponents of political change. As pointed out earlier, parliament already provides the youth a representative voice in politics, and the social teachings of the Catholic Church provide important principles of good political leadership. The youth hold the key to improving the political situation in Uganda and consequently, the promotion of justice and peace.

4.5.3 Ecumenism and Dialogue

The majority of the population of Mbarara is Christian, about 94%. Chapter One has discussed the genesis of the division between Catholics and Anglican believers (see 1.2.4). Since the time of colonialism, tensions and conflicts between Catholics and Anglicans have persisted. Because of the historical effects, Catholics in Mbarara view other Christian churches like Lutheran, Methodist and Pentecostal/Evangelical with the same bias as the Anglicans. Unfortunately, religious
tensions were introduced in the schools and in society out of political purposes to divide and conquer. This atmosphere of tension complicates the relationships within families and among individuals who profess Christianity and impacts Archdiocesan youth ministry. The Vatican Council II dedicates an entire decree on ecumenism: *Unitatis Redintegratio*.

The introduction of this decree on ecumenism clearly stipulates the unity of the Church: “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only” (UR 1). Youth ministry will profit greatly by enhancing the ecumenical spirit in relations among the youth. Pope John Paul II exhorts that catechesis take an ecumenical dimension, give a fair representation of other Churches, and be collaborative in presenting Christian doctrine fairly and honestly (CT 32; 33; 34). In the Archdiocese of Mbarara, where Christians of different confessions have been divided further out of political motivations, youth ministry can heal the divisions through ecumenical dialogue.

Initiatives to create unity among Christians have been taken. On the national level, the Uganda Joint Christian Council was established. This council, in turn, created a common Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus for Secondary Schools (High School); radio and television live ecumenical dialogue programs are broadcast and questions are answered; Catholic seminarians and seminarians of other Christian churches are facilitated to meet periodically to dialogue; some schools of either religion accept chaplains to visit students and arrange discussion of common ground as Christians.

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Despite the obvious value of such initiatives, ecumenical dialogue will bear abundant fruit only if the youth are taught and then facilitated to meet, discuss, and learn to respect each other as human beings made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus Christ came to bridge differences and creates unity through love. Because all followers of Jesus Christ share common spiritual needs, Christian youth need to work together.

4.5.4 Interreligious Dialogue, Tolerance and the Youth

No matter what their religious beliefs, all human beings are called to live in harmony. Interreligious dialogue can promote such harmony. Cardinal Arinze explains, “Interreligious dialogue is a meeting of people of different religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other, to try to understand that person’s religion, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration.”272 Vatican II promoted interreligious dialogue and ecumenism with renewed vigor, especially among theologians and expert representatives of the Protestant and Jewish faiths, as a means of learning from one another’s experiences of prayer and contemplation, and other expressions of faith in searching for God.273 Arinze continues that interreligious dialogue can occur at the ordinary levels of villages, schools, health centers and wherever believers of any faith come together to promote human development and liberation. These opportunities abound in Mbarara, particularly among the youth.


273 Ibid., 17-20.
Religious pluralism is spread throughout the ecology of today’s society. Cardinal Arinze’s statement that “Religious plurality is a fact”\textsuperscript{274} makes it especially necessary for the youth to learn how to deal tolerantly with the differing beliefs expressed by people they meet, particularly during their years of formal education. Their everyday encounters with youth and adults of different religious denominations provide a natural forum for religious dialogue. But as Arinze cautions, interreligious dialogue is not a study and comparison of various religions, nor a debate among the followers of different religions. Neither should it be an effort to persuade others to embrace or convert to another’s religion.\textsuperscript{275} Vatican Council II offers further precautions for the youth, advising that those who take part in interreligious dialogue must willingly and generously equip themselves with solid religious training, maturity of mind and real skill, which the nature of the project demands. In so doing the youths’ learning about other churches and religious beliefs will help them understand and access more correctly what unites Christians and what divides them (UR 67-69). Under such conditions, the youth may come to understand and bridge the sometimes exaggerated differences between churches and people of different faiths.

Finally, interreligious dialogue can profit both youth and adults. It allows participants to recognize similarities and differences in Christian doctrine, and gives them the opportunity to learn about non-Christian religious beliefs. For adults and youth alike,

\textsuperscript{274} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., 15-16.
it helps to solve religious extremism and promote the unity of human nature. Further, it can promote mutual understanding, enrichment and harmony among citizens and through the joint promotion of moral values, the development of justice and peace.

**Conclusion**

Attention to ecological foundations is essential in contemporary practical theology because these foundations form the basis for every aspect of life. The impact of ecology on human existence is found everywhere—in nature, the family, the schools, the Church and society as a whole. For the maturing youth, understanding the nature and nurture of ecology can raise their awareness of their personal and social identities and their individual roles in God’s plan of creation. Harmonious living is at the essence of a healthy ecology, confirming respect for all creation as God’s handiwork. By understanding the relationships integral to the ecology of life, the youth will learn to value their uniqueness as individuals and be empowered to discern their collective calling to foster sustainable stewardship and harmony among people and creation.

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\(^{276}\) Ibid., 21-33.
CHAPTER FIVE: A MOVE TOWARD IMPLEMENTING AN INTEGRAL AND MEANINGFUL YOUTH MINISTRY BY APPLYING THEOLOGICAL AND ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS TO THE PRACTICAL LIVES OF YOUTH

5.0 An Overview: Toward an Integral and Meaningful Youth Ministry

Theological and ecological foundations, as explained in this study, are landmarks for human development and faith living. Just as any enduring structure must stand on pillars firmly and permanently attached to a strong foundation, so effective youth ministry requires theological and ecological foundations. Any loose attachments or substandard materials in constructing the pillars or foundation will cause the entire structure to collapse. Just so, theological and ecological foundations are essential to the structural integrity of youth ministry. A structure erected with care also requires durable
furnishings if it is to be used to its best advantage. In a comparable manner, youth ministry must implement theological and ecological foundations within a particular context that includes historical, social and political factors; the layout of the Church and youth groups; and the prevailing challenges and obstacles to youth ministry. This chapter presents the practical means and methods for forming a comprehensive and meaningful youth ministry by applying theological and ecological elements in the actual context of communities and individual lives. Youth ministry can become a forum where young people of the Archdiocese of Mbarara gather to be formed and transformed into productive members of the Church and Uganda’s current social, economic and spiritually shifting society. As Michael Warren suggests, adherence to the gospel cannot remain abstract; it must be incarnated, indigenized and adapted to the community of believers.\textsuperscript{277} Diligent implementation of youth ministry based upon theological and ecological foundations will inform young people and assist them to be proactive in life and grounded in their faith.

Chapter One described the context for youth ministry within the Archdiocese of Mbarara; Chapter Two presented the administrative structure, youth groups and the challenges and obstacles facing the youth; Chapters Three and Four explained the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry. This chapter considers the content of all four chapters as they apply to forming a holistic, meaningful, practical youth ministry in the transitioning society in Mbarara. It is based on Maureen O’Brien’s prescript for ministry educators: “I contend that ministry educators committed

\textsuperscript{277} Warren, ed., \textit{Readings and Resources in Youth Ministry}, 17.
to the mode of practical theology must center on the dynamic of formation and transformation to be true to both the mission of the Christian community and to the ministers as human subjects.” Although O’Brien is referring to adult lay ministers, her concept also applies to the formation and transformation of young people. O’Brien explains formation as a process of shaping individual participants into a particular identity and mission through structured activities and the creation of a distinctive culture.

Transformation is the process of conversion and change within the individual participant, which may well include the fundamental change in identity experienced in the very process of formation. Both concepts are core to the content of this chapter, which aims to integrate into the context of the Archdiocese of Mbarara attention to theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry, and to propose practical applications for achieving the formation and thus creating conditions to foster the transformation of young people through youth ministry programs. To accomplish this goal, this chapter proposes particular persons and offices, along with activities, methodologies and the appropriate resources for achieving the intended goals for youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara.


279 Ibid.

280 As used in this chapter, “formation” refers to the instruction and formation (shaping) of the youth. “Transformation” refers to the positive effects of proper formation. The terms are being used with the awareness that although transformation cannot be achieved through particular efforts either for the youth or for ourselves, we can
Integrating theological and ecological foundations into youth ministry requires programs that young people find interesting and engaging. The social dynamics in Mbarara, which is in transition, call for application of the principles of Michael Warren, which have inspired this dissertation’s methodology. Warren proposes that the youth be given opportunities to socialize and engage in activities that they enjoy, while at the same time they are being instructed in doctrine and other life skills. Youth leaders themselves must be attuned to what interests the youth and be able to relate on a level that builds rapport with them. This is the foundation upon which youth ministry can elevate the youth to the formative and transformative levels.

This chapter explores the context and particular theological and ecological foundations and applies them to the actual programs. A youth ministry that succeeds in transforming the young will take into consideration African Traditional Religions (ATR) as a major spiritual component of the context within which theological and ecological foundations must be constructed. ATR is essential to the spirituality of the families into which the youth are born and raised; they themselves have been guided by African religions and philosophical concepts and the practical application of ATR in their ordinary lives. As described in Chapter One, ATR is part and parcel of the life of the people of Mbarara. For youth ministry to be truly meaningful to the youth of Mbarara, ATR must be included in the context of theological and ecological foundations.

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5.1 Utilizing the Current Administrative Structure of the Archdiocese and Addressing the Obstacles and Challenges for the Youth

5.1.1 The Current Archdiocesan Administrative Structure Support for Youth Ministry

Chapters One and Two described the Archdiocese of Mbarara. The administrative structure of the Archdiocese encompasses, in descending order, parishes, centers, Hiikas, and Mugongo (Basic Ecclesial Communities [BEC]). The archbishop leads the Archdiocese, assisted by parish priests (pastors), curates (associate pastors), school chaplains and catechists. Lay Apostolate councils include the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Parish Councils, Center Councils, Hiika Councils and Mugongo Councils. As explained in Chapter Two, youth ministry has its own office, which reports to the Lay Apostolate office. To be effective, however, youth ministry must operate as an independent administrative office: designing programs and soliciting funds for implementing them; free of the bureaucratic delays and sometimes refusals of the Lay Apostolate Office and working with other Archdiocesan pastoral departments to implement youth programs. This is not to advocate for the separation of the youth office from the lay apostolate office but rather, like a married couple who remains related to their parental family and yet is independent from them, the youth office should be allowed to run its own affairs, but be able to consult other diocesan offices where necessary. Additionally, youth representatives should be included on all existing Church councils. In theory, the current structure serves to establish comprehensive goals for youth ministry in the archdiocese and to provide a flow of information about the youth programs and activities at all archdiocesan levels. In terms of execution, however, the youth administrator is over-extended and lacks resources, limiting communication among the
various programs and activities. As a result, only a small number of these programs consume most of the administrator’s attention, leaving the others with little or no special notice. Another challenge comes from those youth ministers who work independently, leaving the archdiocesan youth office only limited means of proposing content and approaches to them. Holistic youth ministry must utilize the current administrative structure to disseminate information and the message of theological and ecological foundations for the entire archdiocese.

The variety of youth groups in Mbarara, as described in Chapters One and Two, offer young people the opportunity to join one or more groups that appeal to them and afford a safe, accepting environment where they can voice their thoughts and concerns. Under the present structure, some youth groups like the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and Youth Alive receive more Archdiocesan administrative attention than other traditional groups. Comprehensive and meaningful youth ministry cannot give preference to any one group. To avoid favoring one group over another, the archdiocese needs a comprehensive vision of the mission of youth ministry and an evaluation of the present initiatives, honestly and realistically assessing which are most central to implementing this mission. This evaluation must include an assessment of which youth groups are most vital and vibrant—as well as which may be dying—in order to make the most of limited resources and work for a holistic youth ministry that emphasizes unity for all youth.

