

**The Role Of The Laity In The Roman Catholic
Church.**

The 'Samba' Group As An Example Of The Laity Carrying Out
Diakonia In The Catholic Diocese Of Kumbo In Cameroon

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Abstract

The study sets out to investigate the role and self-understanding of the laity in the church using the example of ‘Samba’ group in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo in the North West Region of Cameroon. In other words the work seeks to know how the Samba members understand themselves and their role as the laity which visible in the *diaconal* work they do in this particular diocese. In order to deal with this investigation properly, two theories have been selected to uncover the facts. These theories present the role of the laity in the church as clearly spelt out in the church’s official documents or official Catholic teachings. The second theory to help uncover the facts deals with how the laity here represented by Samba contribute to the church’s *diakonia* in a practical way, bearing in mind the common deacon hood common to all the faithful.

Qualitative research approach is used in the research work with the aim of getting in-depth facts verbal and thick descriptions from the personal perspectives and experiences of the Samba group who represent the Laity in our case, and the voices of some diocesan authorities. In order get the necessary data, a questionnaire was set, and skype interviews were also carried out with the members of the Samba and diocesan authorities.

The research findings and analysis reveal that there have been different understandings in the life of the church as to what the role of the laity should be. The vision after the Second Vatican Council was more accommodating to the Laity unlike the pre-second Vatican Council church that projected the church as a thing of the Clergy in which the laity were just participating. The new vision ushered by the Second Vatican Council gives the laity a great sense of belonging to the church in mutuality with the clergy. This gives new vision gives lay groups like the ‘Samba’ in our context the take up initiatives in the church and involve in the work of *diakonia*. This awareness and taking of responsibilities in church by the laity does not go without challenges. However, the challenges have not prevented the laity from striving to do better as members of the Church. The challenges do not make them inferior to the clergy as they work in mutuality for the growth of the Kingdom of God. This is visible through the activities of the Samba Group.

The study ends with food for thought about how to sustain the diaconal activities of the laity like the one of the Samba group that has been used in this case. If the Church must continue to grow, there both the laity and clergy must be actively involved in mutuality

working tirelessly for the plight of the vulnerable and the orphans. The sense of belonging plays a great role in the growth of the church. Thanks to the Second Vatican Council that the Lay people are becoming more and more aware of their role in the church.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to all who have spared no efforts in making sure that I acquire education. I think of my parents who were my first educators, my brothers and sisters from whom I learnt a lot and all who have given me a cup of water as I trod the path of knowledge acquisition.

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List of Abbreviations

AA.....	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i>
CCC.....	<i>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
ChL.....	<i>Christes Fidelis Laici</i>
EA.....	<i>Ecclesia in Africa</i>
EG.....	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i>
EN.....	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
LG.....	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
LWF.....	Lutheran World Federation
WCC.....	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A closer and personal observation as a Roman Catholic Christian revealed to me that the church has a lot of documents that explain the role of the laity or lay people (which will be used interchangeably). In spite of these specifications and guidelines laid down in the Church's official documents like the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church: *Lumen Gentium* as to what the laity ought to be and do in church, there are still many Christians who from time to time do not feel fully belonging to church as they see it as an institution for the ordained ministers (clergy) and or other special Christians. Some of the Christians with this kind of mentality or feeling simply act as spectators or Sunday Christians who come to church on Sundays for masses or attend services and then do nothing again besides that. After the Sunday mass, the next rendez-vous is scheduled for the next Sunday. From my reading of the above church documents especially *Lumen Gentium* and other *Apostolic Exhortations* from the Vatican and *Local Apostolic letters* from Episcopal conferences and *Diocesan pastoral letters*, I developed the interest to find out what the lay Catholic faithful think and feel about their role in the church and, how ready are they to take the challenges of the various church documents specifying their role in Church and how they are responding to the call to live the Gospel values practically which in other words is *diakonia*, which is supposed to be part and parcel of every Christian faithful.. The laity are in this research work is represented by the 'Samba' group.

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church did not seem to have clearly spelt out what the function of the laity should be. Even if there were church documents that spelt out the role of the laity, the practice that was taking place was different from what the documents maintained. Nixon (2010), corroborates this view by explaining that the church before the second Vatican Council was almost an affair of the clergy. In Nixon's (2010) own words "The Second Vatican Council unleashed a wave of lay participation in the church - and there's no turning back" (p.8). He explains that the Second Vatican Council could be described as a new window that was opened in the Catholic Church, which brought a sort of ventilation in the church and made every member of the church to know and to feel that they were part and parcel of the church. This new Vision of the church with regards to the participation of the laity is found in the *Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Church* with the Latin title as "*Lumen Gentium*". It addresses a number of issues in the church in eight

different chapters, but our area of interest is chapter four that deals specifically with the role of the laity.

The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church “*Lumen Gentium*” with the two works of John Paul II and the ones by Pope Francis could be linked to the threefold mission of *diakonia* as expressed in the Lutheran World Federation Document “*Diakonia in Context*” which has to do with Transformation, Reconciliation and Empowerment. Therefore, the above documents will shed light and guide the research. The ‘Samba’ Church Group with an origin in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo is a great example of how the lay people are practicing *diakonia*.

According to *Diakonia in Context* specifically in Chapter III, there is emphasis on the universal call to *diakonia* of all the faithful. There is what is called the diaconate of all believers which finds its roots in Matthew 25:31-46 where the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned are lifted up as being in need of care and attention. The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37, is another passage that urges the faithful to perform *diakonia* as part of their daily Christian living. There are also other references that point to the diaconate of the faithful as desired by Christ. That is what the Samba we are using as example of the laity is doing in the diocese of Kumbo.

1.1. Contextual Background

In order to have a good background and setting of the ‘Samba’ in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo, we need to have some background history of the Samba as a group in the traditional setup and how Samba eventually found its way into the church and or Christian group. The word “Samba” literally means seven. According to Lafon, (1987) “Samba wo mission” (Samba of the Church) came into existence under the initiative of Fr Francis Figl fondly called by Nso people as (Fara Figo) a Mill Hill Missionary around the same time he started the Credit Unions in Nso. Lafon, (1987) explains further that when this Missionary arrived in Nso he realized that on Sundays, men were noticeably absent from Church on Sundays. This made Fr. Figl so curious and so he set out to find out where the men always went to while he remained in church only with women and children. After his findings, he discovered that men were interested in going for Samba, where they meet on Sundays to drink, dance and plan their activities.

According to Gufler (1987), in the book *Firm in the Faith* which was written as a document in preparation for the Centenary of the Catholic Church in Cameroon, the Diocese of Kumbo was created on March 18, 1982 by his His Holiness Pope John Paul II. The

territory was taken from the Archdiocese of Bamenda, which was one of the two dioceses that formed the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda. Gufler (1987) explains that Kumbo was a “suffragan see or diocese with a suffragan Bishop” (An assistant bishop having the duty of assisting the bishop of the diocese to which he is appointed but having no ordinary jurisdiction in that diocese) of Bamenda along with the Dioceses of Buea and Mamfe. The Diocese of Kumbo situated in the grass field area of the North West of Region of Cameroon covers a surface area of 8,000 square kilometres (3,090 Square Miles). By the time of the Publication, Gufler, (1987) estimated the population to be approximately 771,664 of whom over 151,971 were Catholic. As we currently speak the Christian population of this diocese has grown in leaps and bounds. It is within the context of this brief historical background of the Church in the diocese of Kumbo that the Samba group found its way into the Catholic Church and has become one of the official action groups in the Catholic Church in Cameroon.

