

**AN ANALYSIS OF EFFECTS OF CONFLICTS BETWEEN PRIESTS AND LAY  
READERS ON CHURCH MINISTRY IN ENDIINZI ARCHDEACONRY ANKOLE  
DIOCESE**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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**DECLARATION**

I, Katsigazi Richard declare that the work presented in this Report is original and my own research work to the best of my knowledge and it has never been submitted for any academic award in any institution of higher learning.

Signature.....

Date.....

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**APPROVAL**

I approve that this research report has been done under my supervision and is now ready for submission and examination

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## **DEDICATION**

This research report is dedicated to my beloved family members especially my parents, my Lord the Bishop of Ankole Diocese, whose unwavering support, endless patience, and boundless love have carried me through every season of life. You are my greatest champion and my truest companion, and this report exists because of the strength and inspiration you so provide.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduced the study on an analysis of effects of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese. It consists of the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of study, research questions, scope and significance of the study.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Conflicts between clergy and lay readers are not unique to any single region or denomination but are a widespread phenomenon affecting church ministry globally. Muhanji Jones (2016) emphasizes that hierarchical structures in church leadership are a primary source of tension between priests and lay readers. In many traditional Christian denominations, there is a strict division between the clergy, who are responsible for spiritual oversight, and the laity, who assist in specific ministerial roles. The perceived power imbalance often leads to misunderstandings and conflict, which can negatively impact church operations.

Globally, churches have tried to mitigate these conflicts through the adoption of collaborative leadership models, which have been shown to foster better relationships between clergy and lay leaders. Anderson Patrick (2020) states that churches in Europe and North America, for instance, have begun to adopt more inclusive decision-making processes where lay readers are given a voice in the administrative aspects of church ministry. This inclusive approach helps reduce tension and improve cooperation, which is essential for effective ministry.

Another global trend is the increasing professionalization of lay ministry. According to Thompson Aranji (2018), formal education and training programs for lay readers have been introduced in many denominations to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. These initiatives aim to improve the collaboration between clergy and laity by ensuring that both groups are equally prepared for ministry roles.

Across Africa, the church plays a critical role in both the spiritual and social lives of communities, making the relationship between clergy and lay leaders particularly significant. Akinyemi Aranji (2019) observes that in many African contexts, lay readers often come from the same local

communities as their congregants, whereas priests may come from different regions or even countries. This cultural disconnect can contribute to tensions, as lay readers may feel that their local knowledge and connections are undervalued by the clergy. These tensions are exacerbated by broader socio-economic and political dynamics that affect the African church.

Taringa Chitando (2021) highlights the role of traditional leadership structures in African communities as both a source of strength and conflict within the church. In some cases, conflicts between priests and lay readers arise from competing power dynamics within the local community, where lay readers may hold significant influence outside the church. This can create tension when priests, who are typically seen as the ultimate authority in spiritual matters, must navigate these local power structures.

In East Africa, where the church continues to grow rapidly, the relationship between priests and lay readers has taken on added importance. According to Omollo Cramer (2020), the East African church is often under-resourced, leading to tensions over the allocation of limited resources. In many cases, lay readers are responsible for much of the day-to-day operations of the church, especially in rural areas where priests may only visit periodically. This can lead to conflicts over decision-making authority and resource management, particularly when priests and lay readers have differing views on how church funds should be used.

In Kenya and Uganda, Mugendi Teresia (2021) notes that one of the primary sources of conflict between priests and lay readers is the lack of clear role definitions. In many East African churches, lay readers are expected to perform a variety of roles, ranging from preaching to administrative tasks, without a clear understanding of the boundaries between their responsibilities and those of the clergy. This ambiguity can lead to disputes over authority and accountability, which in turn affect the overall functioning of the church.

Additionally, Omondi (2019) emphasizes the importance of peer mentorship programs in East Africa as a way to reduce conflicts. By pairing inexperienced lay readers and clergy with more seasoned church leaders, these programs foster the development of strong leadership skills and conflict resolution strategies. This mentorship ensures that lay readers and priests have a better

understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which helps to minimize tensions and improve collaboration.

In Uganda, the Church of Uganda has historically relied heavily on lay readers to support its ministry efforts, particularly in rural areas where priests may be in short supply. According to Nsubuga Denis (2021), lay readers in Uganda play a crucial role in the spiritual life of their communities, often leading services and providing pastoral care in the absence of a full-time priest. However, this reliance on lay readers can also lead to conflicts, especially when priests and lay readers disagree on how to manage church activities or when lay readers feel that their contributions are undervalued.

Additionally, Mukasa (2021) highlights the role of financial management as a key area of conflict between priests and lay readers in Uganda. In many rural parishes, lay readers are responsible for collecting and managing church funds, which can lead to disputes with priests over how these funds should be used. To address these issues, the Church of Uganda has introduced financial transparency initiatives, which aim to ensure that both clergy and laity are involved in the budgeting and financial decision-making processes.

In Endiinzi Archdeaconry, located within the Ankole Diocese of Uganda, conflicts between priests and lay readers have been a persistent issue that affects the overall effectiveness of church ministry. Tumwesigye (2022) reports that these conflicts are often rooted in power struggles over the leadership and management of parish activities. In many cases, lay readers feel that they are not given enough authority or recognition for the work they do, while priests may feel that their leadership is being undermined by lay readers who take on too much responsibility.

One of the specific challenges faced in Endiinzi Archdeaconry is the shortage of full-time clergy, which places a greater burden on lay readers to manage church affairs. Turyasingura (2023) notes that this has led to conflicts over decision-making authority, particularly when lay readers make decisions in the absence of a priest, only for those decisions to be challenged or overturned when the priest returns.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Conflicts between priests and lay readers in the Endiinzi Archdeaconry of Ankole Diocese, Uganda, have increasingly disrupted the effectiveness of church ministry. These conflicts often arise from power struggles, unclear role definitions, and disagreements over the management of church resources. Lay readers, who play a significant role in the day-to-day operations of rural parishes, sometimes feel undervalued or undermined by priests who may challenge their authority. Conversely, priests may perceive lay readers as overstepping their boundaries or failing to adhere to clerical oversight.

This strained relationship negatively affects the spiritual, administrative, and financial aspects of church ministry. The division between clergy and laity has led to decreased cooperation, hindered decision-making, and reduced the overall functionality of the church. As a result, essential church programs, including pastoral care, community outreach, and worship services, have suffered, limiting the church's ability to fulfill its mission.

Despite some efforts to address these issues, such as regular meetings and financial transparency initiatives, the conflict between priests and lay readers remains a persistent problem, threatening the unity and growth of the church in this region. This study seeks to analyze the effects of these conflicts on church ministry and explore possible solutions for improving collaboration between clergy and laity in Endiinzi Archdeaconry.

### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to establish an analysis of effects of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese.

### **1.5 Objectives of study**

1. To establish the causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese.
2. To examine how the conflicts between the clergy and lay readers affect church ministry
3. To establish what is being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese?
2. How do these conflicts between the clergy and lay readers affect church ministry?
3. What is being done to solve these conflicts for better Church ministry?

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

Geographically, this study was conducted within Endiinzi Archdeaconry, Ankole Diocese whose headquarters are located on Ruharo hill Mbarara City in western Uganda.

The content scope of the study was limited to: establishing the causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry, how these conflicts affect ministry and what is being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, Ankole Diocese.

The study utilized literature for the period of 20 years that is from 2002 to 2022 because it is within this time period that Endiinzi Archdeaconry came into existence.

## **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The findings from this study will guide the researcher in drawing recommendations to the Church of Uganda on how it will keep the Anglican tradition amidst the wave of Church conflicts.

Further, the completion of this study will provide enough literature upon which future scholars will base their studies in the same field of knowledge.