Through archdiocesan sponsored workshops and conferences, the clergy, lay leaders, youth ministers and youth representatives must be given opportunities to promote their particular ministries and present their most pressing needs. These are the first essential steps that the Youth Office must take in order to recognize, incorporate and
coordinate all youth groups and ensure that their activities are consistent with the archdiocesan objectives, goals and guidelines. For example, some youth groups like Legion of Mary, Eucharistic Crusaders and Apostleship of Prayer stress the spiritual and apostolic missions above all other activities, yet they are instrumental in communicating the components of theological and ecological foundations as well as other pertinent contents of youth ministry like HIV/AIDS awareness, the effects of societal shifting and peer pressure. In this way, the current structure of youth ministry will serve better to promote the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry throughout the archdiocese.

5.1.2. Youth Ministry and Combating HIV/AIDS and Other Deadly Diseases

Although Mbarara is plagued by many widespread diseases such as malaria, dysentery, measles and tuberculosis, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is currently wreaking the most havoc in the lives of Africans. Nearly every family in Mbarara has lost a loved one to HIV/AIDS, leaving the survivors to care for themselves or other family members who have been infected. Confronted with Africa’s many diseases, especially the deadly HIV/AIDS virus, the youth are often the ones who carry the burden of caring for sick family members and being orphaned, leading them to question the presence of God in their lives. Given that HIV/AIDS also increases the complications of other contracted diseases, youth ministry must place special emphasis on teaching how HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases are communicated, and how they can be treated or prevented. Youth ministry, by showing concern for the youths’ health and well-being, will affirm their dignity as human beings, created in the image and likeness of God.
The Ugandan government is making limited efforts to educate the public about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. For the people of Mbarara, and of Africa as a whole, knowledge is the best solution to combating this and other deadly diseases. The government has promoted the ABC lesson (Abstinence, Be Faithful, Condom use) especially for the youth. The president of Uganda has advocated total abstinence for young people, explaining, “If you learn that poisonous snakes are hiding in the holes, you will be wise not to put your hands in any hole to avoid being bitten by the snake and you die.”

ABC has been effective, but dispersal of its massage is limited. Youth ministry has the obligation to pass on this message as well as informing the youth that condoms are not totally safe against the HIV/AIDS virus, that their use can encourage promiscuity, and that using them contradicts Church teaching. Youth ministry must encourage unmarried young people to practice abstinence for as long as they are single and that once married, to

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282 President Yoweri Museveni, Public speeches in the 1990’s, exact text not available.

283 In an answer to a journalist who intimated that the Catholic Church is doing a disservice to current and potential HIV/AIDS victims because of its stance against the use of condoms, in *The Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, Pope Benedict XVI suggested that the use of condoms in situations like male prostitution may indicate the beginnings of a moral consciousness. He says, “There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward recovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality.” [http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/light-of-the-world/excerpt.htm#condom](http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/light-of-the-world/excerpt.htm#condom), accessed 8/12/2011. However, it must be noted that this was in regard to protective measures against HIV/AIDS in very dangerous circumstances like male prostitution. It was not an order to all youth and adults to start using condoms. He later emphasized that condoms are not a solution to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The teaching of the Church against the use of condoms still stands.
renounce all extra-marital temptations for the sake of Christ. Youth ministry can help them understand the ABC lesson from the Christian perspective as Abstinence, Be faithful and Christ.

Some archdiocesan youth groups are actively striving to teach HIV/AIDS awareness. The mission of youth groups like the Scouts, Xaverians and Eucharistic Crusaders includes apostolic work such as reaching out to those in need, including those who are ill. Other groups such as Youth Alive and Catholic Charismatic Renewal, which emphasize the great love of Jesus Christ for each individual, have begun to include the HIV/AIDS epidemic in their instructional programs. All youth ministry groups of the archdiocese should include programs designed to teach the youth behaviors and methods to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS, how to care for loved ones infected by the virus and how to care for themselves should they become infected. Using the power of peer groups, the youth should be encouraged to spread this message to their fellow youth and to discuss courageously what they have learned about HIV/AIDS with family members and other important adults in their lives.

Youth ministry must involve all youth groups in the campaign to stem HIV/AIDS. To be effective, the message of HIV/AIDS must appeal to the youth. Contemporary rap rhythms can communicate messages of prevention or offer positive hope for those already living with HIV/AIDS. Traditional methods of learning, including oral recitations (ebyevugo), folk stories (ebitebyo, emigani) and traditional music can be effective in sharing the message with families in their homes, as well as with the community at large during weddings, funerals and festive celebrations. By infusing music, recitations, and folk stories with preventive HIV/AIDS messages and stressing the great
love of God for each person, youth ministry will connect through youths’ common language and in their important elements of natural ecology – the homes and the communities.

In Mbarara, HIV/AIDS has reached pandemic proportions because the repercussions of the disease have in some way affected nearly every family. Those who work with the youth must heed the messages of the president of Uganda, who stresses the need to combat HIV/AIDS. He warns, “When a community is attacked by an enemy they all go on top of their houses and make loud alarms. HIV/AIDS is a terrible enemy of the community. Let us not be silent about it.” In response, some urban drama clubs have produced plays to foster HIV/AIDS awareness. Youth Alive and the Youth Support Group have presented similar plays for the same purpose. Effective youth ministry must encourage all youth to be screened for HIV/AIDS, particularly to detect the disease in its earliest stages. In the campaign against HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases, youth ministry must encourage the active engagement of the youth through a variety of appealing modes. For those oriented towards drama, youth ministry can sponsor competitions for short plays that address ways of avoiding HIV/AIDS, recognizing the signs of this and other deadly diseases, and treating those who have become ill. By encouraging the youth to compose, produce and act in their own dramas, youth ministry will validate how the power of words is magnified through actions.

For the many who suffer from HIV/AIDS or other deadly diseases, sports offer a welcome distraction by bringing people together in a common convivial passion.

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284 Ibid.
In Uganda, people willingly walk long distances to observe and cheer for their teams. Michael Warren notes that “adolescence is highly expressive,” and sports provide some of the best opportunities for young people to express their emotions and display their loyalties. Through sports, youth ministry can present information about HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases. For example, under archdiocesan sponsorship, during game interludes the youth can display original posters with messages about HIV/AIDS on the field or in the stands. Sports memorabilia can be awarded for prize-winning posters. By the end of the sports season youth ministry thus would have managed to disseminate essential HIV/AIDS information to countless youths and adults. Through efforts such as these, youth ministry can achieve its goal to provide the informing and transforming messages of the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry.

In Africa, deadly diseases prey on the poor, the uneducated and those lacking medical care. Most rural people in Mbarara live in poverty, are uneducated, and lack basic necessities such as safe water, electricity and disease prevention information. For most rural families, hospitals and health centers are too expensive and too far from their homes. The archdiocese had offered limited programs through the offices of Social Services and Development’s rural outreach (Community Based Health Care [CBHC]). According to the archdiocesan director of Social Services and Development, these programs have been suspended for large portions of the population due to a lack of funds. The absence of essential healthcare programs makes youth ministry’s involvement essential. Holistic youth ministry must incorporate basic health lessons in its programs.

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285 Warren, Reading and Resources in Youth Ministry, 32.
The youth must be taught that many diseases are avoidable. For example, malaria can be avoided by eliminating stagnant standing water, the breeding ground of mosquitoes and by using netting over beds at night (mosquito nets). The youth must also be taught that infectious diseases such as dysentery and worms can be reduced through sanitation, by boiling drinking water and by wearing shoes. As a precaution against communicable diseases like tuberculosis, they need to avoid sharing drinking straws. In addition to teaching the connection between promiscuity and HIV/AIDS, youth ministry also must caution against the dangers of infection from reused tattoo needles, or reusing the same unsterilized knife during traditional circumcisions. Since healthful homegrown food is the source of livelihood in Mbarara, the youth should learn to eat a balanced diet and to eat and drink in moderation. Youth ministry’s involvement in safeguarding young people is crucial to understanding how it attends to theological and ecological foundations because it addresses young people’s physical, social and intellectual well-being, which is good youth stewardship.

In summary, the youth of Mbarara deserve reliable, trustworthy sources of information regarding HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening diseases in order to offset the general lack of information and the misinformation commonly provided by their peers or uneducated family members. For those already infected, especially with HIV/AIDS, youth ministry must provide compassion and instruction to enable those victims to live positively and continue to trust in God, their maker and destiny. The programs of youth groups like Youth Alive, Youth Association Group and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal include components of behavior change, but a protracted campaign for all youth groups in the Archdiocese of Mbarara is needed. Apostolate-based youth groups like Eucharistic
Crusaders, Apostleship of Prayer and the Focolare Movement must also instruct the youth in behavior change, the dangers of HIV/AIDS and compassion toward the victims. Active youth groups like the Scouts, YCS/YCW, Xaverians as well as music and sports groups must also be utilized as avenues to teach the youth about HIV/AIDS, to share testimonies of abstinence and faithfulness and to create youth activities geared toward awareness and support to victims of HIV/AIDS in the Archdiocese.

The traditional family structure is a natural venue for disseminating information and presenting examples of behavior change and compassion toward HIV/AIDS victims. The youth must be given special instructions on how to maximize their overall health with proper nutrition, exercise and medications. For these young people, it is especially important that youth ministry teach them how to prevent transmission of the disease. For young people in general, particularly those who come from poor families, youth ministry must provide basic instruction in proper hygiene practices. Because of their great concern for body image, the youth need guidance in proper nutrition and lifelong habits for maintaining lifelong health. Most of all, youth ministry must help to save lives that might be lost to diseases. It must provide knowledge for preventing or treating diseases, curable and incurable alike. Additionally, it must offer accurate, credible information on these topics through a variety of compelling formats.

Most importantly, in dealing with HIV/AIDS and other serious diseases, youth ministry must emphasize aspects that emanate from theological and ecological foundations such as the steadfast love of God who cares for young people, even in the face of challenges like poverty, disease, and the loss of loved ones; the need to respond to God’s goodness in sacraments, prayer and consecrated lives; the dignity of the human person and the need to
live in harmony with all creation; the respect and value of families, schools, society, as well as human relationships. In teaching about HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases prevalent in Africa, youth ministry can empower the youth to become proactive in safeguarding their own health as a means of living long, productive lives as members of society and the Church.

5.1.3 The Response of Youth Ministry to Problems Created by Peer Pressure, Popular Cultures and Disabilities

Peer pressure is a normal desire to be accepted by one’s equals. Youth are particularly susceptible to such pressure whether positive or negative. Positive peer pressure helps youth behave in accordance with social norms. Negative peer pressure encourages them to violate social norms.