According to Kewong (1990), Samba is one of the battalions of the Nso traditional army. He explains that before the advent of Christianity and civilization, there were a lot of inter-tribal wars that were common in most African communities. As such each tribe or community had their own kind of army that was set up to be able to defend the tribes and clans against any invaders be they local or foreign. Kewong (1990) explains that the Nso typical army was officially called “Mfuh” which is the general name for the army. Within this traditional set up of defence forces, there were different battalions with specific functions, Samba being part of the army had the obligation to use mystical powers to detect when and where enemies will come from so that the general army will then be ready for the attack. This army fought against other tribes and even when colonizers came to Africa. There is much that can be said about the traditional Samba group especially with regards to the mystical part of the group. But for the purpose and limitation of our studies, we shall limit it to a few details and then focus on the Social aspect that is relevant and makes a clear link with the Church Samba group as we have it today.

Kewong (1990), in his book observes that when inter-tribal wars were no longer common, and with the coming of modern civilization, the traditional army set up was no longer having much to do. He explains further that the traditional Samba group evolved from a warring group into a kind of Social group: “The Nso Samba group, eventually evolved from a military group with a sole aim of war into a social group whereby the members met on a weekly bases to drink, eat, dance and discuss social issues affecting the local community”

(p.18). Kewong (1990) explains that since Samba was already a well-established group, they kept meeting and drinking eating, dancing and discussing social and community issues like community work and other related community based projects.

As already indicated above, Fr. Francis Figl was so curious to know where the men used to disappear and go to on Sundays. After his research and findings, according to Lafon, (1987), Fr. Francis Figl then made a couple of visits to the location where the Samba was meeting. He tactfully asked them if it were possible that they could instead be meeting in the church premises. It was not easy initially for the members of Samba to accept, but seeing the simplicity of this missionary and his kind approach, the Samba then accepted to meet in the Church premises after the masses. Fr. Francis Figl therefore succeeded in luring the men into church and many eventually became baptised Christians participating fully in Church activities. He is said to have also started some agricultural projects within the group for the men to help themselves and eventually attract other men who were not yet part of the Christian folk into the realm of Christianity. This could be seen as “domestication of Samba” from a purely traditional group into a church group that has gained grounds within and outside the diocese of Kumbo. The same priest also created “Chong” for women that also made the women more active in Church affairs just like the Samba for men. The first Samba to be domesticated into a church group was in Shisong mission where the missionaries first settled and from there it spread out to the entire diocese and other dioceses of Cameroon.

1.2. Research Problem

Before the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church did not put much emphasis on the role and participation in the life of the church by the Laity. Even if the role of the laity was specified in any of the Churches documents, the practical life was a different story. Many lay people in the church folded their arms while looking upon the clergy to do everything for them. The Clergy were mistakenly thought to do everything in Church. This brought a kind of hidden laziness and sloth amongst the lay faithful as they did not feel that they were naturally part and parcel of the church.

The Second Vatican Council therefore came in as Council that ushered a new way of life and new way of thinking for the Lay faithful in the Church. The dogmatic constitution of the Catholic Church “Lumen Gentium” which was a fruit of the Second Vatican Council, stated clearly how and what the church should look like, thereby specifying the roles of both the clergy and lay faithful alike. Lafon, (1989) in his book *The History of The Catholic*

Church in Kumbo Diocese also corroborates this view by saying that the Second Vatican Council opened the way and a new way of feeling to the lay faithful who are now more aware of the challenges that they are supposed to take as active Christians. He ends up by explaining that a church that is braced to celebrate a centenary celebration should be able to have Christians both clergy and laity who are ready to take their responsibilities in building the Church or God's kingdom.

This research problem will therefore be examined, describe and discuss the relationship between the church and the laity, here represented by the Samba group in the diocese of Kumbo. The Samba group therefore comes in as an example of a group in the Catholic Church that has become aware of the role of the faithful in the Church where all Christians are called to responsibility for fellow human beings for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Their initiative to support the plight of vulnerable children in the field of education, shows nothing but a deeper awareness of the laity ready to take responsibility in the church, thereby either consciously or unconsciously answering the Clarion call of *Lumen Gentium* especially in Chapter 4 that speaks about the role of the laity in Church. This dogmatic constitution of the church was promulgated by Pope Paul VI. The Second Vatican Council declared that "...the laity have the capacity to assume from the Hierarchy certain ecclesiastical functions, which are to be performed for a spiritual purpose." (LG, 33)

John Paul II in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* which was given at Rome, in St. Peter's Square, on 30 December, the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in the year 1988, the eleventh of his Pontificate. This post synodal Apostolic Exhortation cites a lot from *Lumen Gentium*, reminding the lay faithful of their duties to be other Christs to the world. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia In Africa* of John Paul II to the bishops priests and deacons men and women religious and all the lay faithful on the church in Africa and its evangelizing mission towards the year 2000. It also has its foundation in *Lumen Gentium*.

So I felt I should relate the initiative of the Samba group taking a lead in the Bishop's Education Fund to *diakonia* and to examine the challenges that the group may face given that it is a group that is springing from the ranks of the laity in the church, and to examine how the laity can take upon themselves and live the challenges and values of the gospel within the context of the Catholic Church. With these thoughts and reflections about the role of the laity within the Christian community of the Roman Catholic Church.

1.3. Research Questions

. The main research question is describing and discussing how the Samba who represents the lay people in the diocese of Kumbo in our context, relate with the church through the various documents and practical *diakonia*. This relationship between the Church and the Samba will be x-rayed from two angles viz: How the church relates with the Laity (Samba) through its official documents or official church teachings. Another angle is to explore how the Samba contributes to the Church's *diakonia*. Thus two sub questions will be used as research questions as follows:

- How does the Church relate to the Laity (Samba) through her official documents and official Catholic teaching?
- How does Samba (representing the Laity) contribute to the church's *diakonia* in a practical way?

1.4. Structure and Organization of the Thesis

This work is divided into six chapters. Chapter one carries the general introduction to the work. Chapter two focuses on the research methodology that is undertaken for this study. It highlights the research approach undertaken, the data collection method, research site, research participants, data analysis procedures, reliability and validity of data and the ethical considerations. It contains the details of the whole data collection procedures. Chapter three presents the analytical framework or theory that is used in the research. Chapter four is the presentation of the data collected from the field which is then followed by Chapter five that is concerned with analysis and discussion of the findings presented in Chapter four. The last chapter of the work which is chapter, six serves as a general conclusion to the work followed by the references and appendix.

Conclusion

The above elements therefore constitute the methodology that is used in carrying out the project from the field.

CHAPTER TWO METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology for this particular study on the Transformation of Samba from a traditional to a Christian group in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo in Cameroon. This chapter accounts for the ontological and epistemological position of the study as well as research design and methods used for the collection of data from the research site. The chapter ends with presentation of some ethical considerations that are applied to this particular research.

2.1. Research Approach

A research approach or strategy simply refers to an orientation that a researcher uses in order to carry out his or her study. Different research strategies are employed depending on the purpose of a particular study or research. According to Bryman (2012), there are two main research strategies that are employed in social research and these are qualitative and quantitative approach. The nature of the issues that are under investigation, directs the researcher on which type of research approach that is to be employed. Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006), explain these research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) as follows:

The distinction between quantitative and qualitative research marks a series of differences in approach to research. At the most surface level, quantitative and qualitative researchers base their conclusions on different kinds of information and employ different techniques of data analysis (Blanche et al., 2006).

In his book on Social Science Research, Bryman (2012) explains that quantitative research strategy pays attention on the collection of numerical data. He explains further that quantitative research approach uses the deductive method which is similar to the approach employed by natural sciences. He explains further that quantitative research concerns itself with objectivism which “implies that social phenomena confronts us as external facts that are beyond our reach of influence” (Bryman, 2012). For Charles (1998), if

the research approach bases itself on numerical data or scores and measures, then it is quantitative research approach.