This study will also assist the researcher in completing his course at Uganda Christian University since it is one of the requirements for him to graduate.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section reviewed literature on the study related to the Conflicts between priests and lay readers and Anglican

#### **2.2 Causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry**

Globally, conflicts between clergy and laity, including lay readers, have been observed in various denominations and contexts. One of the significant causes is the power dynamics within the Church hierarchy. According to Schwarz (2015), in his study on clergy-laity relationships in the global Anglican Communion, differences in expectations between clergy and lay readers can lead to tensions. Lay readers often feel marginalized in decision-making processes, despite their significant role in ministry. This discrepancy is exacerbated by unclear definitions of roles and responsibilities, often leading to misunderstandings and conflict.

Additionally, Patton Watson (2017) highlights that theological disagreements between clergy and laity also contribute to conflicts, especially in contexts where lay readers are seen as lesser authorities on doctrinal matters. For example, differing interpretations of scripture and church tradition often lead to disputes over how ministry should be conducted. In many global contexts, lay readers feel that priests overshadow their contributions, which leads to frustration and discontent.

Furthermore, Hunter Night (2019) discusses how resource allocation within churches can create tensions. Priests may have access to more financial and material resources, while lay readers often feel neglected or undercompensated for their work, leading to further discord.

Across the African continent, conflicts between clergy and lay readers are prevalent in several denominations. One of the primary causes identified by Mwaura (2018) is the colonial legacy that shaped hierarchical church structures in Africa. The introduction of Western-style clergy systems often placed ordained priests in positions of authority, while lay ministers were relegated to lower tiers of influence. This historical arrangement has continued to create friction, as lay readers demand more recognition and authority in their ministries.

In a study by Adebayo (2020) on church conflicts in West Africa, he notes that cultural differences and the evolving nature of Christianity have resulted in clashes between priests and lay ministers. Traditional African societies often valued community leadership, which contrasts with the more individualistic, hierarchical clergy model. In some regions, lay readers are chosen by the community and expected to play vital roles, yet they find themselves undermined by church leadership.

Chitando (2021) also discusses the role of gender and social justice in clergy-lay reader conflicts. In many African contexts, lay readers are expected to follow the directives of male-dominated clergy, leading to tensions, especially where female lay readers are concerned. This dynamic often leads to calls for reform and equality in church leadership, which can further intensify conflicts.

In East Africa, particularly in Anglican dioceses, conflicts between priests and lay readers have been documented extensively. Omollo (2019) points out that one major issue is the lack of formal training and recognition for lay readers, which contrasts with the rigorous training priests undergo. In some cases, lay readers who have served faithfully for years feel sidelined when less experienced priests assume authority over them. This is compounded by the lack of clear succession plans or mentoring processes within the church, which often leads to disillusionment among lay ministers.

Njoroge (2020) highlights the financial disparities between clergy and lay readers, particularly in rural areas. Priests often receive stipends and other financial benefits, while lay readers are expected to volunteer or receive minimal compensation. This imbalance creates resentment, as lay readers believe their contributions to church ministry are not sufficiently valued.

Additionally, Mugisha (2021) discusses how ethnic and tribal affiliations play a role in conflicts within East African churches. In some instances, priests and lay readers from different ethnic backgrounds find it difficult to work together, as local power struggles influence church leadership and decision-making. This creates a divide that is difficult to bridge, especially in multi-ethnic parishes.

In Uganda, the Anglican Church has seen its share of conflicts between priests and lay readers. According to Kibalama (2018), the ambiguity of roles between priests and lay readers is a

significant cause of conflict. Many lay readers in Uganda feel that their pastoral responsibilities overlap with those of the ordained clergy, leading to confusion about authority and responsibility. This often leads to clashes, especially in rural parishes where lay readers are the primary leaders of congregations due to a shortage of priests.

Mukasa (2020) also points to doctrinal differences as a source of conflict. Priests, being more formally educated in theology, may insist on more traditional forms of worship, while lay readers, who are more in tune with their congregations, may prefer more contextualized or contemporary forms of ministry. This divide is particularly evident in rural areas, where lay readers often feel that priests impose foreign or outdated practices on local congregations.

Furthermore, Nsubuga (2021) discusses the issue of inadequate support and mentorship for lay readers in the Church of Uganda. While priests have access to diocesan resources and training, lay readers are often left to their own devices, with little guidance or formal education in ministry. This disparity leads to frustration and a feeling of being undervalued within the church structure.

In Endiinsi Archdeaconry, the specific causes of conflicts between priests and lay readers reflect broader national and regional trends, but with some unique local dynamics. Tumwesigye (2022) identifies cultural tensions as a critical factor in these conflicts. In Ankole, traditional leadership structures often place significant authority on lay elders, many of whom serve as lay readers in the church. However, ordained priests, who are often younger and less experienced in local customs, may impose decisions that conflict with local traditions, leading to friction.

Additionally, Turyasingura (2023) points out that the financial struggles of rural parishes contribute to these conflicts. Priests are often stationed in Endiinsi for short periods and receive stipends from the diocese, while lay readers, who are long-term members of the community, are expected to serve without financial compensation. This discrepancy leads to feelings of inequality and disrespect among lay readers.

Last but not least, Byamugisha (2023) discusses the lack of communication between the diocesan leadership and local parishes. Priests, being more mobile and connected to the diocesan offices, often make decisions without consulting lay readers, who are more familiar with the day-to-day

needs of the congregation. This disconnect leads to misunderstandings and, ultimately, conflicts over the direction of ministry in the Archdeaconry.

### **2.3 How the conflicts between the clergy and lay readers affect church**

Globally, conflicts between priests and lay readers have profound effects on church ministry, disrupting not only the internal workings of the church but also its mission and outreach. Schwarz (2015) notes that disunity within church leadership can lead to a breakdown in communication and hinder collaboration, affecting the overall functioning of ministry. When priests and lay readers are at odds, congregational activities such as worship, evangelism, and community outreach suffer due to poor coordination. This disunity is particularly harmful in mission-driven contexts, where churches rely on both clergy and lay ministers to work together to achieve their goals.

Furthermore, Patton (2017) highlights that doctrinal disputes arising from conflicts can alienate congregation members who may struggle to reconcile differing theological perspectives within the church leadership. This creates a division among the laity, weakening the spiritual cohesion of the community. In some global settings, conflicts over liturgical practices or theological interpretations have led to congregational splits, diminishing the overall capacity of the church to minister effectively.

Moreover, Hunter (2019) argues that conflicts lead to inefficiency in resource allocation, where the tension between priests and lay readers results in poor financial management and misallocation of resources. This affects the church's ability to fund programs, support missionaries, and maintain facilities, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of its ministry.

Across Africa, the effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers are significant, especially in relation to church growth and community outreach. Mwaura (2018) emphasizes that conflicts stemming from the colonial legacy in African churches often result in a lack of trust between lay readers and ordained clergy, which weakens the church's ability to function as a unified body. The division between clergy and lay readers causes stagnation in ministry growth, as neither group is able to effectively lead or support church activities. This has particularly harmful consequences for youth programs and evangelism initiatives, which rely on cohesive leadership.

According to Adebayo (2020), in West African contexts, conflicts erode community trust in the church's leadership. Lay readers are often more connected to the local community than priests, and when conflicts arise, the community's confidence in the church's ability to lead and guide them spiritually diminishes. This loss of trust negatively impacts participation in church services, community outreach, and financial giving, all of which are crucial for sustaining church ministry.

Chitando (2021) notes that gender-based conflicts between clergy and lay readers often lead to the exclusion of women and marginalized groups from leadership roles within the church. This exclusion weakens the church's capacity to address issues such as gender justice, domestic violence, and social inequalities, areas where the church is expected to be a moral and spiritual guide.

In East Africa, conflicts between priests and lay readers have contributed to the inefficiency of ministry operations. Omollo (2019) explains that when roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined, lay readers often feel demotivated, leading to low participation in essential church functions such as preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. This in turn places a greater burden on the clergy, who may become overextended and unable to meet the needs of their congregations effectively. As a result, parishioners may feel neglected, which can reduce church attendance and involvement.