As explained in 2.2.5, much of African traditional education takes place during apprenticeship, when the youth are assigned to teams according to gender and age, as well as mutual needs, interests and abilities. These groupings encourage positive, interactive peer learning and cooperation. Today, most youth who receive an education do so in settings far from home, and so gravitate toward peer groups of their own choosing. Effective youth ministry must create opportunities for youth to identify their personal goals and seek groups that will help promote those goals. Without appearing officious, youth ministry should encourage peer interaction while offering guidelines on how to evaluate whether those interactions are positive or negative. Chapter One and Two provided points of reference with examples from the African traditional societal setting that emphasized peer groups in gender and age sets during initiation. In teaching the youth about theological and ecological foundations, youth ministry should offer
activities to help build self-esteem so that each boy or girl can be faithful to his or her personal identity and values even within a group. A strong sense of self-worth is essential in promoting the courage to extricate oneself from a group that contradicts one’s personal values. Youth ministry should understand that leaving a particular group may cause a sense of “loss,” and those who have had to leave a group, should be encouraged to find more compatible companions. Peer groups that promote positive, interactive behavior often foster life-long friendships and encourage the development of mutual cooperation that helps young people become positive, proactive citizens. Youth groups like Eucharistic Crusaders, YCS/YCW, the Focolare Movement as well as other youth groups in the Archdiocese are already providing a venue for the youth to gather together, learn and enhance their self-esteem. However, adult family members, especially the parents and guardians, must ensure that the youth join and remain active members in groups that offer them opportunities to be challenged by leaders and their fellow youth and to learn skills to survive in life and be informed and transformed.

Between the ages of sixteen through twenty-two, critical years for psychological, physiological and social transitioning, many youth experience emotional confusion and isolation. Often they resort to the language of troubled youth—silence, idleness and violence (see Chapter Two). Meaningful youth ministry must reach out to those who experience difficulty in interacting with others, who avoid productive work or clash with authority figures. It must offer guidance and counseling to all youth during their transition to adulthood, especially those who feel destined for failure.

Effective youth ministry must engage families, schools, churches and the communities to provide opportunities for open communication between the youth and
adults. Regular informal forums with adults and youth will provide young people with modes for expressing their feelings and concerns. Because these occasions ensure close proximity with one another, they will allow young people not only to listen, but actually to hear one another and to discover common goals. These forums will achieve maximum success if people skilled in helping youth groups achieve peaceful resolutions facilitate them. In addition to these efforts, youth ministry must help create peer support groups that meet regularly and provide non-judgmental atmospheres where the youth’s frustrations and concerns can be vented. As a group, youth tend to empathize with one another and can be amazing problem solvers. Peer support groups under the sponsorship of youth ministry can re-energize their apathetic or disengaged members. With youth ministry’s encouragement to engage in open communication among themselves, their parents, school administrators, church and community leaders the youth acquire speaking and listening skills—important tools for peace through conflict resolution.

Popular culture—mobile telephones, FM radios, TVs and Internet Web culture, as well as videos, movies, and literature that promote Western speech, dress and behavior—has a great influence in the lives of the youth of Mbarara. Popular culture offers abundant advantages—speedy and efficient communication, intellectual enrichment, entertainment and comprehensive coverage of world news, to name a few. However, technological advancements also have negative effects, including the high costs of acquiring and maintaining modern devices, the promotion of promiscuity, social isolation, media addiction and a secular worldview bereft of God. Most Mbarara parents lack access to sophisticated technology and so cannot counsel their sons and daughters in its
use or misuse. Youth ministry must help parents to counsel the youth in using technology wisely, while cautioning them about the dangers of its misuse. Michael Warren exhorts:

> Before one can speak to a particular culture, one must know it, be familiar with it. One must attend to it, in the sense of paying attention to it and spending time trying to understand it. Youth ministry does not wish to affirm every aspect of youth culture, but it is serious about understanding all aspects. Youth ministers worthy of their calling listen to young people, listen to their music, attend the movies they find significant, read their magazines and novels. Such ministers to youth are constantly preparing themselves for speaking out of youth culture and not to it.²⁸⁶

To be relevant, youth ministers must appreciate that the technological tools of popular culture are fast becoming indispensible in the lives of the youth of Mbarara, as they are to people all over the globe. To help young people choose TV shows or movies wisely, youth ministers should encourage critical discussions of popular shows. In this way, youth ministers will become familiar with entertainment that appeals to the youth and be better able to offer constructive guidelines for evaluating what they choose to watch. Youth ministry can guide the youth in discerning the positive qualities portrayed by TV and movie actors and the types of messages inherent in TV shows or films. Since computers are becoming popular among the school-going youth, youth ministry must offer its ministers regular workshops in which they can achieve at least basic computer skills. By familiarizing themselves with computer use and terminology, youth ministers will be more relevant to computer literate youth. During small meetings in internet cafes, the youth can demonstrate their computer expertise and even teach some of these skills to their youth group ministers. Such interactive ventures will promote camaraderie among

²⁸⁶ Warren, Readings and Resources in Youth Ministry, 19.
the youth and their adult leaders. Also, activities that incorporate computer use such as researching and reporting on the lives of the saints can be enjoyable projects. Other examples might include researching sacraments or church-related topics of the students’ own choosing and then sharing their findings.

Youth ministers become the bridge in closing the educational and technological gap between the youth and the traditionally educated adults. They can help enlighten adults, especially parents, through awareness seminars focused on the popular cultures and technological tools and on modern influences in their children’s lives. With better understanding, parents, teachers, and others who deal with young people can provide unified guidelines regarding the dangers of misusing technology while empowering the youth to use technological resources constructively to enrich their lives.

To respond to the needs of all youth, youth ministry must design programs that include those with disabilities. Those who deal with special needs youth must keep in mind the Ugandan maxim “Disability is not inability” (2.2.7). All human beings are created in the image of God and deserve to be treated inclusively and with dignity. Since youth ministry in the Archdiocese of Mbarara does not have the resources to deal with all types of physical and mental disabilities, programs must be developed in cooperation with professionals who work with special needs youth. Specialized seminars should be offered for youth leaders who express interest in working with these youth. Like all young people, youth with handicaps can benefit from weekend camps, summer camps and other social events designed with input from teachers, parents and other caregivers. These settings can afford young people opportunities to socialize, create new friendships, pray and learn more about their faith and God’s love for them. Such occasions will serve to
reinforce their sense of personal worth, their conviction that they must be defined by what they can do, and their position as esteemed members of the Body of Christ.

In summary, youth ministry must study the significant issues affecting the youth and promote the means of addressing those issues through collaboration among families, schools, churches, communities and the youth themselves. The youth must use the positive energy of peer groups to avoid negative peer pressure. In reaching out, youth ministers must understand and employ the technological tools that appeal to young people. Television and radio stations can be encouraged to present programs or talk shows on current issues that are aimed at young people, their parents and educators. For example, when I was Diocesan Chaplain (1994-1997), we created a daily youth talk show on Radio Maria, which transmits to the whole Archdiocese. Professionals responded to written questions from adults and youth. At other times, young people were invited to discuss issues that concerned them on live radio talk shows. The Office of Youth Ministry must work to continue such programs on the archdiocesan radio, on local television, or both to provide immediate and accurate information to the youth, their parents and all who interact with them. Youth ministry must emphasize the positive aspects of technology and other expressions of the popular culture, which if put to good use can enrich lives and become efficient tools for disseminating the gospel. Finally, effective youth ministry must reach out to everyone, including those who may have withdrawn into self-imposed isolation or who are physically or mentally challenged. Youth ministry must remind all youth inclusively of their dignity as human beings and help them to live up to their potentials as citizens and believers in God.
5.2 The Value of Emphasizing Context in Implementing Theological and Ecological Foundations into Youth Ministry

5.2.1 Utilizing the Physical Features in Youth Ministry

The physical features of Mbarara and its historical and socio-economic factors form the context of the youth and are therefore vital to implementing theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry. As described in Chapter One, Uganda is a plateau with fertile hills and plains, many rivers, lakes and equatorial forests. These same physical features extend into Mbarara, where the climate provides sufficient annual rainfall and a comfortable average temperature of 65°F. The climate of Mbarara is favorable for outdoor youth activities throughout most of the year. Youth ministry should make the most of this opportune climate and attractive sites by offering outdoor programs like sports, camps and trips. In natural surroundings, young people can appreciate the physical beauty of their country, thank God for their environment and be encouraged to become responsible stewards of the gifts of nature.

Mbarara’s climate, with its fertile soils and abundant water sources, is ideal for raising livestock and growing year-round crops without artificial fertilizers or mechanical irrigation. For these reasons, nearly everyone in Mbarara is in some way engaged with agriculture. Even those with medical or teaching degrees or who work away from home retain ownership and involvement in their family farms. Despite the ideal agricultural conditions, however, the average annual income of full-time farmers in Mbarara is only about $200 US (Chapter One, 1.1.1). Youth ministry must work to improve young people’s future through programs aimed at raising the average annual income, beginning with practical lessons in agronomy and micro-financing and activities aimed at improving farming methods. An integral part of agricultural programs sponsored
by youth ministry should be conservation. Since most of the youth may be in HIE for the greater portion of the year, holistic youth ministry must encourage HIE administrators to invite guest speakers such as professional agronomists for assemblies or small interest groups. Young people can apply their newly gained knowledge of improved farming techniques if they are allowed to tend small gardening plots on or near the school grounds, or to plant shade and fruit-bearing trees. Since change does not come easily to older traditional people, the youth should be coached on the best methods of presenting improved farming techniques to the adult members of their families. Youth ministry must affirm the importance of farming to the economy of Mbarara and the character-building values that come from dedication to hard work. By encouraging educational opportunities that teach young people how to improve their ecology, youth ministry simultaneously can assist them in working toward sustainable stewardship of their ancestral lands as a gift from the Creator.

5.2.2 Incorporating Socio-Historic Dynamics into Youth Ministry

Socio-historical studies of the people of the Mbarara accurately present Nkore as a traditional kingdom that has assimilated the many immigrants from various African locations (1.2.3). Inclusive youth ministry must recognize the need to integrate different cultures and design ways harmoniously of assimilating various religious beliefs into those of Christianity. By including youth of different tribes, activities such as music groups, altar servers, and others will represent cross sections of the community. Youth ministry must strive to ensure that all of the archdiocesan youth groups are open and welcoming to every tribe represented in Mbarara. To be relevant to multi-tribal youth, holistic youth ministry must evaluate which of their dominant tribal values are compatible
with Christian doctrine and inculturate them into meaningful religiously oriented youth programs. For example, the Nkore people (*Banyankore*) are monotheistic and subscribe to a hierarchy of authority that gives preeminence to Almighty God, followed by the sub-deities, the living-dead, the elders in family and finally the not yet born, still in the loins of their potential parents. These traditional beliefs in one God and intercession through the sub-deities and the living-dead may, with prudence, help explain Christian belief in the one God and the intercessory relationship of the angels and saints. Examples such as this can help young people to appreciate that much of Christian doctrine is compatible with their ATR upbringing.

In Ugandan society, the traditional concepts of family and kin are founded in the originating category of person, *Omuntu* (see footnote 26). In African culture, *Omuntu* emphasizes that no one exists in isolation from others. In *Person and Community*, Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) locates the concept of “person” in Greek and Christian philosophy and theology: “In experience, the human being is given to us as someone who exists and acts.” In the African tradition the person, *Omuntu* is a self-determining individual who exists and acts with other persons. *Omuntu* is followed, in ascending hierarchical order, by the family, *Eka*; the extended family, *Ekika*; the clan, *Omuryango*; the tribe, *Oruganda*; and humanity as a whole, *Abantu*. As described in Chapter One, these fundamental concepts are ingrained in the personal and social lives of the people of Mbarara. They are inculcated in children from birth and are especially emphasized during their initiation into adulthood. Holistic youth ministry must

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287 Wojtyla, *Person and Community*, 221.
acknowledge these traditional concepts as a way of introducing and gradually incorporating the Christian doctrine of “Communion” (CCC 960; 691; 962; LG 3). The people of Mbarara, like many communities in Africa, live in a closely knit community where individuals depend on one another for survival. As Constance Banzikiza notes, “The sense of community among Africans”\textsuperscript{288} should come first among the values to be integrated into Christianity. To interact effectively with young people who by tradition are socially conscious, youth ministry must encourage community building. Therefore, youth ministry in Mbarara must provide opportunities featuring both traditional and Christian leaders who can speak in ways that will allow young people to integrate their traditional views of community with the Christian belief in the communion of the faithful.