On the other hand Bryman (2012) explains that quantitative research is a research approach ‘that usually emphasizes words rather than quantifications in the collection and analysis of data’. This research strategy according to him employs the inductive approach of the relationship between theory and research which leads to the creation of theories (Bryman, 2012, p.16). The qualitative researcher for Bryman uses the interpretivist approach which ‘requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action’. For Charles (1998), qualitative research strategy relies on verbal data that is mostly based on descriptions and stories as narrated by the interviewees. According to Patton (2000), qualitative researchers generate rich verbal and textual data to represent the social environment by using observations that yield detailed and thick description inquiry in depth, interviews that capture direct quotations about people’s personal perspectives and experiences, case studies, careful document review, etc. (Patton, 2000)

Another research approach strategy is the Mixed-method. This is another method that is employed by researchers in social science research. Through the use of this method, both the quantitative and qualitative research strategies are used to conduct a single research project. According to (Bryman, 2012), the term ‘mixed method’ is nowadays used to refer to research that combines methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research. I am going to use the qualitative research method in this work. Nevertheless, some data in the form of statistics may appear in the work where necessary or relevant.

2.2. Why Qualitative Research approach?

The purpose of my study as already indicated in the introduction is to reflect on the role of the Laity in the Catholic Church using the example of the Samba group that has been transformed from a typical traditional group into a church group in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo in Cameroon. Since we are dealing here with the interrelationship between the Church and the Samba, the best research method that is best to be employed here is the qualitative approach. The emphasis is to investigate the Samba who represents the Laity, is interacting with the church in a way that falls within the ambit of *Lumen Gentium* and other Catholic documents on the role of the Laity in the church. It is therefore vital and necessary to investigate perspective the diocesan authorities and that of the members of the Samba

group who are used in this context as a group that is becoming more aware of the role of the laity in the Catholic Church and hear their own subjective views and detailed explanations.

In an attempt to explain clearly and simply the purpose of qualitative approach in social science research, Patton, (2000) in his book explains:

Some questions lend themselves to numerical answers; some don't. If you want to know how much people weigh, use scale. If you want to know if they are obese, measure body fat in relation to height and weight and compare the results to population norms. If you want to know what their weight means to them, how it affects them, how they think about it and what they do about it, you need to ask them questions, find out about their experiences, and hear their stories. (Patton, 2000)

Thus, the qualitative approach is chosen to uncover the subjective understanding and experiences of the Samba members and the diocesan authorities, about the awakening of the laity in the life of the church in the diocese. The approach will also help to uncover how the church is responding to the role the Samba is playing in the Church given that they are coming up with initiatives that make Christian living more practical. According to Bryman (2012), qualitative research entails an inductive exploratory approach, which requires social scientists to understand the subject meanings held by actors and hence to interpret their actions and social world from their points of view (interpretivist epistemology); and embodies a constructivist view of social reality as a constantly shifting emergent property of individual's creation. According to Yin (2009), a qualitative approach is explained as an action plan for getting from 'here' to 'there', where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between 'here' and 'there' may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analyses of relevant data. We can therefore conclude that the qualitative approach is the best method to explore and uncover this subject.

2.3 Research Design

According to (Bryman, 2012), "a research design provides a frame work for the collection and analysis of data" It is the overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the empirical research to be carried out. In other words, a research design articulates what data is required for a particular research project, what methods to be used to

collect and analyze this data in relation to one's study, and how all of this is going to answer the research questions that are set for one's study. According to Yin (2003) there are five important components of a research design: Study questions, its propositions, its unit or units of analysis, the logic linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings.

Gleaning from the ideas above, a research design requires both data and methods, and the way in which these will be configured in the research project needs to be the most effective in producing the answers to the research questions, taking into account practical and other constraints of the study. A detailed outline of how an investigation will take place must be presented. Therefore a research design will typically include how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instruments will be used and the intended means for analyzing data collected and coming out with the results at the end.

2.4. Data collection Method

Bryman (2012) in his work, explains what a data collection method should be in the following words:

To many people, data collection represents the key point of any research project, and it is probably not surprising therefore that this book probably gives more words and pages to this stage in the research process than any other. Some of the methods of data collection covered in this book, such as interviewing and questionnaires, are probably more familiar to many readers than some of the others. Some methods entail a rather structured approach to data collection—that is, the researcher establishes in advance the broad contours of what he or she needs to find out about and designs research instruments to implement what needs to be known implement what needs to be known (Bryman, 2012, p.12)

The main sources of data for this project include Ecclesiastical documents, (especially the Church documents, encyclicals, Pastoral letters and reports). A lot of these documents are available in both hard and soft copies. They are equally available in official church and diocesan official websites.

According to Bryman (2012), it is possible to use online interviews. He explains this in the following words:

Sometimes you may need to contact interviewees who are a long way from you- perhaps even abroad. While interviewing in qualitative research is usually face-to-face kind, time and money restrictions may mean that you will need to interview such people in a less personal context. There are two possibilities. One is telephone interviewing. The cost of a telephone interview is much less than the cost involved in travelling long distances and can be particularly cheap if conducted via Skype. Also the iPhone app called Viber allows two people who have the app installed and who are linked to Wifi at the time to talk free of charge” (p.477).

Bryman, (2012) explains further that conducting personal online interviews in qualitative research may not be the best method as it has its own limitations when compared to face-to-face personal interviews. In order to get more relevant detailed data, a short structured interview guide was prepared that accompanied the skype interviews aimed at getting a more objective and detailed information that will eventually be used for a fruitful analysis capable of answering the research questions. Bryman however concludes that online interviews are still a great tool to be used in research as the researcher may not always have the luxury of being present everywhere or that he will be able to meet every interviewee on a physical basis. Following the above reasoning and explanation therefore, four skype interviews were done with both the Diocesan authorities and some members of the Samba group.

As a third source of data collection, a short questionnaire was prepared and sent to some diocesan authorities and some members of the Samba group chosen randomly by snowballing whereby from getting one person to answer the questionnaire, he or she makes reference to others who can be useful and willing to participate. And that is how I got those who received the questionnaire. The data was collected through the questionnaires that were administered to Samba members whom I had contacted earlier. I sent a soft copy of my questionnaires and my brother in Cameroon printed them and served to those I indicated. When they answered he went round and collected the questionnaires, and sent to me by post. The second method of data collection was done through skype interviews.

2.4.1. Research site

The research site for this investigation is the Diocese of Kumbo in the North West region of Cameroon. There is also an active Samba in the Archdiocese of Yaoundé that has

made it as a duty to come back to the Diocese of Kumbo every year to support the Bishops fund project. The Catholic Church in Cameroon is divided into five ecclesiastical provinces: Viz, Garoua Ecclesiastical Province, Douala Ecclesiastical Province, Yaounde Ecclesiastical Province, Bertoua Ecclesiastical Province and Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province. Each ecclesiastical province is headed by an Archbishop. A number of dioceses make up an Ecclesiastical province.

2.4.2. Research Participants

The research has to do with the Church and Samba which represents the lay people in the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo. Their role in the church is in connection with their function prescribed by the church documents. And how they feel about their role in church which is visible in their practice of *diakonia*. Participants were carefully chosen and in order to do that, I first made telephone contacts with the secretariat of the Diocese of Kumbo, stating to them the idea behind my research topic and project. I therefore proposed sending a short questionnaire which was to be filled and returned.