Njoroge (2020) emphasizes that financial conflicts between priests and lay readers have led to serious consequences for church ministry, particularly in rural areas. Disparities in compensation and resource allocation often create resentment among lay readers, who feel undervalued. This affects the morale of both lay leaders and volunteers, ultimately hindering the church's ability to maintain community development projects and outreach programs that depend heavily on lay participation.

Furthermore, Mugisha (2021) points out that ethnic and tribal conflicts within the church can lead to factionalism, which further fragments church leadership. In cases where priests and lay readers come from different ethnic groups, internal church conflicts can mirror broader ethnic tensions, leading to the alienation of certain groups from the church. This has the potential to erode the church's role as a unifying force within society.

In Uganda, conflicts between priests and lay readers have profound consequences for church ministry, particularly in rural areas. Kibalama (2018) states that poor coordination and leadership disputes between priests and lay readers undermine the church's ability to function effectively. In many cases, these conflicts delay decision-making processes regarding church activities, including organizing services, administering sacraments, and managing church projects. As a result, the church's mission to serve the spiritual and social needs of the community is compromised.

Mukasa (2020) highlights that doctrinal disputes between clergy and lay readers often result in inconsistent teachings within the church. In Uganda, where the church plays a significant role in education and community development, these inconsistencies can confuse church members, particularly in rural parishes where access to theological training is limited. This diminishes the church's authority and credibility as a source of spiritual guidance and education.

Additionally, Nsubuga (2021) discusses how resource-related conflicts between priests and lay readers, particularly concerning the use of church funds and property, affect ministry operations. In some cases, disagreements over resource management have led to legal disputes or the withdrawal of donor support, severely limiting the church's ability to fund its programs and services. This has a direct impact on outreach efforts, community projects, and the overall sustainability of church ministries.

In Endiinsi Archdeaconry, the impact of conflicts between priests and lay readers is acutely felt within the local church community. Tumwesigye (2022) argues that these conflicts have resulted in leadership vacuums, where lay readers, who are often long-term members of the congregation, feel excluded from decision-making processes. This exclusion leads to a lack of continuity in leadership, as priests are often stationed in rural parishes for short periods. As a result, lay readers, who have the trust and support of the community, feel demoralized and may withdraw from active ministry.

Turyasingura (2023) identifies that financial conflicts in Endiinsi Archdeaconry have had a detrimental effect on the church's ability to sustain its ministry. Priests, who receive stipends from the diocese, are often seen as outsiders by lay readers, who serve without pay. This creates a rift between the two groups, affecting the willingness of lay readers to participate in church activities

and outreach programs. The result is a reduction in church-led initiatives that are critical for community welfare, such as health services, education programs, and social support.

Finally, Byamugisha Josaphat (2023) discusses the impact of poor communication between priests and lay readers in Endiinzi. The failure to communicate effectively leads to confusion and misunderstandings about church policies and procedures. For example, lay readers may be excluded from meetings where important decisions about church activities are made, leading to discontent and a sense of disenfranchisement. This lack of cooperation ultimately reduces the efficiency of ministry efforts, as lay readers are critical to the day-to-day functioning of rural parishes.

#### **2.4 Measures being done to solve the conflicts between the Clergy and lay readers for better Church ministry**

Globally, the church has adopted various measures to mitigate conflicts between priests and lay readers, aiming to foster better ministry collaboration. Jones (2016) argues that one of the most effective solutions has been the promotion of structured communication channels between clergy and laity. Churches around the world have developed formalized systems for regular meetings, workshops, and retreats that encourage open dialogue and the resolution of grievances. These communication forums provide an opportunity for both priests and lay readers to discuss their concerns, share ideas, and collaborate on ministry goals.

Thompson (2018) highlights the importance of shared leadership models in reducing power struggles between priests and lay readers. In many Western contexts, churches have embraced a more egalitarian leadership approach where decision-making responsibilities are distributed more equally between clergy and laity. This allows lay readers to have a say in the administration of church activities, which reduces tensions caused by hierarchical power structures.

Anderson (2020) suggests that lay training and education programs have also been instrumental in resolving conflicts. These programs focus on equipping lay readers with theological and pastoral skills, making them more effective and confident in their roles. This professional development encourages mutual respect between priests and lay readers, as both groups gain a clearer understanding of each other's responsibilities and competencies.

On the African continent, the church has implemented specific measures to address the unique socio-cultural factors that contribute to conflicts between priests and lay readers. Akinyemi (2019) points out that one of the main solutions has been the adoption of contextual leadership training, which tailors theological education to the African context. This has helped to bridge the gap between priests, who are often trained in Western theological traditions, and lay readers, who may be more familiar with local customs and practices. Contextualizing leadership training fosters a better understanding of the complementary roles of clergy and laity in ministry.

Chitando (2021) notes that African churches have also worked to reduce gender and ethnic conflicts by promoting inclusive leadership policies. Some churches have introduced quotas to ensure that women and members of marginalized ethnic groups are represented in church leadership, which helps to balance power dynamics and reduce tension. This inclusive approach ensures that lay readers from diverse backgrounds feel valued and respected in their roles, reducing conflict with clergy.

Tewodros Yosef (2020) discusses how African churches have increasingly relied on community-based conflict resolution strategies. These strategies, grounded in traditional African methods of mediation and reconciliation, emphasize communal dialogue and consensus-building. Such practices help to resolve conflicts amicably and prevent divisions within the church. In East and Southern Africa, church councils or elders play a critical role in mediating conflicts between priests and lay readers, ensuring that disputes are handled in a manner that preserves the unity of the congregation.

In East Africa, the church has implemented a number of region-specific measures to address conflicts between priests and lay readers. Omollo (2020) suggests that the adoption of joint leadership teams in East African dioceses has been an effective way to reduce conflicts. By creating leadership teams composed of both priests and lay readers, the church ensures that all voices are heard in decision-making processes. These teams collaborate on issues ranging from church administration to pastoral care, which fosters unity and reduces the likelihood of conflict.

Mugendi (2021) highlights the role of financial transparency initiatives in addressing financial conflicts between priests and lay readers. In many East African churches, lay readers have raised

concerns about the mismanagement of church funds by clergy. To address these issues, churches have introduced transparent budgeting processes, where both clergy and laity are involved in financial planning and oversight. This ensures that resources are allocated fairly and reduces suspicions of financial misconduct.

Additionally, Omondi (2019) points out that peer mentoring programs have been instrumental in resolving conflicts. Priests and lay readers are paired with more experienced church leaders who act as mentors and provide guidance on how to navigate leadership challenges. This mentorship system encourages both priests and lay readers to develop their leadership skills in a supportive environment, reducing the potential for conflict.

In Uganda, efforts to resolve conflicts between priests and lay readers have been focused on improving the working relationship between the two groups. Kibalama (2020) notes that the Church of Uganda has developed initiatives aimed at clarifying the roles and responsibilities of priests and lay readers. By clearly delineating duties, the church helps to reduce misunderstandings and power struggles that arise from unclear role definitions. This clarity allows both groups to work more effectively together, leading to more efficient ministry operations.

Nsubuga (2021) highlights that leadership training programs for both priests and lay readers have been introduced to improve collaboration. These programs, often conducted at diocesan levels, aim to provide both groups with leadership and conflict resolution skills. By fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding, the Church of Uganda has been able to reduce the frequency of conflicts between its clergy and lay leaders.

Additionally, Mukasa (2021) points out that the Church of Uganda has emphasized the importance of inclusive decision-making processes. In many Ugandan dioceses, both priests and lay readers are now included in parish councils and other decision-making bodies. This ensures that lay readers have a say in how church affairs are managed, reducing the likelihood of conflicts arising from exclusion or marginalization.

In Endiinsi Archdeaconry, specific measures have been implemented to resolve conflicts between priests and lay readers in a way that strengthens ministry efforts. Tumwesigye (2022) reports that the archdeaconry has introduced regular clergy-lay reader meetings to foster open communication

and address grievances early. These meetings provide a platform for both priests and lay readers to discuss their concerns in a structured manner, which helps to prevent small disputes from escalating into major conflicts.