In Uganda, marriage is central to community life. As described in Chapter One, marriage among the traditional people of Mbarara in addition to being the beginning of a covenant of love between the new couple, is also an affair between the family of the groom, the family of the bride and the whole community. John Mbiti explains, however, “Marriage is a complex affair with economic, social and religious aspects which often overlap so firmly that they cannot be separated from one another.”\textsuperscript{289} The preparation for marriage is a lengthy process involving several family interactions, exchange of gifts and religious rituals (1.3.1). Because procreation is so integrally linked to marriage,\textsuperscript{290} it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[288] Banzikiza, \textit{The Pastoral Approach To African Traditional Values of Fecundity and Marriage}, 81-85.
\item[289] Mbiti, \textit{African Religions and Philosophy}, 133.
\item[290] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
requires the total support of the community, of God, the sub-deities and the living-dead.

From their families and the extended society of adult relatives and friends, young men and women prepare for marriage through the traditional emphasis on homemaking, parenting, economic responsibility for one’s family, and fidelity to one’s spouse.

However, in present Mbarara, the Church does not involve itself in the process of marriage until just prior to the wedding. The Church typically provides a brief period of instruction on married life along with the formula for the wedding rites themselves—the order of standing and processing to the altar, the exchanging of vows, and the recessional. In current practice, few, if any, relatives or friends accompany the groom and the bride to the Church for the exchange of vows before a priest. The focus of the wedding is on the return home to the assembled jubilant community. To make the Church community more relevant to young people entering into marriage, youth ministry must work with Archdiocesan administrators to develop greater parish involvement with the couples, beginning with the first stages of the traditional marriage preparations. The Youth Office can help arrange for a priest or parish catechist to solemnize the customary betrothal ceremonies with the prayers and blessings of the Church. At the actual wedding ceremony, when the bride and groom enter into the sacrament of Matrimony, the Youth Office must strongly encourage the extended family to witness the marriage vows and the Church’s blessing of the newly married couple. Just as marriage is central to the continuity of life in the traditional community, it is also essential to the continuity of new life in the Church. The Ugandan tradition is that the whole community celebrates a
marriage. Youth ministry, therefore, must encourage the Church to involve itself more fully in all the steps leading to marriage and to encourage wider community support for those who enter into the sacrament of Matrimony. In so doing, the Church will project its belief in the importance of community and assume greater relevance in the lives of the newly married couple, and in the lives of their children, the future of the Church.

5.2.3 Understanding the Historical Impact of Political and Religious Factors to Youth Ministry

Youth programs must take into account the effects of the political and religious situation of Mbarara on ministry. Chapter One describes an earlier political and religious setting when Mbarara was divided between the Colonialists and Missionaries, who represented rival political parties and Christian religions. Dysfunctional post-independence political leadership, biased post-missionary religious leadership, and wars have created intense political and religious rivalry, emotional distress, and diminished moral standards. Families have been divided between different religions and political parties, while wars have deprived families of loved ones and left others without means of support. Political and religious divisions are normally more pronounced at family levels. Families identify and align themselves to certain political factions and religious persuasions and insist that all members conform to their perspectives. Because family biases get transplanted to the schools, youth ministry must include adult family members in its peace and conflict resolution meetings and activities. Interaction between the various students and family members can do much to break down political and religious stereotypes. Youth ministry can encourage mutual respect and understanding between the families and the youth by basing the activities it promotes upon theological and ecological foundations.
As discussed in 1.2.4, in 1962, a religio-political merger between the Anglican Bahima and Catholic Democratic Party took place in Nkore. Nevertheless, the merger remained only at a political level, and did not extend to include bridging the religious and social differences between the two factions. It remained a superficial political alliance fraught with the usual suspicions and antagonisms between Anglicans and Catholics. Youth ministry in Mbarara has a healing role to play among the youth of these long-time factions by encouraging peace and conflict resolution. As a first step, youth ministry must design programs aimed at bringing youth of different religious affiliations together for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, as well as for interreligious discussions. To be truly effective these programs must involve the Archdiocesan leadership down to the lowest Hiika level of the Church. Youth groups like the Focolare Movement, Young Christian Students and Young Christian Workers, as well as sports and music groups must be encouraged to include members of other denominations in their activities. Youth ministry will become truly holistic if the Christian belief that all people are created in the image and likeness of God, called to dignity and unity, is reflected in the composition of Mbarara’s various youth groups and in the topics of their discussions.

Young people must learn to appreciate every human being as created in the image and likeness of God, dignified and good. By sponsoring gatherings that encourage candid discussions and joint prayer services among young people and adult members of different faiths, youth ministry can serve as a healing and rejuvenating agent.
5.3 Inculcating Theological Foundations into Youth Ministry

5.3.1 Relating the Revelation of the Triune God to the Youth

Faith has theological foundations as the bedrock upon which are set the pillars of human, physical, intellectual and spiritual development: a Christian’s total existence (see 3.0). Of that foundation, the crucial component is revelation, the self-manifestation of God in creation, preservation and salvation. Theological foundations are necessary for a greater understanding of God’s self-revelation, and for a human response to their Creator.

In Mbarara, youth ministry is founded theologically on a blend of African spirituality and Christian theology. The belief in God as the creator, sustainer and the destiny of all being is central to African Traditional Religion as well as to Christianity, but ATR has no concept of a Triune God. Belief in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—is the cornerstone of Christian doctrine. Revelation of the Triune God must be the fundamental component of the theological foundations for youth ministry because it is the self-communication of God to human beings through creation, a series of covenants and finally through the incarnation of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Chapter Three). The life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God for the sake of redeeming human beings. Sacred Scripture teaches that God is manifested in Triad, beginning with the creation stories where God (YHWH) the Father spoke the Word (Dabah, Logos), the Son, and the life-giving Spirit (Ruah, Sophia) created cosmos out of chaos. In the New Testament, God spoke again through the angel Gabriel and the Word became flesh through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:28-35). Youth ministry must teach the importance of revelation as the natural and
fundamental relationship between God and human beings, asserting that God is humanity’s origin and final goal, and human beings are God’s creatures and subjects.

Christian doctrine and the African traditional religious heritage share several compatible beliefs. Both acknowledge God as the origin, sustainer and destiny of all creation. Both uphold the transcendence and immanence of God; the prominence of divine work through creation and sustenance; and the spiritual permeation of all reality linking worldly with divine, the mortal with the immortal. At present in Mbarara, these theological concepts are transmitted to the young through catechetical instructions and through traditional informal (oral) education via songs, stories and proverbs. In explaining Christian revelation, formative and transformative youth ministry must include ATR teachings that allow young people to understand the views of God in both heritages. By inviting local Christian and ATR leaders to lead seminars, workshops and prayer services, youth ministry can further emphasize the oneness of belief in God from both Christian and ATR perspectives.

While Christianity and ATR have comparable beliefs in God as creator, sustainer, and destiny, the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity does not exist in ATR. ATR upholds God as supreme and the sub-deities and the living-dead as spiritual intermediaries between God and human beings. ATR emphasizes belief in the spirits but has no frame of reference for the Christian God as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Youth ministry must present the doctrine of the Triune persons in one God as an essential difference between followers of ATR and African-Christian believers. In teaching about God as Trinity, youth ministers must be careful to explain that revelation does not contradict the ATR understanding of God, but rather augments it. The youth must be
assured that the concept of Trinity is difficult for all Christians to comprehend since it is a divine mystery that surpasses human understanding. Nevertheless, the proper focus for all Christians concerning the Trinity is not so much to consider the three persons in one God as an inscrutable but necessary “mystery,” but to experience Trinitarian meaning in their lives. Proper reflection on the hierarchy of God in ATR (Chapter One) will help the youth to relate the unity within the sacred Trinity and the Trinity’s connection with human beings with the examples of God, sub-deities, the living-dead and the living community. The youth must be helped to appreciate God and to turn in prayer to the Trinity in times of affliction, weakness and thanksgiving with the same fervor that ATR approaches God. Encouraging the youth to meditate on the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds can increase their appreciation of the divine interaction of the Trinity and heighten their awareness of the compatibility between the Christian and ATR concepts of God.

Besides professing God as the origin and sustainer of all creation, both Christian doctrine and the ATR heritage understand life as a journey, a transition to God from birth through death to eternity. Each acknowledges God as creator and ever-present companion, source of wisdom, strength and means to achieving eternal life with God, the destiny of every human being. The youth must be taught to experience God as a personal friend involved in all facets of their lives. Incorporating these themes in activities such as Bible study and life testimonies will inculcate strong theological foundations, which will transform the youth into convinced believers in the Triune God.

The mystery of the Trinity is manifested in God’s self-revelation through deeds and words. Sacred scripture, the tradition of the Church and the teaching authority of the Church (Magisterium) are the channels of revelation (see Chapter Three). In ATR,
the revelation transmitted through traditional religions and philosophy encompasses God, creation and the hierarchy of authority. ATR is transmitted and taught through proverbs, riddles and stories as well as music, dance and spiritual worship. In teaching revelation, youth ministry must promote it from the Christian doctrine perspective while acknowledging the ATR tradition, since both beliefs are prevalent in Mbarara. Youth ministry can promote better understanding of the significance of both forms of revelation through sponsoring experts in both sacred scripture and traditional beliefs to present revelation from their perspectives and facilitate opportunities for asking questions and holding discussions. In a culture where many young people are familiar with treatment of the Bible as a magical book in cult ceremonies of the Bacwezi Bashomi, youth ministry must teach proper reverence for the Bible as the word of God and a divine source of spiritual nourishment. Pastorally, the Archdiocesan Youth Office must advocate for cooperation with the Archdiocesan Pastoral coordinators to investigate the Bacwezi Bashomi syncretism and proceed to implement their findings through parishes, lay apostolate groups, and youth groups. The familiar reverence of traditional symbols and special objects in the Bacwezi Bashomi shrines can be inculcated into Catholic doctrine since in themselves they are merely objects and traditional symbols. The youth should be taught that the Bible is the word of God, the source of inspiration and guidance, and that God is Triune, invisible to our eyes yet much more intimate to human beings than scriptural writings. By understanding sacred scripture as the word of God and a channel of revelation, by including ATR’s symbols and oral traditional transmission of divine revelation, youth as well as adults will be led to a deeper appreciation of the many ways God is revealed to believers.
The tradition of the Church is another channel of revelation. It includes its documented and undocumented heritage, expressed in symbols, gestures and the structure of the Church (Chapter Three). ATR transmits its tradition through religious and cultural customs, through its hierarchy of authority and through symbols, gestures, orally articulated stories and prayers. Youth ministry must teach the value of tradition in both the Church and in ATR. Tradition is a deposit of faith, a legacy to be cherished and preserved for posterity. Meaningful youth ministry must draw examples from ATR’s valuable heritage: the family, the clan and the tribe. Traditional values, Christian and ATR, must be cherished since they have endured for generations and convey the core of their beliefs. Through presentations sponsored by youth ministry young people will have the opportunity to learn from religious leaders of both Catholicism and ATR, ask questions of them, and come to appreciate how the inculturation of African values with those of Christianity can help them become balanced, fervent believers of the Catholic faith.