When this idea of sending a questionnaire was done, the secretary advised me that having a skype interview could be best as it had to save time especially for the busy diocesan authorities. The secretary therefore assured me that he will help to book an appointment for a skype interview which could be more convenient for diocesan authorities. My request was granted and I therefor conducted two Skype interviews with the authorities, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. These interviews were successfully conducted on Sunday the 28th of February 2016 between 14:00 to 16:00. Therefore only two detailed skype interviews were conducted with the diocesan authorities.

I equally made contacts with the Members of the Samba group who willingly accepted to respond to my questionnaire and 10 members were willing to respond to my questionnaire. I therefore mailed a copy of the questionnaire which was printed by one of brothers and with the help of other Samba members they were distributed to those who answered the questionnaires. The completed hard copies of these questionnaires were collected and posted to me by the same person. I equally booked to have two skype interviews with the president and the secretary of the Samba group who readily accepted. I had the advantage of getting to them easily because these are people I personally know and who were willing and ready to provide me with the relevant data I needed.

2.5. Data Analysis Procedures

According to Bryman (2012), data that is gathered from qualitative interviews is usually in the form of a large amount of unstructured textual materials. He explains further that such data at this stage is not straightforward and so not yet suitable for any analysis. According to him, there usually are no clear-cut rules or laws about how qualitative data should be analyzed although he makes it very clearly that the best process in approaching qualitative data analysis is by what is termed 'coding'. By coding, he explains that it is a situation whereby the raw data from the interview is broken down into component parts with similar themes. These parts are then given names and categories that are generated in the process.

After data collection from the field, then came the data analysis procedures. The initial stage of data analysis was replaying the recorded Skype interviews and transcribing the interviews into written form. Then the reading and re-reading of the answers gotten from the questionnaire then followed, which Bryman (2012) explains in the following words: "Because qualitative data deriving from interviews or participant observation typically take the form of a large corpus of unstructured textual material, they are not straightforward to analyze. Moreover, unlike quantitative data analysis, clear-cut rules about how qualitative data analysis should be carried out have not been developed (Bryman, 2007, p.538

The data collected both through skype interviews and the questionnaire were all done in English language and that made transcription easier to listen to and transcribe. The recorded skype interviews were carefully listened to several times and then combining them with the notes taken alongside the interviews, the Skype interview that was noted in written form. At this stage of transcription, everything said by the participants was put down in the form of raw data from which the useful and necessary material will still to be sorted.

At the second level, the data from the interviews already transcribed into written form was read over and over sorting similar material and coding it under the various themes thereby reducing the bulk of the raw data at the beginning. The various themes were then generated and the relevant data used to fit into the relevant themes that will serve as answers to the research questions that are meant to guide the study all through. The analysis of these finding will then be conducted using the general principles that are found in the theory which form the bases of analysis.

2.6. Reliability and validity of data.

Bryman (2012) identifies three widely used criteria that researchers use in evaluating social science research viz: reliability, replication and validity. According to him, some people argue that the three criteria are used mostly in quantitative research but that qualitative research also uses these criteria (reliability, replication, validity) with little alteration of their meanings. Bryman (2012) explains validity thus: “The issue of reliability and measurement validity are primarily matters relating to the quality of the measures that are employed to tap the concepts in which the researcher is interested, rather than matters to do with a research design”. He explains further that reliability looks at the results of a research work in relation to the fact that if the same research is repeated, the same results can be gotten again.

In relation to replicability Bryman 2012 states that: “Replicability is likely to be present in most cross-sectional research to the degree that the researcher spells out procedures for: selecting respondents; designing measures of concepts; administering research instruments (Such as structured interview or self-completion questionnaire); and analyzing data” (Bryman, 2012)

Validity is another important criterion of research. According to Bryman (2012), it is concerned with the ‘integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research’ (Bryman, 2012, p.60). He further explains that there are two aspects of validity in qualitative research: ‘internal validity’ which looks at whether there is a good match between researchers’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop; ‘External validity’ which is concerned with the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings (Bryman, 2012, p.60). Patton (2002) on his part explains in the following words: “There is no formula for determining significance. No ways exist of perfectly replicating the researcher’s analytical thought processes. No straightforward tests can be applied for reliability and validity. In short, no absolute rules exist except perhaps this: Do your very best with your full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study” (Patton, 2002, p.433).

The selection method of research participants from the diocese of Kumbo already constitutes a limitation to the external validity of this study and influences the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the specific research context (Bryman 2012). That is, we cannot generalize the findings to another areas or country that do not share the same

realities as the Catholic diocese of Kumbo. It therefore indicates that the factors that are inspiring the Samba group in a particular diocese depend too on the nature of that community and a wrong impression may be gotten if the research results are generalized to all catholic communities are generalized to all other dioceses or Catholic communities because Samba is a particular group stemming from the diocese of Kumbo.

2.7. Ethical Consideration

According to Cohen, Manion and Keit, (2011), dealing with human beings is a very challenging issue for researchers in general. Bryman (2012) explains that researchers are usually in search of the truth, but the quest of these truths should not violet the rights of the participants the researcher is dealing with. In dealing with human beings therefore, Bryman (2012), also explains that ethical issues should not be ignored since they relate directly to the integrity of a piece of research and of the disciplines that are involved in the research.

In relation to ethical principles of conducting social research Diener and Crandal, (1978) propose four aspects that any researcher must take into consideration to avoid before venturing into any form of interviews. These four aspects that are to be evaded by all researchers are: harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Being conscious of these ethical issues highlighted above, I was therefore morally bound to respect the rights and privacy of the participants. Generally, conducting interviews is a matter of mutual trust and as Lewin (1990) argues: “it would be a short-sighted researcher that did not exercise discretion sensitively” (Lewin, 1990 p. 141).

According to the ethical considerations based on the Norwegian law, it is a requirement that any social science research like this one I am carrying out or research in general, if any information from the interviews can be traced back to the one who responded to the interview, then permission must first be obtained from NSD, the Norwegian Data Protection Board before the interviews are carried out. I considered the fact that the theme and content has nothing to do with any sensitive information about persons. Secondly, given the fact that I was not personally going to be onsite to carry out the interviews myself, I had to drop down the interviews I designed for the kids, and use only the questionnaire and the skype interview. Given this limitation of not being able to be there in person, and given the short time at my disposal to come up with the final product, I decided to focus more on document analysis and then questionnaire and skype interviews which of course after transcription and coding are made anonymous so that no one will be able to trace who said

what. For that reason, the requirement of reporting the work to NSD was not done given the above explanations, and because the contents of the theme is not regarded to be sensitive material.

I therefore had to guarantee confidentiality of my participants, while assuring them that their names will not appear anywhere in the work and if necessary, I would rather put pseudo names. I had to explain to the diocesan authorities and members of the Samba that both the data collected through my questionnaire and the Skype interview was to appear in this project as anonymous. This explains why I designed the short questionnaire as anonymous and the participants were told not to write their names on it. This implies that by the end of this project, the data collected is going to appear as anonymous.

Considering the skype interviews that were recorded with a voice recorder and stored in my computer with a secret code. After transcribing the skype interviews and sorting out the information valuable for this project, everything was deleted from the computer in such a way that no other person can have access to it. This is geared towards protecting the privacy of my respondents to the short questionnaire and the skype interviews. So all the material will be deleted after use so that no one can trace who was behind the information.

Conclusion

The various aspects of methodology that are employed in this research work have just been presented with the various facets therein. These aspects presented facilitated the data collection procedures and the final study will be thanks to the use of these methodological aspects.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OR THEORY

Introduction.