Turyasingura (2023) notes that another measure taken in Endiinzi Archdeaconry is the creation of rotational leadership opportunities for lay readers. By giving lay readers the chance to take on leadership roles in various church ministries, the archdeaconry fosters a sense of shared responsibility and reduces the hierarchical tension that often leads to conflict. This also helps lay readers feel more appreciated for their contributions, improving overall morale and cooperation with priests.

In addition, Byamugisha (2023) discusses how the archdeaconry has adopted a resource-sharing model to address financial conflicts. In this model, priests and lay readers collaborate on decisions regarding the allocation of church resources, ensuring that funds are distributed equitably. This model has not only improved financial transparency but has also reduced the sense of competition between clergy and laity over limited resources, leading to a more harmonious working relationship.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section outlines the research methodology employed in the study titled “Conflicts between priests and lay readers and Church Ministry in Ankole Diocese of the Church of Uganda”

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study utilized a qualitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey strategy which will help to generalize the population, allow conclusions to be made about the whole population at one point in a short period. The study was carried out in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole Diocese which has 04 parishes and 54 sub-parishes. From each parish, the researcher selected 05 sub-parishes/ churches to participate in the study. This approach was chosen to capture the multifaceted nature of the research topic, validate findings through triangulation, and provide a deeper understanding of the issue by harnessing the strengths of both methods.

#### **3.3 Area of Study**

This study was conducted from Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole Diocese in western Uganda. The area is characterized by a blend of residential, commercial, and agricultural activities, reflecting the diverse livelihoods of its residents.

#### **3.4 Sources of Information**

Primary Sources. Here, the researcher obtained raw data from the field using data collection tools.

Secondary Sources. Here, data was collected from the existing sources such internet, textbooks and library.

#### **3.5 Population of the study**

According to Omari Mcholo Issa (2011), a population is the totality of any group of units, which have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest.

In this study, the target population involved Anglican Church leaders such as Parish priests, Lay readers, Christians and this study as well targeted a population of 100.

### 3.6 Sample Size

Omari (2011) defined a sample as a small proportion of a population selected for observations and analysis. In this study, the researcher utilized sample size determination table to get 56 respondents as distributed

*Table 3.1: Population and Sample Size Representation*

Category	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Archdeacon	01	01	Purposive sampling
Parish Priests	04	03	Purposive sampling
Lay readers	25	18	Purposive sampling
Christians	70	34	Simple random sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56</b>	

### 3.7 Sampling determination and sampling

Kothari C.R (2013) defined sampling technique as the process by which a representative portion of the population is selected for data correction. The study employed different techniques to select participants.

### 3.8 Simple Random Sampling

Selection of Christians was done using simple random sampling. Saunders, Lewis and Thorn hill (2012) defined simple random sampling as the type of sampling which provides equal chance to every member in the population to be included in the study. Under this, the researcher first used stratified sampling by Christians according to parishes and sub-parishes. After this, fish bowl method was used to get equal number of respondents from different strata (Botev & Ridder, 2017).

### 3.9 Purposive Sampling

Selection of the Archdeacon, parish priests and lay readers was by purposive sampling technique. Omari (2011) defined purposive sampling as process which involves picking units most relevant or knowledgeable in the subject matter, and study them. These respondents were selected using purposive sampling because they have key information concerning the conflicts between lay readers and parish priests.

### **3.10 Variables and indicators**

In this study conflicts between priests and lay readers was the independent variable (I.V) and these influence the Dependent Variable (D.V) which is the Church Ministry.

### **3.11 Procedure/ Protocols for data collection**

The research procedure entailed obtaining an introductory letter from the Dean of Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology (BTSDT), seeking support for the research. The procedure included Churches, securing informed consent, conducting interviews and surveys, and meticulously recording responses. This systematic approach was designed to guarantee the accuracy of the data collected. After this, data was collected from the necessary respondents as described above, after which sorting and analysis was done to prepare for the compilation of the research report.

### **3.12 Data Collection Methods**

Data is collected through two main methods: interviews and questionnaires.

#### **Interview Interviews**

The use of structured interviews with key stakeholders, Archdeacon, priests and lay readers is a valuable data collection method for gaining insights into the Conflicts between priests and lay readers and Church Ministry in Ankole Diocese. Structured interviews involve a pre-determined set of questions and a standardized format, ensuring consistency in data collection. This approach allowed researchers to systematically gather information from these important individuals, enabling a deeper understanding of the topic. The structured nature of the interviews ensures that relevant and consistent data is collected from each participant, facilitating subsequent analysis and the drawing of meaningful conclusions from the gathered information.

#### **Questionnaire Method**

Data from Christians was collected using questionnaire administering questionnaires to both Christian categories is an effective method for collecting quantitative data on the experiences and perceptions related to Conflicts between priests and lay readers and Church Ministry in Ankole Diocese”

### **3.13 Quality Control**

To maintain data quality, the study assessed the validity and reliability of research instruments.

### **Validity of the Instruments**

In this study, validity of the data collection instruments was tested through the pilot study in the aspects of comprehensiveness, language clarity and relevance of items. Four knowledgeable research experts in the area of content were approached to help check the tools. The tools were tested using content related evidence of validity. After computing the levels of agreement on the items, the researcher calculated content validity index using the formula of the Content Validity Index was calculated as;

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No. of items regarded relevant, } n}{\text{Total No. of items, } N}$$

$$CVI = \frac{n}{N}$$

Because CVI was calculated to be above 0.7, the tools were considered to yield valid findings as recommended by (Sekaran U, 2013).

### **Reliability of Instruments**

In this study, reliability of data collection instruments were tested during pilot study. Instrument reliability was tested using pre-testing and Cronbach Alpha coefficient values on four knowledgeable research experts in the area of content.

Then responses were entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). When the scores are found at 0.7 and above alpha values, it indicates good credits hence better for use in the study. This is in line with (Amin M.E, 2015).

### **3.14 Strategy for data processing and analysis**

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of one's data. It involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp 2016).

The methods which were used in data analysis are influenced by whether the research is qualitative or quantitative. In this study therefore, data was analysed quantitatively to draw conclusions.

Quantitative data from questionnaires was sorted, coded, edited and classified into categories as per study objectives. Descriptive statistical methods were employed to describe the findings.

The data was collected, organized and presented by tables to describe its behaviour of data and to measure relationship between two variables.

### **3.15 Ethical Considerations**

Confidentiality. The researcher ensured that the information and respondents names are not disclosed.

Informed consent. The researcher had to explain to the respondents the purpose of the research and until an informed consent is obtained.

The researcher did use anyone's information without observing copyright rules or respecting the original author of the work.

### **3.17 Anticipated methodological constraints**

In this study, the researcher is expected to have the following limitations:

Limited funding. The researcher was faced with limited funds since there were a lot of costs involved. However, the researcher sorted this by soliciting more funds from friends and family.

Some respondents might resisted to provide data in fear of confidentiality. However, the researcher solved this by convincing them and explaining them that this study is for academic purposes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings on the effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese. They are presented using descriptive statistical methods which include tables and figures.

#### 4.2 Causes of the conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole Diocese

The first objective of study was aimed at assessing the causes of the conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole Diocese, and as a way to fulfil this objective, some questions were set which required respondents' views. Responses were collected, presented, analyzed and discussed as in the proceeding sections.

##### 4.2.1 Responses on whether members encountered any conflicts with your parish priest(s) during your service

*Table 4.1: Respondents' Experience of Conflict with Parish Priests*

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	34	61%
No	22	39%
Total	<b>56</b>	100%

*Source: Field data, 2025*

According to the findings in Table 4.1, it was found that the majority 34(61%) of the respondents agreed that they had encountered conflicts with their parish priests during their service. The interpretation of this is that conflicts between priests and lay readers are prevalent in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, which may negatively impact church ministry and relationships among church leaders. This agrees with the findings of Majwara (2020), who asserted that strained relationships between different church leaders can hinder effective ministry and spiritual growth within congregations.