Another channel of revelation in the Church is its teaching authority (Magisterium), a mandate from Jesus Christ that has preserved the unity of the Church for two thousand years. ATR maintains a hierarchy of authority that ensures the transmission of religious and cultural heritage through oral tradition and apprenticeship. Youth ministry must teach the importance of authority in safeguarding and propagating God’s revelation. Therefore, it must teach young people to acknowledge Church leaders as partners in their social, intellectual, moral and religious growth. Unfortunately, youth aged sixteen through twenty-two often resent authority. They claim that Church services and activities do not involve them and are boring. Some of the adults, in the Church as
well as in ATR, judge the youth as troublesome, unskilled and too young to do anything significant. Effective youth ministry must bridge this gap. It should organize forums that allow the youth and leaders of the Church and ATR to discuss the role of the teaching authority in the safeguarding, transmission and propagation of God’s revelation. Such forums may include seminars, workshops and retreats. Involving youth in the planning and execution of such events will help to lessen their resistance and heighten their interest in the topics being presented. Both the youth and Church leaders must comprehend that “the Church is a mother under an obligation, therefore, to provide for its children an education by virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ” (GE 3).

Finally, reconciling the Christian channels of revelation—sacred scripture, tradition of the Church and teaching authority of the Church— with comparable ATR channels for transmitting its religious and cultural heritage—stories, prayers and hierarchy of authority —can help to form and transform the youth into balanced believers. Currently tension exists due to the misunderstanding between the Catholic Church and African expressions in the areas of liturgical music, dances and other emotional involvement, as noted by Peter Hebblethwaite at the Synod for Africa in St. Peter’s Square.291 Youth ministry programs must include topics geared toward reconciling Christian liturgical expressions and doctrine with the ATR expressions of religious cultural

291 Peter Hebblethwaite, Pope John Paul II and the Church (Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1995), 266-268. Hebblethwaite describes the uneasiness that arose at the opening of the Synod for Africa on April 10, 1994: “That Ratzinger and the pope should regard African singing and dancing as something to be observed as a spectacle ‘out there’ is unbelievable.”
heritage. Recently, the Catholic Church in Mbarara has taken steps to ease these differences. Traditional drums, shakers and liturgical dances with traditional costumes and symbols are now permitted in liturgical celebrations. Processional dances at the liturgy of the word and the offertory have become common in the celebration of the Mass.

Nevertheless, as Hebblewaite points out in footnote 291, some traditional Catholics still view the jubilant and jovial African singing and dancing as a spectacle rather than liturgical expression of faith. To respond to such thinking, under the guidance of the archbishop, adult church leaders and ATR leaders within the archdiocese of Mbarara should spearhead an investigation into appropriate and significant inculturation of the traditional religious heritage and cultural expressions into Catholic liturgy. The youth must be encouraged to participate in the efforts to revisit liturgical and catechetical methods and contents in order to incorporate traditional concepts from both Christianity and ATR. Through social and spiritual activities, discussions among themselves and with expert adults (socialization) young people will learn to read and understand the Bible, and develop the ability to differentiate between authentic teaching and deceptive presentation of God’s revelation.

5.3.2 Making the Sacraments Relevant and Meaningful to the Youth

Chapter Three described the subjects of sin and grace, the Catholic sense of sacramentality and the relationship between the two. Roger Haight explains that the doctrine of sin and grace defines an anthropology, a Christian conception of human existence, because divine revelation presents the human as standing before God. The doctrine of sin and grace unfolds the core of Christian self-understanding, the mystery of
human existence in relation to God revealed in Jesus Christ. Because they are visible signs that manifest invisible grace, sacraments deal with the nature of human beings as graced and yet sinful pilgrims in their life journey to God. Sin distances human beings from God and grace sanctifies and brings sinners back to union with God. Most of the youth in Mbarara will have been taught the seven sacraments during their fundamental catechetical training for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. When the youth become young adults, youth ministry must revisit the sacraments with them, explaining the new relevance of each sacrament in forming and transforming their lives as maturing adults. In ATR, the traditional rites of passage from birth to death resemble the Christian sacraments (See Chapter Three). To develop a more concrete conviction in their faith, the youth must re-visit, re-live and if possible witness through testimonies about the effects of the sacraments and the rites of passage. Youth ministry must create opportunities, through prayer groups and other forms of discussions, to explain the true nature of the sacraments as visible signs that communicate invisible grace and the significance of ATR rites of passage. Young people should also learn the meaning of the sacramental symbols, the ritual words (formulae), and gestures in order to deepen their appreciation of the sacraments. As informed participants, they can approach the sacraments with mature faith and devotion. As a means of living the sacraments and witnessing to the effects of grace, young people should be encouraged to share their knowledge of the sacraments with others, especially other youth.

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5.3.2.1 Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) Practically Related to the Traditional Rites of Passage of the Youth

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are the Christian sacraments of initiation (see 2.2.2.1; 2.2.2.2; 2.2.2.3). Regis A. Duffy characterizes these sacraments as demonstrating “a theology of initiation inseparably linked to a theology of church.” The function of these sacraments is reflected in ATR initiation rites of birth and naming, the meal and initiation into adulthood. Through revisiting the sacraments of initiation and their comparable traditional rites of passage, youth ministry can help young people come to a deeper appreciation of the graces they have received, the indelible mark they bear and their responsibilities as Christian witnesses to the faith. The youth should be encouraged to discuss the occasion of their baptisms and the significance of their names with their parents and godparents as a way of making the sacrament more immediate to them.

Youth ministry can also help the youth re-live their baptisms by providing opportunities for interactive group sharing where the youth can narrate their families’ and godparents’ recollections and any extant photos of their baptisms. Youth ministers can arrange field trips for small groups to attend parish baptisms and allow opportunity for follow-up discussions of their impressions of the experience. Explaining the relationship between the sacrament of Baptism and the traditional rituals of naming and blessing babies will help to engender in the youth a sense of incorporation into the Church community through the sacrament of baptism and into the family and tribe through the first traditional rite of passage that they may not even remember.

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The Eucharist is central in Catholic doctrine as a symbol of communion and thanksgiving, but most importantly is the real presence of Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine (See Chapter Three). David N. Power summarizes the teaching on the meaning of Eucharistic of the 1967 Sacred Congregation of Rites: “The sacramental sacrifice that perpetuates the sacrifice of the cross, the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the sacred banquet in which the new covenant is renewed in the church in anticipation of the final coming of the Lord.”

In Mbarara, Catholic families raise their children to participate in the Eucharist as often as possible. Catechetical instruction also gives prominent attention to the sacraments of initiation, yet as the children enter into puberty, they tend to distance themselves from the Church and spiritual activities. ATR emphasizes the centrality of a meal within the life of family and community as nourishment and communion as well as a rite to honor the sub-deities and the living-dead with libations and food sacrifices. Both faith traditions agree with the concept of meal as a ritual, as nourishment, as community building, and as an opportunity for communion with those who have gone before in death. Formative and transformative youth ministry must strive to inculcate in the youth the centrality of the sacrament of Eucharist in the life of the Church and in their individual lives. Youth ministry should facilitate open discussion with priests about the character imparted by Baptism and Confirmation and the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. As celebrants of the Mass, ordained priests have thorough understanding of how the thanksgiving sacrifices of the

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Old Testament were fulfilled in the death of Jesus Christ at Calvary and his resurrection on Easter, and are accomplished in the Eucharist. Additionally, through the consecration of the bread and wine, by transubstantiation Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist as a meal of unity; the host, the altar and the food itself nourish the Church and the individual faithful.

Youth ministry also should facilitate interactive dialogue among the religious men and women, catechists and other committed faithful in which they share the significance of the Eucharist in their lives. Since these are not ordained and therefore do not preside over the sacrifice of Mass, the youth might relate more readily to their testimonies. The youth can be invited to participate more fully in the sacrifice of the Mass by taking up for themselves vital roles such as greeters, choir members or Eucharistic ministers. Adult lay members of the Church can re-emphasize to the youth the role of the family as a domestic church and teach them to be actively involved in the life of the Church.

Resources about Eucharistic experiences, miracles and witnesses can help the youth cultivate love and devotion to the Eucharist. Youth ministry can assign a committee of youths to search out books and videos explaining the sacraments of initiation in language that young people understand. These could be made available on a rotating basis to various youth groups and stimulate further discussion of these sacraments. In coordination with other offices of the archdiocese, youth ministry should organize Eucharistic Congresses, where large numbers of participants can come together to witness the centrality of the Eucharist to their faith and in their lives. The Youth Office should encourage all parishes and schools to hold periodic youth Masses during which young
people take special responsibility for singing, preparing the readings and assisting at the liturgy. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, frequent attendance at Mass and visits to the Blessed Sacrament will also generate a greater love and understanding of the sacraments of initiation. Examples from meals in traditional society and the presence of the spirit (the unity of the living and the living-dead) that is honored by libations and prayers at meal times may be used to suggest the mystery of transubstantiation and build a zeal for the sacrament and the desire to explain it to others.

Confirmation confers maturity in faith, just as the ATR rituals of initiation usher youth into adulthood. In presenting the sacrament of Confirmation to the youth of Mbarara, comprehensive youth ministry must include the familiar traditional rites of passage. Although many youth groups, including the Scouts and Girl Guides, Xaverians, YCS, YCW, and the Eucharistic Crusades already make this effort, more groups should be involved in this process. Catechetical instruction of adolescents must acknowledge their desire for discussion, questioning and self-expression.

Youth ministry must continue by revisiting the content of traditional initiation in order to relate it to the content of the sacrament of Confirmation. In keeping with traditional instruction, adolescent young women should be allowed supervised opportunities to interact with women who are role models of the faith community. The same opportunities should be provided for adolescent males. These interactions can serve as master-peer apprenticeship and an enhancement to the attempts of youth ministry to inculcate the sacraments of initiation with ATR intimation and coming-of-age ceremonies. Further, the witness of these role model adults will illustrate how the graces of the sacraments are at work in the lives of mature adult believers.
5.3.2.2 Sacraments of Healing Presented to the Youth as Generous Means
to Continue a Relationship with a Loving God

The sacraments of healing, reconciliation and penance and Anointing of the Sick, restore the spiritual and the physical life. Regis A. Duffy explains:

The perennial image of Christ as physician provides the theological context for the brief analysis of the sacrament[s] of [penance and reconciliation and] the anointing of the sick: “When the Church cares for the sick, it serves Christ himself in the suffering members of his Mystical Body. When it follows the example of the Lord Jesus, who ‘went about doing good and healing all’ (Acts 10:38), the Church obeys his command to care for the sick (Mark 16:18).”