This chapter focuses on the theory or analytical framework, which is going to form the basis for the foundation of the analysis and discussions to be carried out. The analytical framework or theory to be used is firstly, Catholic Ecclesiology about the laity and their role in church as presented by *Lumen Gentium* Chapter IV and other official church documents. The second theory is that of *diakonia* whose meaning for our purposes is rooted in the words of Dietrich, 2014, in the introduction to the book *Diakonia As Christian Social Practice. An Introduction*, highlights in the following words: “What does *Diakonia* actually mean? Is it about the service of each other in mutuality, including empowerment and advocacy work, humble service for people in need, acts of mercy and charity performed by ‘good christian people’?” (p.13). The highlights above in the form of rhetorical questions therefore forms the basis of the diaconal theory we are using. The diaconal theory will therefore help us understand in a more practical way the relationship between the Samba who represent the laity in our case and the church. The diaconal theory therefore makes a liaison or a link with the seven corporal works of mercy recommended in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: To feed the hungry, To give drink to the thirsty, To clothe the naked, To shelter the homeless, To care for the sick, To visit the imprisoned and To bury the dead “Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God: He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?” (C.C.C. 2447). The above theories will therefore help to inform our data presentation and analysis that will follow in the next chapters.

3.1. Catholic Ecclesiology of the Laity.

Under the theory of the Catholic Ecclesiology of the laity, we shall examine the various official Catholic documents that specify the role of the lay faithful in the church, which spell out clearly the how the church ought to relate with the laity. We shall dwell especially on the guidelines or the role of the laity spelt out in *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church), Chapter IV, The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the various Apostolic Exhortations to the universal church: *Christifideles Laici*. The Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (The Joy of the Gospel), the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Manus*” (*Ecclesia in Africa*). We shall make reference to Pope John Paul II’s writing in September 1995 towards the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops which gave a good light on what inculturation is supposed to be in the church. Finally, the recent book of Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*, published in 2015, which also sheds more light on what the church expects from the laity especially towards God and others.

Lumen Gentium treats a lot of issues in the Catholic Church and chapter IV is going to be our area of focus and reference because it spells out clearly what the role of the lay members of the church should be. Other documents that treat the role and function of the lay people will be delved into which also have *Lumen Gentium* as their foundation. On the 30th of December 1988, precisely on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (On the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World) explained the role and status of the laity or lay people in the church. In the church, there is the classification of the people of God who form the church into two broad categories viz the clergy constituted by ordained ministers (Deacons, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals and Pope) who form a very small part of the people of God. Secondly, the other part of the church or the people of God is the laity or lay people who form the greater part of the church. For the Pope, the identity, vocation, mission, and spirituality of the laity spring from the dignity conferred by the sacrament of baptism whereby during the baptismal rites, the individuals are called to be Kings, Prophets and Priests. Through baptism therefore there is the universal call for all the Christian faithful to be Priests, Kings and Prophets.

Through his Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, the Pope John Paul II explains and expounds in detail the theme of baptismal dignity conferred on all Christians during baptism by stressing its Trinitarian and ecclesiological dimensions. According to Pope John Paul II therefore, the identity of the laity is based on three pillars; baptism, secularity and

participation in Christ's triple ministry. Communion ecclesiology is the context for understanding the role of the laity which has also been expounded in an earlier Encyclical letter "*Lumen Gentium*" (Light of All Generations). The universal call to holiness lies at the heart of *Christifideles Laici*. (Which is another document expounding on the universal call to holiness of all Christians irrespective of their state of life). The Apostolic Exhortation "*Evangelii Gaudium*" (The Joy of the Gospel) Of the Holy Father Pope Francis in 2015 is also going to help in the exploration of the research. In this document he stresses in one of the chapters that the poor should not be neglected in society and that it is collective responsibility for humanity to take care of the poor, the vulnerable and the less fortunate in society which points out to what *diakonia* is all about.

Since our topic has to do with Samba's relationship with the church, we shall also make reference to the *Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Africae Manus" (Ecclesia in Africa)* Pope John Paul II, writing in September 1995, towards the Special Assembly for African Synod of Bishops, notes that "...the synod clearly showed that issues in Africa such as increasing poverty, urbanization, the international debt, the arms trade, the problem of refugees and displaced persons, demographic concerns and threats to the family, the liberation of women, the spread of AIDS, the survival of the practice of slavery in some places, ethnocentricity and tribal opposition figure among the fundamental challenges." Christian-Muslim relations, "inculturation" of faith, formation of the laity, priestly formation and numerous other topics concerning the agents and structures of evangelization are discussed. Returning repeatedly to a human rights theme, he (Pope John Paul II) says "...the winds of change are blowing strongly in many parts of Africa, and people are demanding ever more insistently the recognition and promotion of human rights and freedoms". Reference will also be made to the Latest book of Pope Francis *The Name of God is Mercy*, published in 2015 because it makes a clear connection between the charitable works that flow from the mercy Christians should have for others having its root in God's continues and boundless mercy for his humankind. In addition to the afore mentioned documents, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with Specific reference to Chapter 3, Article 9, Paragraph 4 will also be used as reference.

3.1.1. *Lumen Gentium* Chapter IV

According to *Lumen Gentium* Chapter IV, which deals specifically with the role of the laity, namely those members of the people of God who belong neither to the clergy nor to the

religious orders. The laity in their own way participate in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles of Christ:

The term laity is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ, and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world. (LG, 31)

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council made it clear through the wordings of *Lumen Gentium* that the church is composed of many members, who do not all have the same function, yet they all work for a common goal, and are united in “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” (LG, 32). Since we all have the same calling to perfection and one salvation, there is “in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex” (cf. Gal. 3:28). Although different members may proceed along different paths and “by the will of Christ some are made teachers, pastors and dispensers of mysteries on behalf of others, yet all share a true equality with regard to the dignity and to the activity common to all the faithful for the building up of the Body of Christ.”

The term laity according to *Lumen Gentium*, is understood to mean all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the church. These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are constituted among the people of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ and they carry out for their own part the mission of the whole Christian people in the church and in the world. Moreover, the document goes on to state that while different members of the one body are called to various ministries and are granted unique charisms particular to each member’s distinct calling and secular profession, all share the same dignity as adopted sons and daughters of the Father, though, with and in Christ. ‘For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we, the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members are one of another. Therefore, the chosen People of God is one: ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’, sharing a common dignity as members from their regeneration in Christ, having the same filial grace and the same vocation to perfection possessing in common one salvation, one hope and one undivided charity’ (LG, 32).

Moreso, the laity on account of the distinctively “secular” roles they assume within society, are afforded a unique access to persons who would otherwise not be exposed to officially designated Ministers of the Word and the Sacraments. Thus, the said laity are in a privileged position to act as the “salt of the earth” by carrying the Good News, or the “Gospel” of Christ, into those worldly arenas that Sacred Ministers would likely not have access to. Thus, they are called to act as a leaven in the world, while they live “in” the world without being “of” the world. The document continues on to underscore the tremendous significance of the lay vocation and apostolate in the following words:

The lay apostolate, however, is a participation in the salvific mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, especially holy Eucharist, that charity toward God and man which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. Now the laity is called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth. Thus every layman, in virtue of the very gifts bestowed upon him, is at the same time a witness and a living instrument of the mission of the Church itself ‘according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal’ (*LG*, 33).

Lumen Gentium’s call for greater participation by the laity does not involve giving them functions proper to clergy, but on the contrary takes advantage of their specifically secular duties in the world. Instead of “laicizing” the Church, the Council calls for the laity to sanctify the secular world. They may either conduct such projects on their own initiative, or in collaboration with their pastors, so that clergy and laity utilize each other’s gifts for the benefit of the Church’s mission. Lay participation is not summoned merely for its own sake, but is entirely subordinate to the Church’s mission to serve as the light of the nations. In our context therefore, we shall use this perspective to evaluate the activities of the Samba group which here represents the laity in the church.