22(39%) of the respondents stated that they had not experienced any conflicts. The interpretation of this is that while conflicts exist, they are not universal, and some priests and lay readers maintain harmonious relationships. This aligns with the perspective of Kato (2018), who emphasized that effective leadership and mutual respect can reduce disputes within church settings.

#### 4.2.2 Churches where respondents have met and experienced the conflicts

*Table 4.2: Churches where conflicts have been experienced*

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
All the Churches I have served in	15	44%
In my current church	12	35%
In a few churches	07	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field data, 2025*

From Table 4.2, it was found that 15(44%) of the respondents who had encountered conflicts indicated that they had faced such conflicts in all the churches where they had served. This implies that conflicts may be systemic and deeply rooted in the church’s leadership structures, rather than isolated to individual congregations. This finding aligns with Kisembo (2019), who highlighted that church leadership conflicts often arise due to structural and hierarchical power struggles.

Further, it was found that 12(35%) of the respondents noted that the conflicts occurred only in their current church. The interpretation of this is that some conflicts may be caused by individual leadership differences rather than broader systemic issues. This supports the findings of Tumwine (2020), who argued that leadership dynamics in specific churches can lead to unique conflicts among clergy members.

The remaining 07 respondents (21%) of the respondents reported experiencing conflicts in only a few churches where they had served. The interpretation of this is that conflicts may not always be persistent but can emerge due to changing leadership, policies, or community interactions. This is in line with Mugisha (2017), who suggested that church conflicts can vary based on leadership transitions and congregation-specific dynamics.

### 4.2.3 Source of conflicts between lay readers and parish priests

*Table 4.3: Causes of conflicts between lay readers and parish priests*

Response	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Leadership style differences	15	27%
Financial management issues	06	11%
Poor communication	17	30%
Disagreements over roles and responsibilities	10	18%
Personal misunderstandings	04	07%

*Source: Field data, 2025*

From Table 4.3, it was found that the major cause of conflicts between priests and lay readers was leadership struggles

17(30%) of the respondents identified poor communication as the primary cause of conflicts. The interpretation of this is that ineffective communication leads to misunderstandings, mistrust, and tensions between priests and lay readers. This agrees with the study by Nsubuga (2021), which indicated that communication breakdowns are among the leading causes of leadership conflicts in religious institutions.

15(27%) of the respondents pointed to leadership style differences as a cause of conflicts. The interpretation of this is that variations in leadership approaches create disagreements on decision-making, authority, and delegation of responsibilities. This supports the research by Amanyana (2019), which found that leadership style disparities often result in power struggles within religious organizations.

10(18%) of the respondents cited disagreements over roles and responsibilities. The interpretation of this is that unclear job descriptions and overlapping duties lead to friction between priests and lay readers. This aligns with the findings of Karungi (2020), who emphasized that role ambiguity is a significant factor in organizational conflicts.

6(11%) of the respondents mentioned financial management issues as a cause of conflicts. The interpretation of this is that financial disputes, including budget allocation and transparency concerns, contribute to tensions between church leaders. This agrees with the findings of

Tumwebaze (2018), who noted that financial mismanagement frequently causes leadership disputes in church institutions.

4(7%) of the respondents attributed conflicts to personal misunderstandings. The interpretation of this is that individual personality differences and interpersonal disputes can escalate into broader conflicts affecting church ministry. This supports the argument made by Katongole (2016), who stated that personal grievances among church leaders can undermine effective teamwork and cooperation.

As far as this question is concerned, some members totaling to 04 and constituting 07% of the total number of respondents did not provide answers to certain questions. This means that either they had no personal experience with conflicts, chose not to disclose their views, or were unaware of the causes of conflicts. This highlights the need for further investigation into non-respondents' perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

### **4.3 Effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, Ankole Diocese**

The second objective of study was aimed at establishing the effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, Ankole Diocese, and as a way to fulfil this objective, some questions were set which required respondents' views. Responses were collected, presented, analyzed and discussed as in the proceeding sections.

#### **4.3.1 Whether these conflicts affect the Church ministry**

*Table 4.4: Respondents' views on whether conflicts affect Church ministry*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	56	100
No	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Field data, 2025*

From Table 4.4, it was found that all the respondents who participated in the study (56 or 100%) agreed that conflicts between priests and lay readers do affect church ministry. The entire sample group, consisting of 56 individuals (Archdeacon, Parish Priests, Lay Readers, and Christians), responded affirmatively to this question. This indicates a strong consensus that the conflicts

between the clergy and lay readers have a significant impact on the ministry. The interpretation of this is that the presence of conflicts is seen as a substantial issue affecting the effectiveness and unity of church ministry. This could manifest in various ways, such as divisions among congregants, disruptions in church programs, or a breakdown in communication between church leadership and the congregation. This result emphasizes the importance of addressing the root causes of such conflicts to foster a harmonious environment within the church. This agrees with the findings of Majwara (2020), who asserted that unresolved conflicts between clergy and laity often lead to a decrease in the effectiveness of church activities and can create a toxic environment that affects the overall spiritual well-being of the congregation. It further suggests the need for intervention strategies to mediate such conflicts and ensure the smooth running of church functions.

**Table 4.5: Ways in which conflicts affect Church Ministry**

Respondent Group	Disruption in Church Services	Decreased Congregational Unity	Reduced Spiritual Growth	Total
Archdeacon	1	0	0	01
Parish Priests	3	0	0	03
Lay Readers	12	5	1	18
Christians	20	12	2	34
Total	36	17	3	56

**Source: Field data, 2025**

From Table 4.5, it was found that the majority of the respondents (36 or 64%) indicated that the conflicts between priests and lay readers caused disruptions in church services. The interpretation of this is that a significant number of respondents believe that these conflicts directly interfere with the smooth running of church activities, particularly during worship services. Disruptions could manifest in various forms such as delays in service proceedings, interruptions during sermons, or disagreements that distract from the spiritual focus of the gathering. For example, unresolved conflicts might lead to awkward moments in services, affecting the overall flow of worship. This supports the findings of Smith (2015), who stated that conflicts between leaders in church settings can have a considerable impact on the order and effectiveness of church programs. He noted that such tensions create an environment where worship becomes less about spiritual enrichment and

more about internal disputes, which ultimately detracts from the worship experience of the congregation.

Secondly, it was found that 17 (30%) respondents mentioned that conflicts between the clergy and lay readers led to decreased congregational unity. This implies that, according to these respondents, the discord between church leaders had a ripple effect on the unity of the entire congregation. When leaders are at odds, it can create division within the church body, with members potentially taking sides or becoming disengaged from church activities. This disunity can lead to an overall weakened sense of community within the church, making it difficult for the congregation to work together towards common goals. Members may also feel uncertain about the direction of the church if the leadership is divided. This finding aligns with the assertions of Majwara (2020), who observed that church conflicts often spill over to the wider congregation, leading to divisions. As Majwara emphasized, the inability of church leaders to present a unified front affects not only the functioning of the church but also the relationships among its members. Church unity is critical for effective ministry, and these conflicts risk undermining that unity.

Furthermore, it was found that only 3 (5%) respondents felt that conflicts between priests and lay readers led to reduced spiritual growth. This means that, while a small number of respondents highlighted this aspect, the majority did not directly associate conflicts with a decrease in spiritual growth. The respondents who mentioned reduced spiritual growth may have felt that the distractions and tensions caused by conflicts hinder individuals' ability to engage deeply in worship and spiritual practices. In environments where there is division among leadership, congregants may feel unsettled or distracted, making it harder for them to focus on their spiritual development. As a result, the potential for personal growth in faith may be stunted. This corresponds with Galtun (2002), who suggested that a fractured church environment makes it difficult for believers to grow spiritually. He argued that spiritual nourishment relies on the leadership's example and the overall atmosphere of the church. When conflicts prevail, they overshadow the focus on spiritual growth and can lead to a spiritual decline within the congregation.

#### **4.4 Strategies being done to solve the conflicts between Church leaders for better ministry.**

The final objective of study was aimed at determining the strategies being put forward to solve the conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, Ankole

Diocese, and as a way to fulfil this objective, some questions were set which required respondents' views. Responses were collected, presented, analyzed and discussed as in the proceeding sections.