The sacraments of healing restore recipients to the life of grace through reconciliation with God and neighbors. In today’s world, sacraments of healing face more challenges than support because society has a tendency to crush the weak and award victory to the strong without consideration for mercy, compassion and correction. Many people consider justice to mean severe punishment or death. For example, sports like football and boxing encourage winning by vanquishing the weak. War and terrorist activities aim to destroy one’s opponents. The objective of many video games is to destroy the opponent, while movies abound with graphic scenes of violent subjugation, with little or no acknowledgement of the need for reconciliation or forgiveness. Christian faith, by way of contrast, abounds with opportunities for mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Sacraments of healing reflect the example of Jesus Christ, the son of God who became

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human – weak – in order to save human beings (Ph 2:4-11). In a world that despises the weak, the youth must be taught to embrace humility, compassion and mercy so as to comprehend the work of God in their lives through the sacraments of healing.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the sacraments of Reconciliation and Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick present Jesus Christ as the physician of souls and bodies. ATR places healing and reconciliation at the center of individual and harmonious communal living. When explaining the Church’s sacraments of healing, youth ministry must include the significance of the ATR reconciliation process, since both belief systems play important roles in the ongoing conversion of Mbarara’s youth, who face a world full of challenges and temptations. As a vital part of programs that teach young people how to develop skills in conflict resolution and peace building, youth ministry must explain the sacraments of healing. They must teach young people that by partaking in the sacrament of reconciliation and penance, they will heighten their awareness of their own human frailty and God’s infinite mercy. God does not cast the sinner aside, but is ever ready to offer the grace of forgiveness, love and peace. As in any lessons for adolescents, youth’s ministry’s presentations must include a forum for questions, open discussions and personal reflection. These presentations must also challenges young people to practice forgiveness and live in peace with others. By coming to understand the significance of the sacraments of healing and the relationship of these sacraments to their own lives, youths can discover who God wants them to be and what they can do as agents of peace and people reconciled with God and neighbors.

5.3.2.3 Sacraments of Vocation Ordination and Marriage (Holy Orders and Matrimony) as Sacraments Anticipated and Prepared for by Youth Ministry
Standing on the threshold of adulthood, youth aged sixteen through twenty-two are beginning to consider their calling as adults. As they dream and plan for the future, many of these young men and women are considering a life calling to one of the sacraments of vocation: Marriage and Ordination. Michael A. Fahey explains, “Marriage and ordination are two sacraments of vocation to life in the church and society.” Most youth will be drawn to the sacrament of Matrimony, while some others may consider the sacrament of Holy Orders or consecration in committed lives as religious men and women. Similarly, in ATR, it is expected that anyone not set apart as a medium to the sub-deities will find a suitor and marry. Youth ministry must recognize the soul-searching taking place among the youth and design programs to prepare them for the vocations of their choosing. The Youth Office must work together with the vocation directors of the archdioceses and religious congregations as well as the Family Apostolate Office to offer the youth opportunities to attend symposiums of adults representing many vocations in the Archdiocese of Mbarara. During youth ministry sponsored retreat days, the youth can examine the various life choices open to them, and learn first-hand through real life testimonies the requirements, benefits and challenges of each vocation. Youth aged sixteen through twenty-two perceive themselves as old enough to make correct life choices, yet experiences shows that they often end up in complicated situations. Therefore, for additional in-depth information, professionals like marriage counselors or domestic and religious moderators should be invited to address youth groups, answer their questions, offer them information, and encourage them in pursuing their life choices. To

296 Fahey, “Church,” 38.
prepare the youth thoroughly, the programs addressing sacraments of vocation and related life professions and occupations should be offered at least quarterly, in order to offer as many opportunities as possible to prepare the youth to make informed life choices and commitments.

5.3.2.4 Prayer as Building Personal Relationships between Youth and God

Through prayer, human beings communicate with and establish a personal relationship with God. Chapter Three explains the many forms of prayer and how it grows with experience of God’s love and faithfulness. Young people need to appreciate God as a personal friend involved in all facets of their lives. Michael Warren proposes some types of spirituality for teens that may be useful for youth ministry in Mbarara: A journey-spirituality; a spirituality of redirected life and fantasy; a spirituality of patience and gradualness.297 Warren’s concept of journey-spirituality emphasizes that the youth need to be instructed in life choices. It is important to have definite likes and dreams, yet they need to learn that they must wait and work toward their goals step by step. A journey-spirituality helps young people to understand the connection between the journey motif in the Judeo-Christian tradition and their own life journeys, much like the pilgrimage of Abraham from Ur to the land the Lord would show him (Gn 12: 1-6); the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex 3: 16-17); and the journey of Jesus into Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11: 1-11; Lk 19: 28-38). The youth must realize that their past and present experiences are all preparations for the journey as they continue

297 Warren, Youth and the Future of the Church, 57-67.
their pilgrimage toward God, with God. Meditative reflection on this concept is genuine prayer. The youth must be assured that God brought them into being, has been with them, is with them and will always lead them until the journey’s end, when they will rest in Him. The spirituality of redirected life and fantasy assists the youth in appreciating their own dreams and directing them to their fulfillment in God. The spirituality of patience and gradualness guides youth in making step-by-step progress with God as they grow and mature. Youth ministry must incorporate such virtuous themes into their programs in order to teach young people patience, trust, and endurance in personal and community prayers. Activities like prayer groups, Bible study and Lectio Divina will lead the youth to appreciate God as a personal friend and improve their prayer life.

Establishing a lasting relationship with God as a personal friend and companion comes with some challenges. In Mbarara, multiple religions have sprung up in the last ten years, all eager to recruit the youth. They all claim to be the best and truest religions. Some of them recruit on street corners, in temporary shelters and through other means like pamphlets, television, and radio advertisements. Youth ministry must assist young people to discern false claims, whether they come from individuals, the written word or the media. The Youth Office must design a standard of evaluation based on the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry so as to teach the youth genuine Christian values versus those presented by other sources. Exposing the confusion and deceptive claims of false “religions” will help young people bring their Catholic faith into clearer focus. Youth who learn to recognize false advertising in religion become better judges of what is true and what is false in the claims of other socio-economic agencies which sometimes make enticing but false claims about what they represent or what they
have to offer in form of religion. Pope John Paul II, in his address to the youth of Rome in preparation for the World Youth Day 2001, acknowledged such situations, and counseled:

Let us now look more closely at your situation, dear young people. You - especially you adolescents - are living in a difficult age, full of enthusiasm, but also exposed to dangerous confusion. Your limited experience threatens you with the risk of falling prey to those who play on your emotions, who, instead of fostering a critical conscience in you, tend to exalt uninhibitedness and to present immoral choices as values. They blur every distinction between good and evil and present truth with the changing features of expediency.  

Through prayer, the youth can trace the hand of God as revealed in creation, in values as confessed in ATR, and in Christian theological foundations (3.2.3.1). Foundation in prayer can empower the youth to see through the deceptions of some modern philosophies that distort the image of God or even deny God’s existence. With the support of well-prepared peer groups and with experts, the youth should discuss revelation, beginning with the eternity of God; the manifestation of God in creation; the incarnation of God (Phil 2: 6-11); and salvation of human beings through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and the continual active presence of God – Emmanuel – in order to establish a genuine foundation for prayer. The magnanimity of God is expressed by the traditional people of Mbarara through stories, proverbs and worship. They refer to God as Kazooba Nyamuhanga, the Sun Creator and identify sub-deities in terms of natural phenomena like rain, drought and plagues. By inculcating such examples, youth ministry can assist young people in integrating the spiritual aspects of God’s divine nature with

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298 John Paul II, “Address of John Paul II to the Young People of Rome in Preparation for the Celebration of World Youth Day,” (Thursday, April 5, 2001) no. 3.
human salvation and sustenance. By seeing the action of God in their day-to-day experiences, the youth can be motivated to fulfill Jesus’ two great commandments—to love God, and to love their neighbors as themselves. Finally, the youth must be taught to pray with the confidence that God is Truth and that they can rely on God as a true and eternal friend involved in every facet of their lives.

5.4 Appropriating Ecological Foundations into Youth Ministry

5.4.1 The Youth and Harmonious Living in the Archdiocese of Mbarara

Ecological foundations for youth ministry emphasize that the youth are part of God’s handiwork, integral to all of creation, and so are called to live responsibly (Chapter Four). The basic components of ecological foundations for youth ministry include teaching the youth that they are created as human beings, male and female with individual distinctiveness and are called to be good stewards to all creation. Holistic youth ministry must make the youth aware that as a part of creation, they have a responsibility of caring for themselves, one another, the environment and all the other creatures. Therefore, these programs should include teaching environmental conservation, the symbiotic relationship between human beings and all creation and peaceful living. Projects such as planting trees, maintaining small scale farms at home and at schools and preserving natural habitat may serve to encourage their sense of stewardship.

Harmonious living requires that young people understand their dignity as male and female, created in the image and likeness of God (imago Dei). Jesus answered those who questioned him about paying taxes by reminding them that the currency coins bear inscriptions of those who made them; in like fashion, human beings bear the imprint
of the God who made them, and so must be given back to God (Mk 12: 13-17). Chapter Four emphasized the link between theology and anthropology and the equal dignity of each human being, whether male or female. It also touched on repressive attitudes toward women held by ATR, politicians, and the Church. Transforming youth ministry must teach four fundamental lessons. First, as they are created in the image and likeness of God, young people must respect themselves because of their inherent dignity and favor before God. Second, by recognizing who they are and their position in creation, they must respect others who share the universe with them. Third, they must respect all creation, since it is the handiwork of God. They must acknowledge that men and women are created equal and meant to complement each other in life. Fourth, young people must oppose injustices, particularly those against women, the young and the poor, because injustice contradicts God’s call to harmonious living. Youth ministry must emphasize the equality of males and females by means of their informal everyday interactions with the youth and by sponsoring workshops and cooperative group activities focusing on the equality of male and female members of society. Parents must be taught that all children, boys and girls, must be given equal opportunities in life. ATR offers more opportunities like learning cultural heritage, inheriting property, and attending high schools to boy children, who are believed to be more suited to building the family, whereas girls are married off. Youth ministry must teach the youth to challenge such prejudices, since enlightened mothers contribute much more to developing the nation and the Church than ignorant ones.

The psychological, social, and physical characteristics of young people are the prerequisites for the content and methods of inculcating ecological foundations for
youth ministry. As described in Chapter Four, because youth between ages sixteen through twenty-two are transitioning from childhood to young adulthood, they exhibit particular psychological, physical and social characteristics. The youth must be taught about the changes they are going through. In ATR, uncles taught the boys and aunts taught the girls about these changes, but due to socio-economic shifting, formal education for most youth now takes place in boarding schools. Moreover, the working schedules in families make it difficult for uncles and aunts to fulfill their traditional teaching roles.

Comprehensive youth ministry can help fill this void in the youths’ lives by acknowledging the physical and psychological changes the youth are experiencing and assuring them that these changes are perfectly normal. The Archdiocesan Youth Office, with the cooperation of families, churches, schools and the community, must design programs focusing on adolescence. Through well-organized youth camps and teenage festivals it can avail opportunities to some parents, student leaders like matrons, patrons and other adults dealing with adolescents on daily basis to meet and discuss with the youth at relaxed atmospheres. The camps can also provide opportunities for nurses, physicians, and mental health counselors to talk about puberty and explain what is normal and when the adolescent should seek help. Leaders in families, churches and schools as well as in the community must also be taught how to deal with adolescents, particularly the value of patience, answering their questions about the changes in their lives. Most importantly, young people should be encouraged to join existing youth groups in order to better understand and discuss with their peers their transitioning issues in comfortable settings.

The distinctiveness and autonomy of each individual is another important aspect of the ecological foundations; each person’s unique gifts are meant to enrich the
Appreciating one’s distinctiveness boosts an individual’s self-esteem and self-worth, encouraging self-assertiveness and responsibility. In traditional Mbarara, youth aged sixteen through twenty-two go through an initiation process as a preparation for adulthood. As explained in Chapter One, the initiation is meant to prove a young person worthy of becoming an adult and a responsible member of society. In summary, the socio-economic shifting in Mbarara has all but negated traditional initiation of adolescents. The youths’ coming of age now takes place in schools where the focus is on academics, combined with a few extracurricular activities. Because young people spend only short holiday periods with their families and their tribal communities, they have little opportunity for traditional formation. Holistic youth ministry must recognize the problem and with careful discernment act as proxy for traditional formation while encouraging the interaction of parents and other adult relatives. During these crucial years, the aim of formative and transformative youth ministry must be to develop in the youth an appreciation of their personal self-worth and God-given talents together with a developing sense of responsibility as future heads of families and leaders of society. Opportunities to experience leadership can begin with the youths’ active participation in school policy-making and organizing extra-curricular and even community events. Youth ministry will succeed in these endeavors if they work in consort with the youths’ parents, church and community leadership in properly integrating them into adult society.