3.1.2. The Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church equally specifies her ecclesiology of the laity in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which forms part of the Catholic Ecclesiology we are using here as a

theoretical framework. There are specific chapters and paragraphs that spell out what the laity should do in the church. This can be found in Article 9, Paragraph 4. It states: “The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one” (No. 871). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also states: “In virtue of their rebirth in Christ there exists among all the Christian faithful a true equality with regard to dignity and the activity whereby all cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ in accord with each one's own condition and function.” (No.872).

The differences which the Lord has willed to put between the members of his body serve its unity and mission. For “in the church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors, Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God.” (No. 387) Finally, “from both groups (hierarchy and laity) there exist Christian faithful who are consecrated to God in their own special manner and serve the salvific mission of the church through the profession of the evangelical counsels.” (No. 873).

In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, CCC, No.2447, The seven works and Spiritual works of Mercy are highlighted as follows: The Corporal Works of Mercy include: “Feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead”. The Spiritual Works of Mercy include: “admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive all injuries and pray for the living and the dead” All these come in to highlight Catholic ecclesiology on the laity and they also have a link with practical *diakonia* or service to the less privileged in the church.

3.1.3. Papal Exaltations to the Universal Church

The various Apostolic Exaltations the universal: *Christifideles Laici*. The Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (The Joy of the Gospel), the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Africae Manus*” (Ecclesia in Africa) the Pope John Paul II, writing in September 1995, towards Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops which shed a good light on what Inculturation is supposed to be in the Church. Finally to look at the recent book of Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy*, Published in 2015, which also sheds more light on what the church expects from the Laity especially towards God and others.

Christifideles Laici emphasizes that this Christian message awakens humanity to the true nature and meaning of its existence. “Because of their “secular nature” the lay faithful play an irreplaceable role in this service to the human family. An authentically Christian life constitutes a service to all humanity and all aspects of society” (*ChL 36*). In *Christifideles Laici*, the Supreme Pontiff lists the following as fields of action that are supposed to be undertaken by the laity in living their witnesses in the Church as the laity: “promoting the dignity of the person; protecting the inviolable right to life; acknowledging religious freedom and the family as the basic environment for social engagement; charity as inspiration and support for solidarity; the duty of all to engage in politics; the human person’s centrality in social and economic spheres; and evangelizing culture on both the general level as well as every individual culture” (*ChL 37- 44.*).

Christifideles Laici in the first place, “provides an organic summary of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council on the laity, in the light of the subsequent Magisterium and practice of the Church. In the second place, in its approach to new movements and questions arising after and as a result of the Council, it proceeds to a delicate and necessary discernment as regards experiences, trends and forms of lay participation that characterized the first post-conciliar period. Thirdly, it gives new indications intended “to stir and promote a deeper awareness among all the faithful of the gift and responsibility they share ... in the communion and mission of the Church” (*ChL.2*).

At the same time, the Synod has pointed out that the post-conciliar path of the lay faithful has not been without its difficulties and dangers. In particular, two temptations can be cited which they have not always known how to avoid: the temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world, and the temptation of legitimizing the unwarranted

separation of faith from life, that is, a separation of the Gospel's acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world (*ChL 2*).

Another Apostolic Exhortation which is going to be used as one of the sources of Catholic ecclesiology of the laity is “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (The Joy of the Gospel). Particularly, in chapter 4 where Pope Francis is exhorting the church to be at the service of the poor and the vulnerable. Pope Francis wants “a Church which is poor and for the poor.” The poor took up a huge section in this Apostolic and his words deserve to be closely examined. Pope Francis uses the various quotes in that document to show what Christians ought to do in order to help the poor and the vulnerable of the society. He writes:

Evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social” (EG.181). “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society” (EG.187). “Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a “special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness” (EG198). “God’s heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself 'became poor' (2 Cor 8:9). The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. Salvation came to us from the 'yes' uttered by a lowly maiden from a small town on the fringes of a great empire.” (EG.197)“Without the preferential option for the poor, ‘the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communications’ (EG.199)

This above citations from *Evangelii Gaudium* show what the church expects from the Laity in relation to their function which is part and parcel of the Catholic Church’s ecclesiology of the function of the Laity, which we shall also use as we evaluate the activities of the Samba group in the Diocese of Kumbo.

Lastly, we shall explore the recent book of Pope Francis *The Name of God is Mercy* Published in 2015, which also sheds more light on what the church expects from the laity especially towards God and others in the church especially in the context of the Great Jubilee Year of Mercy. He writes “To follow the way of the Lord, the church is called on to dispense its mercy over all those who recognise themselves as sinners, who assume responsibility for

the evil they have committed, and who feel in need of forgiveness. The Church does not exist to condemn people, but to bring about an encounter with the visceral love of God's mercy." (P. 20) and goes ahead to link it to practical life in the following words: "I often say that in order for this to happen, it is necessary to go out: to go out from the churches and the parishes, to go outside and look for people where they live, where they suffer, and where they hope. I like to use the image of a field hospital to describe this "Church that goes forth". It exists where there is combat. It is not a solid structure with all the equipment where people go to receive treatment for both small and large infirmities. It is a mobile structure that offers first aid and immediate care, so that its soldiers do not die." The pope therefore stresses the fact that the church must take actions especially with regard to the vulnerable of society. All these ecclesiastical guidelines will inform the analysis of our data as theories.

3.2. Catholic Ecclesiology on Inculturation

As an important aspect of the theory, we shall pay attention to the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "*Africae Manus*" (*Ecclesia in Africa*) of Pope John Paul II, who in September 1995, wrote towards Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. This document gives guidelines but for our purposes, we shall focus on the third chapter that deals with the major tasks of evangelisation in terms of the five main topics of the Synod: proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication and equally chapter six in which the Pope analyses the "prophetic role" of the church in building God's kingdom of justice, peace and love within the realities facing Africa today. This document therefore gives clear guidelines on how the laity in the African context is supposed to act in the church.

Before Christianity came to the African continent, Africans had their own African traditional beliefs embedded in African philosophy and way of life. Njenga K. (1997) explains that although the Africans were converted and baptised as Christians, they still maintained and kept their own values. According to him and other schools of thought, African Christians live double standards in that while professing what Christianity teaches, they still believe strongly in their African traditional values. Metu, (1996) explains that African Traditional Religion has certain practices which are similar to what Christianity proposes to them like the idea of sacrifice, and the idea of communion of Saints which the traditional Africans identify with ancestors. Crollius (1986) buttresses this definition of inculturation when he defines it as: "The integration of the Christian experience of a local church into the culture of its people in such a way that the experience not only express itself

in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion not only within the culture in question, but also as an enrichment of the church universal” (p. 43).

Popularly, inculturation in Africa is often understood as the assimilation of African values, traditions and rituals into the church's praxis. It is also seen as the Africanisation of the church by ridding it of foreign practices and replacing them by African traditional ones. According to Bate (1995), the process of inculturation does include these elements but inculturation is a much deeper process than the assimilation, indigenization and accommodation, which this popular understanding implies. He explains that inculturation goes deeper than the importation of rituals and practices and the accommodation of values even though it can include these things. Inculturation is a theological term which is linked to the anthropological term “enculturation” coined by Herskovitz (1952), who described it as “the aspects of the learning experience which mark of man from other creatures, and by means of which, initially, and in later life, he achieves competence in his culture”.

In English, inculturation is a theological term which refers to the cultural nature of the Church, its faith and its praxis. Misunderstandings arise in inculturation when we reify concepts such as culture, faith, church and praxis. What we are concerned about is people. It is people who are the subjects of culture, the church, its faith and its praxis. Inculturation is not just about mixing faith and culture it is about the faith becoming a culture in the Church and this culture becoming the culture of the people in the Church (EA 78).