**Table 4.6: Responses on actions taken to solve conflicts**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Conducting reconciliation meetings	18	32
Providing continuous spiritual guidance	15	27
Engaging both parties in open dialogue	12	21
Strengthening church leadership structures	09	16
Training on conflict resolution	02	04
No significant action taken	02	04

**Source: Field data, 2025**

From Table 4.6, it was found that the majority of the respondents, 18 (32%), agreed that conducting reconciliation meetings was a significant action taken to solve the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers. The interpretation of this is that the church emphasizes restoring relationships through structured dialogue. This suggests a proactive approach where the church takes steps to bring parties in conflict together for mutual understanding. This is consistent with the findings of Tutu (2000), who argued that reconciliation plays a key role in healing divisions within religious communities.

In addition, 15 (27%) respondents mentioned providing continuous spiritual guidance as a solution. This highlights the importance of ongoing support from church leaders to address the root causes of conflict, aiming at the spiritual growth of the individuals involved. The interpretation of this is that spirituality remains at the core of resolving disputes, in line with Smith (2015), who emphasized the need for continuous spiritual care in maintaining harmony in church settings.

Furthermore, 12 (21%) respondents noted engaging both parties in open dialogue as an action taken. The interpretation of this is that the church actively encourages transparency and communication between conflicting parties, thus fostering a culture of openness. This approach aligns with Galtung (2002), who highlighted open dialogue as essential in conflict resolution.

Additionally, 9 (16%) respondents pointed out strengthening church leadership structures. This suggests that efforts have been made to address organizational weaknesses that may contribute to conflicts, with a focus on building more effective leadership frameworks. This agrees with Jones (2006), who stressed the importance of strong leadership structures in minimizing conflicts within religious organizations.

Finally, 2 (4%) respondents indicated training on conflict resolution. Although this response was less frequent, it suggests that there has been some level of emphasis on equipping church leaders and members with the necessary skills to address conflicts effectively. This supports the views of Miller (2011), who argued that conflict resolution training is a vital tool in preventing and addressing disputes in community settings.

It was also noted that 2 (4%) respondents indicated that no significant action had been taken. This response indicates that there are still areas where conflict management is lacking within the church, a concern highlighted by Walker (2013), who noted that without proper intervention, unresolved conflicts can escalate and negatively affect ministry.

#### **4.5 Other practical recommendations suggested as a way of overcoming these conflicts**

***Table 4.7: Recommended practical solutions***

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Strengthening leadership training programs	20	35
Encouraging teamwork and cooperation	16	28
Establishing clear communication channels	12	21
Enhancing accountability among leaders	06	10
Promoting spiritual mentorship programs	02	04

***Source: Field data, 2025***

From Table 4.7, it was found that the majority of respondents, 20 (35%), suggested strengthening leadership training programs as a practical recommendation. The interpretation of this is that there is a recognition of the need for more comprehensive leadership development to prevent conflicts from arising in the first place. This is consistent with the work of Bass (1990), who emphasized the importance of training leaders to manage challenges within their communities.

Additionally, 16 (28%) respondents proposed encouraging teamwork and cooperation as an effective recommendation. This suggests that respondents believe fostering collaboration between Priests and Lay Readers can reduce tensions and create a more harmonious working environment. This agrees with Tannen (1990), who argued that teamwork is a crucial factor in building strong, effective ministry teams.

Moreover, 12 (21%) respondents recommended establishing clear communication channels. The interpretation of this is that poor communication could be a root cause of conflict, and by setting clear communication systems, the church can prevent misunderstandings and resolve disputes more effectively. This supports Robinson's (2008) view that effective communication is vital in resolving conflicts in organizations.

Furthermore, 6 (10%) respondents suggested enhancing accountability among leaders. This recommendation implies that greater transparency and accountability within church leadership could prevent conflicts. This interpretation aligns with Mintzberg (1989), who stressed the need for accountability in leadership roles to maintain trust and order.

Lastly, 2 (4%) respondents proposed promoting spiritual mentorship programs. This indicates that there is also a suggestion to focus on personal spiritual development as a means of overcoming conflicts. This agrees with Foster (1997), who argued that spiritual mentorship can help guide individuals through personal and relational challenges.

In conclusion, the analysis of the responses reveals that while the church has made significant efforts in addressing conflicts through reconciliation, dialogue, and spiritual guidance, there is still room for improvement, particularly in the areas of leadership training, communication, and accountability. These findings resonate with the views of scholars who emphasize the role of effective leadership and communication in resolving conflicts in faith-based communities.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the theological reflection of the research findings on the effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese. It is presented as based on the objectives of study.

#### **5.2 Theological Reflection on the auses of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers**

The presence of conflicts in church ministry is not a new phenomenon. Theologically, conflicts between priests and lay readers in Endiinzi Archdeaconry can be examined through biblical principles and historical church contexts. Leadership disagreements, poor communication, and role conflicts have been evident throughout biblical history, affecting both the early church and contemporary Christian communities.

One significant biblical example of leadership conflict is found in the dispute between Paul and Barnabas (see Acts 15:36-41). Their disagreement over John Mark led to a separation, illustrating how differences in leadership perspectives can create divisions even among faithful servants of God. The lesson from this incident is that conflicts, when not properly handled, can result in broken relationships, which may weaken church unity. However, despite their disagreement, Paul later reconciled with John Mark (see 2 Timothy 4:11), demonstrating the necessity of reconciliation and humility in ministry.

Poor communication, identified as the leading cause of conflicts in the study, has been a source of tension even in biblical times. In Exodus 18, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, observed that Moses was overburdened by his leadership responsibilities because he had not delegated duties effectively. Jethro advised Moses to appoint capable men to assist him in leading the Israelites (see Exodus 18:17-23). This passage highlights the importance of clear communication and delegation in church leadership. When priests and lay readers fail to communicate effectively, misunderstandings arise, leading to unnecessary conflicts that hinder ministry.

Differences in leadership styles also contribute to conflicts, as indicated by 27% of respondents. The Bible provides insights into different leadership styles, such as servant leadership exemplified by Jesus Christ. In Mark 10:42-45, Jesus teaches that true leadership is about serving others rather

than exercising authority over them. Priests and lay readers should embrace servant leadership by fostering humility, mutual respect, and collaboration rather than competing for power and recognition.

Disagreements over roles and responsibilities were another major cause of conflicts. The early church faced similar challenges, particularly in Acts 6:1-7, where complaints arose about the unfair distribution of food among widows. The apostles resolved the issue by appointing deacons to handle administrative tasks, ensuring that spiritual leaders focused on their primary mission. This teaches that clearly defined roles in church ministry can reduce conflicts and enhance harmony among church leaders.

Financial management issues also emerged as a source of conflict. The Bible warns against financial mismanagement and greed, as seen in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. Their dishonesty in handling church finances led to severe consequences. Transparency and accountability in financial matters are essential to maintaining trust and avoiding disputes between priests and lay readers.

Finally, personal misunderstandings, cited by 7% of respondents, reflect the human nature of church leaders. In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to resolve their disagreement and work together in the Lord. This emphasizes the need for unity and reconciliation within the church.

### **5.3 Theological Reflection on the effects of conflicts between the Clergy and lay readers on Church Ministry**

Conflicts between the clergy and lay readers in a church setting are not only organizational challenges but also spiritual crises. From a theological perspective, these conflicts touch the core of the church's unity, mission, and witness. In light of the findings from the study—where disruptions in church services, decreased congregational unity, and reduced spiritual growth were highlighted as the primary effects of such conflicts; it is important to explore these issues through the lens of Scripture, the theology of the Church, and the role of leadership in Christian ministry.

Theological importance of Church unity. The unity of the church is central to its identity and mission. The Apostle Paul emphasizes unity in the body of Christ, describing the church as one body with many members, each contributing to the whole. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Paul writes,

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” This metaphor illustrates that unity in the church is vital for the health and functionality of the body of believers.