5.4.2 The Indispensable Roles of the Family, the Church, the Schools and the Community in Holistic and Meaningful Youth Ministry

The larger ecological groupings of family, Church, school and community are essential components of the ecological foundations for youth ministry. These
ecological environments are where the youth are born, raised, educated and live. Chapter Four describes the wider ecological groups that also affect fundamental character formation and intellectual development. ATR settings insure proximity between adult family members and the youth, yet contemporary social and economic shifts have weakened the traditional settings that facilitated learning by apprenticeship. Nevertheless, the role of the family in the character formation of the youth cannot be compromised.

Youth ministry must spearhead ways to educate parents, church leaders, and school and community leaders to prepare themselves and the youth to adjust to the current social shifting and changing environments.

Balanced development of young people is contingent on the mutual cooperative efforts of the family, the Church and the community. Youth ministry can facilitate harmonious, collaborative interactions among these groups in committees, discussion forums and youth-directed activities. For example, establishing boards that link families, churches, schools and the community can be a vital component in the balanced development of the youth. These might include Parent-Teacher-Associations (PTA), parish parent associations, or parent and youth forums. The Archdiocesan Youth Office could facilitate the establishment of such committees and can coordinate the efficient and transparent flow of information among them. The cooperation of the four ecological groups is vital for adults trying to adjust to shifting social structures and lifestyles, and for the intellectual, social and religious growth of the youth. Nehemiah N. Nyaundi underscores this importance:

The school and the Church are two institutions that team up with the family institution in the nurture of individuals. While the school and the Church are also experiencing change, they function together with the family in the crucial role of
In the traditional societal setting of Mbarara, the youth are told what to do, as well as how and when to do it. Independent opinions or rebellion are extremely rare. Such traditional subservience is being altered, however, by the influences of socio-economic shifts, formal education and modern development. The youth have found the windows of freedom open to exercise their independence and as the saying goes, unbridled freedom is anarchy. Since the youth now spend most of their time in schools, the traditional respect for authority is being eroded. Formal education and contact with the outside world has exposed them to a new atmosphere where they can freely express their opinions and question traditional values and authority. Traditional life is not the only structure being undermined by the youths’ newfound freedoms, which in some cases has led to anarchy. As discussed in Chapter Two, schools are experiencing strikes, families are faced with rebellious youth, and many no longer attend church or community activities. Most parents and other adults are at a loss in knowing what to do. Formative youth ministry, while teaching the youth to be self-assertive and independent, must emphasize the holistic value of maintaining strong, positive relationships with families, the Church and schools, even as they integrate themselves in modern society. Youth ministry must reach out to the youth by personal invitations to participate in youth activities

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offered at youth camps, seminars and workshops. These events should be organized around adolescent interests, concerns and challenges while offering practical ways of coping with that phase of life. Youth leaders should identify peer group leaders and work with them to attract their friends to youth activities; good food and music also draw in young people and provide an occasion for developing personal relationships. Those who have strong ties to families, churches, schools and communities may encourage other youth to participate in such activities that teach relational skills.

Finally, the family, the Church, the school and the community form the fundamental and indispensible ecology of the youth. These ecological groups will naturally, spontaneously, and in many ways deliberately nurture, educate and shape young people physically, morally and intellectually. These are natural ecological structures, yet youth ministry can mediate so as to enlighten the adults about approaches best adapted to current situations in the shifting society. Holistic youth ministry must work with these ecological groups as well as the youth themselves to contend effectively with the shifting social structure by implementing programs that involve the cooperative participation of all concerned.

5.4.3 Life, Death and Eschatology in Shaping Youth Ministry

The questions of life, death and eschatology are fundamental for the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry. While the themes of life, death and eschatology are theological, they are being discussed under ecological foundations because theological and ecological foundations are intertwined. The themes of life, death and eschatology are anthropological because they provide the purpose, motivation and destiny for the ecological foundations. Earthly life that originated “in the beginning” (Gn
1-3) is in transition and will eventually cease to be. This concept may not impress the youth, who tend to feel strong and vital, yet its reality must be fully integrated into holistic youth ministry. Youth ministry must design programs to teach the youth that as creatures grounded in earthly life they must appreciate a sense of purpose for their lives against the backdrop of creation and God as the destiny. They must acknowledge that their days on earth are limited; in the words of the Psalmist: “… Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are strong; …” (Ps 90).

Understanding life, death and eschatology will shape the focus of the youth. Theological and ecological discussions must emphasize creation and its sustenance—life. The youth must learn to acknowledge that all life—human persons and their environment, animals and ecosystems—are all created and are passing into eternity. As discussed in Chapter Three, God is a Trinity that is revealed in Jesus Christ. In his discussion of “God and the human quest for God,” David Tracy explains, “The Catholic theological understanding of God is, therefore, grounded in the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both the self-disclosure of God and God’s quest for human beings. Jesus Christ, therefore, is the divine response to the question humans are to themselves.”

Tracy’s explanation, which reinforces Church doctrine, reiterates the fact that human life, to be solidly founded, must be in Jesus Christ (Mt 7: 21-27). Life, therefore, is a gift from God, to be lived for God in Jesus Christ. The journey motif that sacred scripture uses to convey salvation history is helpful in understanding that human beings originate from God, are sustained by God and are destined to God after this life.

300 Tracy, “Approaching the Christian Understanding of God,” 139.
Both Christianity and ATR profess that life does not end with physical death but transitions into the spiritual world. Young people must be taught to acknowledge God as the creator, sustainer and destiny of life and thus make conscious efforts to live in Christ in anticipation of eternal life.

Physical human life begins at conception and expires at death.

Understanding its origin, purpose and destination is fundamental to the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry, since it is the subject of anthropology and theology. Both Christianity and ATR cherish life as a gift to be protected, nourished and prepared for its destiny. Youth ministry must arouse in the youth an appreciation of their lives, gratitude to the creator and most important, steadfast preparation for death since no one knows when it will come. In Mbarara, even among the youth, death is common. HIV/AIDS and other deadly diseases are rampant, killing big numbers and funeral services are continuous. Transformative youth ministry must teach the youth to focus on appreciating earthly life while preparing for the spiritual one. Youth ministry must guide the youth to integrate themes of life like celebrating birthdays (something not common in traditional Mbarara), anniversaries and achievements so as to recall the precious gift of earthly life, the appropriateness of celebrating it and the need to prepare for the end. By teaching the value of life, youth ministry will help young people to comprehend their dignity as human beings and foster in them a sense of responsibility as pilgrims in this world.

Eschatology, which includes the hope that for human beings death is not the end, is fundamental to the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry. Monica K. Hellwig explains, “The word eschata in Greek means ends or outcomes, and
the discussion of eschatology has traditionally been titled ‘the last things’ (often ‘the last four things’). These were listed as death, judgment, hell and heaven.”301 This dissertation will not explore the details of eschatology; instead it presents death as a transition and life after death as human destiny. Both Christianity and ATR embrace death as a transition to the spiritual world. Youth ministry must engage the youth in discussions concerning death and what happens after death—unending life. Like in many parts of the world, in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, “death is placed under a taboo”302 never to be discussed except at funerals. While traditional Mbarara society strongly believes in the immortality of the soul and continuing spiritual life after physical death as the Living-dead (Chapter One), talking about death is dreaded. Youth ministry can help the youth overcome their aversion to discussing death by sensitively engaging young people in plays, songs, talks and movies that will explain death as a reality of human life and prepare them for their own passing.

The perception of the end will determine the preparations and the means by which the journey is made. Likewise, the way death is understood determines the way life is lived. Joseph Ratzinger observes: “Death is a place where the metaphysical breaks through.” He continues by quoting Schleiermacher, “birth and death [are] ‘hewed out

301 Monica K. Hellwig, “Eschatology” in Systematic Theology: Catholic Perspectives, 249.

perspectives’ through which man peers into the infinite.”
Youth ministry, therefore, must lead the youth to an enlightened understanding of death because the “attitude to dying determines the attitude of living” and “the dehumanization of death brings with it the dehumanization of life.”
Explaining the ethos of death in Christianity will create a positive assent to life as a whole, since life is a gift of God and Christian faith is about life – the risen Jesus Christ – and will create in young people a new understanding of suffering, since life prevails through suffering: the soul is immortal and there is the resurrection – resurrection of the dead is a truth of faith. Youth ministry must create in the youth the consciousness that death is a reality of life; it can happen at any time without warning and must be respected as an honorable transition to the beatific vision. An awareness of the imminence of death will create in the youth a sense of preparedness and strengthen their reliance on God, the destiny of their lives.

Finally, as the common African proverb states, “It takes a village to raise a child.” The work of inculcating theological and ecological foundations into youth ministry will take a corporative team of parents, teachers, community adults, as well as the youth themselves. Therefore, the theme throughout this chapter reflects the instruction of

303 Ibid., 70.
304 Ibid., 72.
305 Ibid., 71.
306 Ibid., 101-161.
307 From common proverbs of Nkore, actual source not known.
Pope John Paul II’s address to youth that they seek the guidance of adults in their process of transformation:

With the help of the adults and priests of your communities, organize formation meetings on the most important issues of the moment. By sharing the life of your peers in places of study, recreation, sport and culture, seek to bring them the liberating message of the Gospel. Re-establish after-school programmes, adapting them to the needs of the times as bridges between the Church and the street, with special attention for those who are marginalized, going through hard times or are ensnared in deviancy and delinquency. In the pastoral care of your school or university, strive to form groups and cultural workshops that can be a reference-point for your friends. Do not forget to be close to those who are living in pain and illness: in these situations we can be particularly open to the God of life.  

5.5 The Broader Significance of the Dissertation beyond the Archdiocese of Mbarara

5.5.1 “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them …” (Lk 18: 16): The Indispensability of Leadership for Youth

The significance of this dissertation extends beyond the Archdiocese of Mbarara. It is about the importance of youth as the vibrant present and the formidable future of the Church and society. The youth are youth wherever they are in the world and their problems are similar, even though the context may differ. They are curious, energetic and intelligent. They crave attention, sympathy and guidance. The adults who relate with them must learn to be patient, understanding and supportive during this crucial phase between childhood and adulthood. This dissertation calls the youth to consciousness of their context and challenges; their knowledge of God and appropriate human response; their responsibility to creation and fellow human beings; their awareness

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of who they are and their roles in the ecological groups that form their nature and nurture. Adults, likewise, must face the challenge of welcoming, listening and teaching the youth. Jesus Christ told those who were preventing children from being brought to him: “Let the children come to me and do not prevent them: for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” Lk 18: 16). Jesus Christ shows preferential love for the young, whom many may consider uninformed, weak and chaotic. The youth, as discussed in this dissertation, are often judged to be inexperienced and restless, yet they deserve particular attention and guidance so they can use their giftedness wisely and prepare a good future.