Ecclesia in Africa therefore calls for the respect of two criteria in the process of inculturation (EA 62). “The first of these is that all inculturation should be compatible with the Christian message. Since inculturation is concerned with evangelisation and the bringing of the good news to all people, then all efforts at inculturation should clearly be part of that same good news. Syncretistic attempts to incorporate practices and traditions in conflict with the gospel message is not inculturation”. The second criteria to be respected is that of communion with the universal church. The “Ancient Eastern churches of Africa” are given as examples of areas where successful inculturation has been achieved whilst maintaining this union (EA 62).

According to Metuh (1993), it is due to the missionaries’ intolerance of the tendency of the new African converts to introduce elements of the traditional religion into Christianity. There was a clash of worldviews and the failure of missionaries to come to terms with the traditional African cosmology and values. Walligo (1986) from his own part explains the

meaning of inculturation in the following words: “Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his Gospel of salvation ever more understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It is the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people... It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity ‘truly feel at home’ in the cultures of each people” (p. 11).

Arrupe (1990) argues that “Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the cultures, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation. (p. 6). For him therefore, inculturation is so important.

Schineller (1990) in stressing the importance of all cultures and highlighting that there are always good aspects in each cultures, explains that Inculturation is so vital if Christianity is to make meaning to an African. He puts forth this arguments in the following words:

Like revelation is offered to all men and women, and any exclusivist understanding of grace would deny the understanding of inculturation as a two-way street, a listening as well as sharing or teaching. The exclusivist understanding of grace accounted for the lack of respect for local cultures and traditional religion, and for the colonialist attitude of much traditional missionary endeavour. If, on the other hand, grace is offered to and in some ways present in cultures and contexts beyond the explicit Christian pale, then the agent of inculturation must attend to and search for the presence, learn from it and build on it rather than reject or ignore it (p. 47).

3.3. Diakonia (from a more practical understanding)

As we have already highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, we shall use the understanding of *diakonia* from Dietrich (2014), in the introduction to the Book *Diakonia As Christian Social Practice*. Diakonia according to Dietrich (2014), has to do with “service for each other in mutuality, that has to include empowerment, advocacy work, humble service for people in need or the vulnerable in society, acts of mercy and charity performed by good Christian people” (p.13). Dietrich (2014), also highlights another important aspect of *diakonia* which is *Prophetic Diakonia* in the following words: “The tradition of diakonia has often somehow narrowly focused on humble service based on historical circumstances in the 18th century and a narrow reading of the New Testament tradition. Nevertheless, this concept

of humble service often described as acts of charity should not be totally discarded” (p.34-35).

This clear understanding from Dietrich (2014), ties with the understanding of World Council of Churches which in 1983 defined *diakonia* “as the church’s ministry of sharing, healing and reconciliation as well as a central part of the Nature of the Church (Nordstokke 2011a:162). The WCC therefore introduced the concept of Prophetic *Diakonia* as an “essential for the churches role in shaping the future” (Poser 1987:124). These understandings highlighted above are therefore going to form the bases of our assessment of the activities of Samba to the church and others in the community. We shall use it to evaluate the service they render to the church and the vulnerable.

Bearing in mind the understanding of *diakonia* based on the understanding of Dietrich, (2014), and the other above, the activities of the Samba in the Catholic diocese of people should be able to bear fruits that tally with threefold ecumenical understanding of *diakonia*, presented in the Lutheran World Federation document *Diakonia in Context*. This document highlights *diakonia* whose fruits are supposed to be threefold viz: transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment.

3.3.1. Transformation

According to the LWF document, Transformation comes in because all human beings are vulnerable in one way or the other and as such need each other to journey towards the path of perfection. One of the diaconal work main task is transforming people in society especially those who are in the boundary zone (the underprivileged or the disadvantaged of society). By transformation, human beings dignity is changed and restored through the church’s fight against injustices of various forms, which could be seen in the light of social change and development in society that leads to social cohesion and peace among human beings. It is thus a diaconal task to transform creation to a better and higher level as reflected in the Pauline letters when he admonishes believers “not to be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). This transformation has to be shaped by the Gospel and values that are embedded in Sacred Scriptures. In this case it will analyse how the activities of the SAMBA can play a transformative role or function in the Church through the diaconal activities they carry out.

3.3.2. Reconciliation

Through reconciliation and according to LWF, diaconal activities seek to mend the broken relationships that have led to what may be termed a broken world. Since *diakonia* seeks to follow the footsteps of Christ, it also in the light of Christ who came to reconcile humanity with God, seeks to reconcile all humans and mend the broken world. This is done through Prophetic *diakonia*, which aims at healing the world as Tsele (2002) explains: “Rather than merely rendering humble service to the poor, *diakonia* needs to be viewed and enacted within the context of Jubilee and Sabbath dynamic of relief and social intervention which aims at restoring the dignity of human beings. It involves taking a stand and the willingness to take risks. It touches and engages us personally and requires a spirituality that includes confession of our own culpability and acknowledgement that we are not heroes or saviours of the poor” (p.53). Reconciliation is more than the removal of suffering for the victim and conversion for the oppressor. Reconciliation moves hand in hand with Transformation. Therefore the Samba will be examined to see how its activities could serve as a means of reconciliation within the church and the wider community that evolved from the Traditional African religion to embrace Christianity.

3.3.3. Empowerment

According to the LWF, through empowerment, the diaconal activities help to build people’s capacities such that they can be able to better their lives and human dignity. According to Alaszewski et al. (1999), empowerment can be defined in general as the capacity of individuals, groups and or communities to gain control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards helping themselves and others to maximise the quality of their lives. In health and social care, empowerment means patients, carers and service users exercising choice and taking control of their lives. It is not that one is empowered means he or she become all powerful like God. This means that we are still limited despite the empowerment. The actual meaning of empowerment is that one feels that he or she is able and feels powerful enough in certain situations to take part in decision making. As such diaconal activities should aim at helping people to be able to develop capacities that can help them take care of themselves rather than always depending on others for survival. We shall therefore analyse to see how far the Church has empowered the Samba

group and also to see if their activities are a source of empowerment for the vulnerable in the Christian community.

Conclusion

It is therefore the documents that we have highlighted above that will form the basis or the theory of the analytical framework which we are using to analyse and discuss the data we have gathered for this research. The presentation, analysis and discussion will proceed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION

Introduction

According to Bryman (2012), “One of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that it very rapidly generates a large cumbersome data because of its reliance on prose in the form of such media as field notes, interview transcripts, or documentation.” In highlighting this challenge for researchers, Miles (1979) described qualitative research as an ‘attractive nuisance’, because of the attractiveness of its richness but the difficulty of finding analytic paths through that richness. This chapter therefore focuses on the presentation of the data based on the material gathered through questionnaire and skype interviews that were conducted. The findings are presented in line with two main research questions that guided the data collection process.

4.1. Presentation of data

As earlier indicated, a series of questions were designed and sent to members of the Samba group. Ten questionnaires were sent to the Samba members who willingly answered the questions. The questions were designed based on the general research question. This general research question has to do with exploring the challenges that the Samba group as members of Christ’s Lay faithful are facing in living out the Gospel values as Christians viz-a-viz the guidelines that are stated in the church’s official documents and official diocesan documents. We are therefore going to present the data under three broad headings from both the Samba members and diocesan authorities as follows:

- Data in relation to the Understanding of Catholic Ecclesiology of the Laity.
- Data in relation to *diakonia* (Service) from a more practical understanding.
- Data in relation to what Samba members feel about themselves as being part of the church.
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Note should be taken that data from the Samba is from two sources viz: ten questionnaires and two skype interviews while that from the diocesan authorities is from skype only

4.1.1. Data presentation from the Questionnaire and skype interview gotten from the Samba members

The first part of the data is presented in accordance with the understanding of Catholic Ecclesiology of the Laity based on the various Church documents from the Vatican, National Episcopal Conference, Provincial Episcopal Conference and Diocesan Pastoral Letters.