When conflicts arise between the clergy and lay readers, the unity of the body is compromised. The findings from the study indicate that these conflicts lead to decreased congregational unity, which is a direct contradiction to the biblical understanding of the church as a united body. Ephesians 4:3 urges believers to “make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Conflicts, especially unresolved ones, cause division, leading to disunity that hinders the mission of the church.

Theologically, unity is not just a practical need but a divine calling. The prayer of Jesus in John 17:20-21 is a powerful reminder that unity within the church is essential for the witness to the world: “I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me” Disunity, therefore, undermines the church's witness to the world, causing it to lose its prophetic voice. The effects of disunity caused by conflicts between clergy and lay readers can dilute the church's effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

**The Role of Church Leadership.** Leadership within the church is meant to be a reflection of Christ's servanthood. Jesus, in Mark 10:42-45, teaches his disciples that the greatest among them must be a servant, not a lord over others: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all.” The theological understanding of church leadership is grounded in servanthood rather than power or authority.

The findings from the study that conflicts between clergy and lay readers result in disruptions in church services can be understood through this theological lens. When leadership models division or power struggles, it leads to dysfunction and disruption in the ministry. James 3:16 highlights the destructive nature of conflicts driven by selfish ambition: “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” These disruptions do not just affect the logistical aspects of church services but the spiritual environment as well. A divided leadership model contradicts the example of Christ, who was the ultimate servant leader, and it distorts the church's mission.

Furthermore, the theological implications of decreased spiritual growth due to leadership conflicts are significant. Romans 12:2 calls believers to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, a transformation that should occur within a harmonious and spiritually nurturing environment. When leadership in the church is marred by conflict, it prevents the conducive atmosphere for spiritual growth, hindering the believers' ability to be renewed and transformed in Christ.

**The Impact of Conflict on the Congregation.** The study's findings also reveal a theological issue regarding the spiritual nourishment of the congregation. 1 Peter 5:2-3 speaks directly to church leaders: "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them; not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." The role of both the clergy and the lay readers is to shepherd the flock, guiding them into spiritual maturity. When there is conflict, the very environment meant to nurture spiritual growth becomes toxic.

Theologically, spiritual growth is stunted not merely by personal issues but by the disruption of relational harmony within the body of Christ. Hebrews 10:24-25 urges believers to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Church services and communal worship are meant to be a source of encouragement and spiritual nourishment. However, when clergy and lay readers are in conflict, this communal aspect is damaged, and believers are deprived of the spiritual benefits that come from a united leadership.

**Biblical Examples of Conflict and Its Resolution.** Scripture provides numerous examples of conflict within the church and the importance of reconciliation. In Acts 15:36-41, Paul and Barnabas have a sharp disagreement over whether to take John Mark on their missionary journey. The conflict is so intense that they part ways. However, this division ultimately results in the spread of the Gospel to different regions, demonstrating that even in conflict, God can bring about fruitful outcomes. However, this is not to be idealized; the story also highlights the challenges and difficulties that arise from disunity among leaders. Later in 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul asks for Mark to be brought to him, suggesting reconciliation and the restoration of relationships.

Theologically, the church is called to a ministry of reconciliation (see 2 Corinthians 5:18), and conflicts between clergy and lay readers must be addressed in a spirit of humility and forgiveness.

Matthew 18:15-17 provides a clear biblical framework for resolving conflicts within the church, emphasizing the need for reconciliation through dialogue and accountability.

#### **5.4 Strategies being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry**

From the findings and discussion of the study, the strategies being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry, invites us to consider the ways in which the Church addresses conflict in light of biblical teachings. Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human relationships, including within the Church. However, scripture offers numerous insights into how conflicts can be addressed to facilitate reconciliation and strengthen ministry. The actions described in the study, such as reconciliation meetings, spiritual guidance, open dialogue, leadership structures, and conflict resolution training; are not only practical steps but also deeply rooted in biblical theology, drawing upon principles of unity, forgiveness, and peace.

The findings from the study suggest that the Church is actively engaging in processes to reconcile conflicts, particularly between priests and lay readers, for the sake of better ministry. One of the major actions reported is the conducting of reconciliation meetings. This action directly mirrors the biblical call to reconciliation, a fundamental theme in Christian ministry. In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Paul writes, All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. This scripture underscores that reconciliation is at the heart of the gospel message, and the Church is called to mirror this reconciliation in its internal conflicts. The Church, as a community of believers, is meant to embody God's redemptive work in Christ. Thus, when conflicts arise within the Church, the steps taken toward reconciliation are not just practical measures but acts of faith, reflecting God's desire for His people to live in harmony. By facilitating reconciliation meetings, the Church participates in this divine act of reconciling people to one another and to God.

The study also found that providing continuous spiritual guidance is another important action taken to address conflicts. Spiritual guidance is vital in helping individuals navigate relational challenges. Scripture frequently emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and maturity, particularly in dealing with interpersonal conflict. Ephesians 4:1-3 urges Christians to live in a manner worthy of their calling, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. This passage highlights that unity is not passive but requires active effort, often through patience, understanding, and love. The continuous provision

of spiritual guidance, therefore, becomes essential in helping individuals cultivate the Christ-like attitudes needed for peace and unity. Spiritual guidance fosters an environment where individuals are reminded of their identity in Christ, which supersedes personal differences and fosters a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

Engaging both parties in open dialogue also stands out as a key action. This practice aligns with the biblical principle of communication in relationships, as found in Proverbs 18:13: To answer before listening; that is folly and shame. Open dialogue, when done in a spirit of humility and active listening, fosters understanding and clarity. Conflict often arises from misunderstandings, miscommunications, or unspoken grievances. The scripture calls for careful listening and honest, respectful conversations. Jesus Himself modeled open dialogue in Matthew 18:15-17, where He outlines a process for resolving conflicts within the Church. First, He instructs individuals to address the issue directly with one another, and if necessary, to involve others in the process. This model of conflict resolution through open and direct communication not only offers a practical solution but also reflects the biblical ideal of reconciliation in community.

Another key finding of the study is the emphasis on strengthening church leadership structures. Strong leadership is essential for the healthy functioning of any organization, and this is particularly true in the Church. In Acts 6:1-7, we see the early Church address a conflict over the distribution of food, leading to the establishment of the office of deacons to ensure that the needs of all members were met. This is an example of proactive leadership that aims to prevent conflict by addressing issues early and structuring the community in a way that ensures fairness and accountability. In a similar manner, strengthening leadership structures in the Church ensures that leaders are equipped to handle disputes effectively and create an environment where peace can flourish. Scripture offers many insights into the qualities of good leaders, emphasizing qualities like wisdom, humility, and a servant heart (see 1 Timothy 3:1-13). When church leadership is grounded in these biblical principles, it helps to foster an environment of trust and respect, reducing the likelihood of conflicts escalating and enhancing the ministry's effectiveness.

The study also identified training on conflict resolution as a vital action. While the Bible does not provide a formal conflict resolution curriculum, it offers many principles for resolving disputes. The apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, rebukes the Corinthians for taking their disputes to secular courts, urging them to resolve their conflicts within the Christian community. He writes, Why not

rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? (see 1 Corinthians 6:7). This passage suggests that the Christian approach to conflict is countercultural; focused not on winning or losing but on maintaining peace and preserving relationships. Conflict resolution, as a form of spiritual training, helps individuals understand that the goal of resolving conflicts is not just to reach a solution but to reflect God's kingdom values of humility, reconciliation, and peace. Training church leaders and members in these principles equips them to handle conflicts in a way that aligns with the teachings of Scripture.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The study examined the effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese. Therefore, this chapter presents Conclusions, Recommendations and Areas for further research based on the study findings.

#### **6.2 Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate that conflicts between priests and lay readers are prevalent in Endiinzi Archdeaconry, with leadership struggles, poor communication, and unclear role definitions being the primary causes. A majority of respondents reported experiencing these conflicts across multiple churches, highlighting the systemic nature of the issue. The tensions between priests and lay readers often stem from power struggles, doctrinal differences, financial disagreements, and favoritism in church leadership. These conflicts significantly impact church ministry by creating division, reducing cooperation, and hindering effective spiritual leadership. Addressing these conflicts is essential for fostering a harmonious working relationship within the church and ensuring smooth ministry operations.