Pope John Paul II was unmatched in his love, care and support for the youth. He wrote extensively on their potential and their need for support. He devoted his life to them because he was convinced that the future of the Church and the world belongs to them. As cited above, in his Tertio millennio adveniente, No. 58, he emphasized, “The future of the world and the Church belongs to the younger generation …. Christ expects great things from young people.”309 The pope further demonstrated his exemplary leadership for the youth on Palm Sunday, March 31, 1985, when he announced the institution of World Youth Days. Since then the world has witnessed twenty-six World Youth Days that challenge the youth all over the world and give opportunities to those who can travel to the venues to join with others from all over the world to celebrate.310 For any youth ministry to achieve its intended goals, good leadership is indispensable.


This dissertation is aimed at helping leaders to recognize the practical reality of the youth world and thus to challenge them to approach their ministry in holistic, meaningful ways that form and transform young people.

Youth exist in particular contexts that provide for their nature and nurture, social and intellectual formation and moral and religious orientations. The implications of this dissertation extend to all cultures. Though the context of this study is the Archdiocese of Mbarara in Uganda, East Africa, its contents apply to youth ministries seeking to inculcate theological and ecological foundations in their programs anywhere in the world. Obviously, leaders who wish to use a practical theology approach to youth ministry must adapt it to their particular context. The dissertation does not present specific outlines for youth ministry programs; instead, it explores the context and theological and ecological foundations in ways that will enlighten leaders on how to approach the youth and minister to them. It provides a model for integrating Christian foundations with those of traditional culture. It proposes suggestions and examples on how to implement theological and ecological foundations into particular contexts, and notes the challenges and obstacles of doing so. The final goal of the dissertation is to inform leaders on how to deal with the youth, design programs and attract them to participate in their implementation. In so doing, the youth will learn how to cope with the challenges of adolescence and to build faith-filled lives as responsible members of society and the Church.

Finally, this dissertation calls upon all adults to assume leadership roles in relating with the youth. In particular, adults in families, churches, schools and communities are challenged to acknowledge young people, to invite them into
participation and to guide them patiently to live up to their potential. The dissertation notes the challenges of the adolescent period such as peer pressure, and the influence of a shifting society; in light of those potential obstacles, it invites leaders and all adults involved with youth to study these issues and take appropriate action. Jesus Christ challenged his followers to let the children come to him; his challenge is now extended to all adults to exercise patience and generosity in teaching the youth under their care, to encounter God in them, and to be God’s witnesses to young people in the world.

5.5.2 The Role Models for the Youth: Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and the Saints

The youth of Mbarara, as well as youth all over the world can live lives influenced by theological and ecological foundations if they heed and emulate models of good life. The highest model for the youth is God incarnate, Jesus Christ. God is the model of perfect love, generosity and faithfulness manifested in the history of salvation, particularly in God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ stands out as the example of obedience in fulfilling the will of the Father, of humility in taking on human form and dying to save human beings, and of love and concern for the weak and the needy as expressed in his life and ministry. The youth are invited to follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. Meaningful youth ministry must be centered on Jesus Christ as the model, the teacher, and the savior.

The theological foundations discussed in this dissertation stress knowing and building a personal relationship with God through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. The surest way to get to Jesus Christ is through the intercession of his beloved earthly parents, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. The Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph stand
out as a models—parents and intercessors for all the youth. Scripture presents the Blessed Virgin Mary as a humble, devoted, and obedient woman who says YES to allowing our Lord Jesus Christ to be conceived in her (Lk 1: 26-38). The Blessed Virgin Mary challenges the youth by her purity, piety and obedience as a virgin of Nazareth. Joseph is described as “pious” and his obedience is shown in following the directives of an angel in a dream to take the Blessed Virgin Mary and assume fatherhood to Jesus (Mt 1: 18-25). Their faithfulness as good parents to Jesus are expressed in saving him by taking him to Egypt (Mt 2: 13-23), presenting him to God (Lk 2: 22-40), and looking for him when he disappeared in Jerusalem (Lk 2: 41-52). Youth who may hesitate to do the will of God because of their fears and uncertainties are challenged by the young parenthood of St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary. If well taught, they will profess, with the Blessed Virgin Mary, “nothing will be impossible for God” (Lk 1: 37). The Blessed Virgin Mary played her role further by inviting the first miracle at the wedding at Cana (Jn 2: 1-12); by remaining with Jesus despite the accusations against him and fear of being implicated in his crime up to the cross on Calvary (Jn 19: 25-27); by being a mother and counselor to the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and as the Church began (Acts 1: 13). The Blessed Virgin Mary’s humility, faithfulness, and resilience are models for those who find it difficult to be faithful to their commitments. Youth ministry grounded in the theological and ecological foundations must have the Blessed Virgin Mary as the model, the mother of young people and intercessor to her Son Jesus Christ through her spouse the Holy Spirit.

Elizabeth A. Johnson’s understanding of the saints and the Blessed Virgin Mary guides the presentation in this dissertation. Johnson ties the theology of God and the sacramental character to understanding saints’ true identity: “The theology of God is
involved, for God alone is the Holy One; the saints, or holy ones, from the Latin word sanctus, which means holy, are recipients of the gift of divine holiness and, like signs or sacraments, reveal the face of God to the world.\textsuperscript{311} The writer of the book of Revelation emphasized this in the answer given by one of the elders: “These are the ones who have survived the times of great distress; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7: 14). Johnson’s definition of a saint is important to implementing the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry because it stresses sainthood as a gift from God. All are called to holiness but faith is a gift from God. The youth must learn that the way to holiness is the way to God, by fulfilling the greatest commandment left by Jesus Christ (Mt 22: 36-40). The saints, in their lives and in their choice of God, are models for how to be a fulfilled human. They challenge the youth with the reality that if they were able to make it, youth too can follow in their footsteps. Meaningful youth ministry must teach young people to study the lives of the saints, to emulate their examples, and to seek their intercession in this pilgrim life.

\section*{CONCLUSION}

The dissertation has identified the theological and ecological foundations for youth ministry, in this particular case, youth ministry in the archdiocese of Mbarara, Uganda – East Africa. While acknowledging that the youth are the vibrant present and the promise of a formidable future of the Church and the world, it has provided content for building a holistic, formative and transformative youth ministry. It has discussed the

\textsuperscript{311} Elizabeth A. Johnson, “Saints and Mary,” in \textit{Systematic Theology}:
steady but dramatic societal shift from the conservative and often static culture of native tribal communities of Mbarara with their adherence to informal education, traditional customs and worship, and a predominantly agrarian economy due to the ever more pervasive influences of Western civilization and technology. It has offered suggestions for implementing theological and ecological foundations. Nevertheless, it has been acknowledged that amidst this process of transition, the Church is struggling with the immediate need to adjust the message and methods of its pastoral ministry, especially to the youth who are most easily allured and impacted by new waves of change.

The dissertation has strongly proposed that the relevant message and methods for holistic, formative and transformative youth ministry must consider the basic yet vital prerequisites for comprehensive youth ministry as discussed in chapters one, two, three and four and the ways to inculcate them in chapter five. The first chapter has addressed context: the geographical, demographic, historical and religious features of Uganda that impact the youth of the Archdiocese of Mbarara. This includes the physical features, the means of livelihood and the religious and tribal compositions. It discussed the historical factors like the British policy of divide and rule—or, rather, divide and conquer—and the adversarial relationship between Anglican and Catholic missionaries that left the country divided. The chapter also pointed out the decades of suffering caused by political intrigue, conflict, and war—especially under the dictator Idi Amin, but also the liberation wars—that brought about deplorable poverty, moral decadence and too many

\[\textit{Catholic Perspectives, 146.}\]
deaths. The social, cultural, and political as well as the educational shifts have been analyzed: the traditional cultural values like the hierarchy of authority (God, sub-deities, the living-dead, the elders, the young and the unborn); family and kin (individual person – Omuntu, family – Eka, the extended family – Ekika, the tribe – Oruganda, humanity – Abantu); the marriage process and informal education by socialization and apprenticeship. All these were discussed with the backdrop of the influence of the current shift to western civilization and the impact it is making on the youth.

The second chapter laid out the current archdiocesan administrative structure: Archdiocese, Parish, Eucharistic Center, Hiika and Basic Ecclesial Communities [BEC]; the personnel involved in youth ministry (pastors, curates, chaplains, and lay ministers); the existing youth groups and institutions involved in youth ministry as well as the age group that is the focus of this study. These, as the dissertation explains are the people, the structures and the groups where the youth will be afforded opportunities to gather, be acquainted and be ministered. Particular challenges and obstacles include the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the abuse and neglect of the youth, popular culture, peer pressure, the paths of least resistance for the youth, and including youth with disabilities are discussed in relation to the traditional cultural attitudes. The youth are actually facing these issues and ways for youth ministry to put them into account are proposed.

Theological foundations are discussed in chapter three as God’s initiative of love and human faithful response to God. The self-revelation of the Triune God is discussed since it is the main distinguishing factor between Christianity (Catholicism) and
the African Traditional Religions (ATR). The chapter has drawn the content of the theological foundations from by ATR and from Catholic doctrine: Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and Teaching Authority of the Church (Magisterium) for Catholic doctrine, and the hierarchy of authority and other traditional ways of acknowledging the revelation of the divine for ATR. In the discussion of human response, sin, and grace, the sacramentality of the Church, prayer, and consecrated lives were discussed as radical ways of assent to the divine. All these were discussed side by side with the traditional expressions of human response through acknowledgement of God’s love and mercy, the rites of passage and the roles of specialists in ATR. The youth find themselves in the confused situation of living in families that cherish traditional values of worship (Bacwezi Bashomi) while at the same time confessing Christianity. Inculturation theology was proposed as a bridge between ATR and Christianity.

Ecological foundations, discussed in chapter four, include the handiwork of God in creation as a sacrament – a visible sign that confers God’s grace. As explained in this dissertation, the contents of ecological foundations form the nature and nurture of the youth. The discussion suggests that the term “ecology” transcends the natural environment to include existence, growth, education, and formation by numerous entities: God, the environment (ecosystems), individual nature (traits), as well as the family, the church, the school and society. These were discussed with an emphasis on harmonious living through responsible stewardship – environmental consciousness, human dignity derived from imago Dei, acknowledging the nature of the youth, and nurture in the family, the church and the school as well as in society. Ecological foundations raise and form the
youth. As the contents of the chapter explain, holistic, formative, and informative youth ministry must make the youth conscious of how paramount ecological foundations are to their being fervent believers and responsible citizens.

Chapter five revisited the content of the previous four chapters and suggested practical ways of implementing an integral and meaningful youth ministry by applying theological and ecological foundations to the actual lives of the youth. The existing structure of the Church in the Archdiocese, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the context of the youth were discussed. Practical methods that include traditional cultural and modern means were proposed in order to reach out to the youth in language and methods that appeal to them. Theological foundations – Revelation, sin and grace, and the seven sacraments, as well as prayer and consecrated lives were presented in a manner that would assist the youth to appreciate and claim grace as well as building personal relationships with God. The indispensability of authority and models to the youth – Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and the saints— were discussed under the broader significance of the dissertation with conviction that if the youth will be assisted practically to appreciate these great heroes, they will turn to them during their own pilgrimage of faith through life in this world.

Finally, the youth aged sixteen through twenty-two stand at the crossroads between childhood and adulthood. They are beset with challenges due to the natural transition characteristic of adolescence, yet they are intelligent, energetic, and open to guidance. The context in which they find themselves, including their socio-political and
economic situations, contains the particular challenges and obstacles that influence their physical, intellectual and moral growth. By understanding the youth and their contexts, holistic youth ministry can integrate theological and ecological foundations into programs that help young people cope with their particular life challenges and prepare them to become God-fearing youth, responsible citizens, and adults.

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