The findings of this study indicate that conflicts between priests and lay readers significantly affect church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry. The majority of respondents acknowledged that these conflicts lead to declining church attendance, ineffective preaching, weak leadership coordination, division among members, and weakened spiritual growth. Additionally, financial contributions and outreach programs are negatively impacted due to tensions between clergy and lay leaders. These findings underscore the importance of unity and collaboration in church leadership to ensure effective ministry and spiritual growth. Unresolved conflicts shift the church's focus from spiritual development to administrative disputes, thereby hindering its mission and overall stability. Therefore, addressing these conflicts is crucial for sustaining an effective and vibrant church ministry.

The findings reveal that reconciliation meetings, spiritual guidance, and open dialogue are the key measures taken to address conflicts between priests and lay readers in Endiinzi Archdeaconry. However, a notable gap remains in structured leadership training and proactive conflict resolution

mechanisms. While reconciliation efforts have yielded positive results, some church areas still struggle with unresolved conflicts, which hinder effective ministry. The responses also indicate that miscommunication and a lack of accountability among church leaders contribute significantly to conflicts, necessitating structured leadership approaches. Overall, the study highlights the critical need for institutionalizing conflict resolution strategies to sustain a harmonious and effective church ministry.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

To mitigate conflicts between priests and lay readers, it is recommended that the church establishes clear role definitions for both groups to avoid misunderstandings and overlapping responsibilities. Leadership training and workshops should be conducted to equip both priests and lay readers with conflict resolution skills and promote effective communication. Additionally, structured mediation mechanisms should be put in place to address disputes in a timely and impartial manner. Transparency in church financial matters should be prioritized to eliminate suspicions and disagreements over resource management. Lastly, church authorities should emphasize fairness and inclusivity in leadership decisions to prevent favoritism and ensure unity within the ministry.

To mitigate the negative effects of conflicts between priests and lay readers on church ministry, church leadership should prioritize open communication, mediation, and structured conflict resolution mechanisms. Regular leadership training programs should be conducted to equip both priests and lay readers with skills in teamwork, conflict management, and servant leadership. Furthermore, creating dialogue platforms where clergy and lay readers can openly discuss grievances in a respectful and constructive manner will help bridge misunderstandings. The church should also emphasize biblical principles of unity, humility, and mutual respect to foster harmonious relationships within leadership. Finally, external church oversight bodies, such as the diocesan council, should intervene where necessary to ensure that disputes do not escalate and affect ministry effectiveness.

To enhance the resolution of conflicts between priests and lay readers, church leadership should implement structured leadership training programs to equip clergy with conflict management skills. Establishing clear communication channels will also minimize misunderstandings and foster cooperative relationships. Encouraging teamwork and mentorship programs can further strengthen collaboration and spiritual growth among church leaders. Additionally, church leaders

should enhance accountability measures to ensure that conflicts do not escalate due to unaddressed grievances. By institutionalizing these recommendations, Endiinzi Archdeaconry can create a more unified and effective ministry that fosters spiritual development and church growth.

#### **6.4 Areas for further study**

Exploring the Impact of leadership training on conflict resolution in Church ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry.

The role of communication strategies in enhancing cooperation between Priests and Lay Readers

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Sample size determination table

Table 3.1									
<i>Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population</i>									
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	1000000	384
<i>Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size</i>					<i>Source: Krejcie &amp; Morgan, 1970</i>				

## Appendix II: Research Questionnaire for Lay readers

Dear Respondent,

I am Katsigazi Richard, a final year student of Uganda Christian University – Mukono, pursuing a Bachelor of Divinity. I am currently carrying out a Research entitled an analysis of effects of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese You have been selected to participate in this research exercise and any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you very much for cooperation.

### Part I: Respondents' bio data

1. Name

(Optional):.....

2. Name of Church: .....

3. Name of Parish: .....

4. Kindly select your gender

Male

Female

5. What is your age bracket? (Select from the alternatives given below)

Youth (18-35)

Adult (36-60)

Elderly (60 & above)

6. What position/ role do you play in your church?

.....

### Part II: Causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese

7. Have you encountered any conflicts with your parish priest (s) during your service?

Yes

No

8. If yes, in how many churches have you experienced this? (kindly choose from the alternatives given)

All the Churches I have served in

In my current church

In on a few churches have I conflicted with my parish priest

Any other response? (please specify).....

.....

9. Where do such conflicts between you or other lay readers and parish priests come from? (Causes) – Kindly fill in the spaces provided below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part III: How the conflicts between the clergy and lay readers affect church**

10. Do you think these conflicts affect the church ministry?

Yes

No

11. If yes, kindly state how

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part IV: What is being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry**

12. What have you or church done to solve these conflicts?

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. What other practical recommendations do you suggest as a way of overcoming these conflicts?

.....

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you very much for your responses*

### Appendix III: Questionnaire for Christians

Dear Respondent,

I am Katsigazi Richard, a final year student of Uganda Christian University – Mukono, pursuing a Bachelor of Divinity. I am currently carrying out a Research entitled an analysis of effects of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese You have been selected to participate in this research exercise and any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you very much for cooperation.

#### Part I: Respondents' bio data

1. Name

(Optional):.....

2. Name of Church: .....

3. Name of Parish: .....

4. Kindly select your gender

Male

Female

5. What is your age bracket? (Select from the alternatives given below)

Youth (18-35)

Adult (36-60)

Elderly (60 & above)

6. What position/ role do you play in your church?

.....

#### Part II: Causes of the conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese

7. Have you noticed any conflicts between your lay reader and your parish priest (s) during your service?

Yes

No

8. If yes, in how many churches have you seen this? (kindly choose from the alternatives given)

All the Churches I have been to

In my current church

In only a few churches I have observed these conflicts

Any other response? (please specify).....

.....

9. Where do such conflicts between lay readers and and parish priests come from? (Causes) – Kindly fill in the spaces provided below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part III: How the conflicts between the clergy and lay readers affect church**

10. As a Christian, do you think these conflicts affect the church ministry?

Yes

No

11. If yes, kindly state how

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part IV: What is being done to solve these conflicts for better ministry**

12. What have you or church done to solve these conflicts?

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. What other practical recommendations do you suggest as a way of overcoming these conflicts?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your responses

**Appendix IV: Interview Guide for key respondents (Parish priests and the Archdeacon)**

Dear Respondent,

I am Katsigazi Richard, a final year student of Uganda Christian University – Mukono, pursuing a Bachelor of Divinity. I am currently carrying out a Research entitled an analysis of effects of conflicts between Priests and Lay Readers on Church Ministry in Endiinzi Archdeaconry Ankole diocese You have been selected to participate in this research exercise and any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you very much for cooperation.

**Questions**

1. Name (Optional)
2. Name of Parish
3. Recording the respondents' gender
4. How old are you?
5. What position/ role do you play in your church?
6. Have you encountered any conflicts with your lay readers in your your service?
7. If yes, in how many churches or how often have you experienced this?
8. Where do such conflicts between you or other lay readers and parish priests come from?
9. Do you think these conflicts affect the church ministry?
10. If yes, kindly elaborate the ways how the conflicts affect church ministry
11. What have you or church done to solve these conflicts?
12. What other practical recommendations do you suggest as a way of overcoming these conflicts?

**Thank you very much for your responses**



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR DATA COLLECTION

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

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

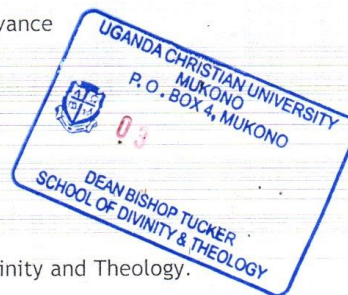
Counting on your cooperation and thank you in advance

Yours faithfully

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Mukeshimana




Research coordinator, Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology.

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