D. Data based on the understanding of Catholic Ecclesiology of the Laity.

In an effort to know how far the Samba members were knowledgeable about the Catholic Ecclesiology on the role of the laity in the Catholic Church, the questionnaire was designed into simple questions that allowed the various members of the Samba to bring out their subjective views about the official church documents. From the questionnaire, a good number of those who answered showed little knowledge of the Official church documents about the role of the laity in the Church. As a kind of introduction to the questionnaire, I designed a question to know the origin of Samba and how it became an official Church group. All the respondents at least gave a uniform answer as to how the group started which could be seen as oral tradition account (handed down by word of mouth), because of little or no written documents about it. Every one attested to the fact that it was a Nso Traditional group that has been “Christianized” or “baptised” into a church group. This is spelt out in the following words of one of the Samba members:

Samba was originally a Nso Traditional group that was part of the Nso traditional army that was responsible for protecting Nso citizens during intertribal wars and colonization by the Germans. After the warring periods were over, it became a social group that also undertook community activities. Eventually a certain Fr. Francis Figl a Mill Hill Missionary came and went closer to its members and eventually converted the members into Christianity and the group finally became part of the life of the church as we have it today and the number of members has continued to grow and spread in the diocese to other dioceses of the country especially where you have the presence of Nso people.

The above response from one of the respondents, represents the view I gathered from all the questionnaires that were sent out to the Samba members. The origin of Church Samba is common knowledge in the diocese as it is part of oral tradition that has been passed from one generation to the other, eventhough this is also found in diocesan documents that are cited in this work.

According to one of the Samba members in responding to the question whether they have about an idea about official church documents on the laity, the following answer was gotten:

I know definitely that there are Church documents that specify the role of the Laity in the life of the Roman Catholic Church. I know for certain, that since the Catholic Church is all over the world, there must be instructions from the Pope how lay people should live their lives as Christians or to act as Christians. But personally I have never seen or read any of those document. From time to time, I hear the priests speak and make mention of these documents but I have never had the chance to search for them and read. All I know is that they are giving the church's guideline on how Christians should live their lives as lay people. Thank God we have the chance of these documents being simplified for us in other forms by either the Bishop, the priests or the diocesan pastoral team.

In the same vein, another Samba confessed that he has heard about the documents, *Lumen Gentium* and other documents he doesn't remember which he often hear the Bishop make reference to it in some of his Pastoral Letters:

I have heard a lot about Lumen Gentium from the Bishop's preaching and Pastoral Letters and preaching during some important occasions of the church in the life of the diocese. I know generally that these documents are calling on the Christians to live and lead better lives in collaboration with their priests and church authorities who are there to help them to grow morally, spiritually and other wise. I cannot pretend that I know the specific details of these documents and neither have I taken any time to read them.

In explaining how they get into contact with the ideas presented in Official Church documents about the role of the laity some of the respondents also made it clear that the Pastoral plan of the diocese makes it easier for them to know what role they are supposed to play in the church. According to one of the prominent members of the Samba:

The Diocese of Kumbo in particular and the Ecclesiastical province of Bamenda in general have a very detailed and comprehensive Pastoral plan that focuses on the Basic Christian Communities and through these basic Christian communities that meet on weekdays, a lot of information and useful information is disseminated so much so that the Christians become more aware of their roles and functions like good Christians. These Basic Small Christian Communities

also help the Samba members just like any other Christians in the diocese to know their function in the diocese and the Church as a whole.

In a bit to test the knowledge of Samba members about the Diocesan Pastoral Letters from the Local Ordinary which inspire the Samba group, some of the Samba members acknowledge that frequently they receive Pastoral Letters from the Bishop in relation to different issues and situations. In the words of one of them:

Normally, the Bishop sends out different Pastoral Letter for various reasons and different occasions, but the one that strikes me most and maybe other Samba members is the Annual Letter of the Bishop before the beginning of every academic year. This one is so special because it falls in line with the initiatives that Samba has been taking with regard to education. The Bishop writes to encourage Christians to uphold Catholic education, which is facing great challenges from the proliferation of public schools all over the diocese, and as such pulling away pupils from Catholic Primary schools. The Bishop also writes to encourage Christians to help and sponsor at least one child especially Children from families affected by HIV whose parents are dead and thus surviving with their Grandparents. We hear and read these Pastoral letters that continue to ring the bell in our heads and drive us to action.

Another respondent from the Samba group explained that the Diocesan Pastoral Team and the Mobile Catechetical Team of the Diocese, together with the Catholic Education Office helps them to know the role of the Laity. One explained thus:

At different periods of the year, the Bishop sends out the various mobile teams like the Diocesan Pastoral Team, The Mobile Catechetical Team and the Catholic Education Office Team to move round the Diocese and sensitise the Christians about the various needs of the church and how the Christians ought to live their lives as members of the church as the laity. Through these teams, members of the Samba also come to know what is expected of lay people. There is equally the Diocesan Laity Council that is charged with the responsibility of letting the lay people know what is expected from them as a church. The Diocesan Laity Council has been of tremendous help to letting us understand our roles as Lay members of the church.

One out of all the respondents acknowledge that he has read a lot of church documents about the role of the laity in the church for curiosity sake. He explained:

I am a very curious person and love to read a lot of things just to have knowledge about it. I have personally read Lumen Gentium Chapter for with keen interest on the role of the laity in the Church. I read a lot of Papal Encyclicals and Apostolic Exhortations which have given me the change to have a very broad knowledge about what the church expects from both the Clergy and the laity. I also make sure I acquire the Diocesan Pastoral plan and the Pastoral Letters from both the National Episcopal conference, Provincial Episcopal conferences and the Diocesan Pastoral Letters. Even if I don't live up to expectations, but at least, I know what is expected.

One of the interesting responses came from one of the members who spoke almost on behalf of those who have no formal education and who are members of the Samba group. This came as one of the challenges the group faces. Since some do not know much about what the church expects, it becomes challenging to understand. This was expressed in the following words

I have an idea about the church's documents on the role of the laity in the church but we have some Samba members who have no formal education and can neither write nor read. So they rely on other sources to get information about what the church expects from the lay people. So many have no idea about the documents. They then have to rely on interpretations and information from others who can read and who actually have mastered the contents of the various documents. This poses a challenge but the consolation is that these people are at least able to put into practice what the documents entail even though they may not have a full knowledge of what the documents stipulate.

As another source of getting to know somehow about the official teachings of the Catholic Church about the role of the laity, one of the respondents made mention of the Diocesan Chaplain who acts as a great source of information for them. According to him,

The appointment of a Priest as the Chaplain of the Diocesan Samba is a great blessing for us. The Chaplain is always with us and help us in our spiritual lives. He also advices and teaches us about what the church wishes for her sons and daughters. Thanks to him that many people are able to know what to do. He reads and explains the Church's mind to us when we meet and through him we are gathering a lot of knowledge about the Church.

The above response also came from a good number of the respondents. From my personal observation gleaned from the responses related to the issue of Catholic ecclesiology

of the lay Christian faithful, presented in the official Church documents already presented. Many of the Samba have knowledge of what the laity or Christians in general should do as part of their Christian duty to fellow human beings but they have no direct contact with the Church's official documents. The general role of the laity which some professed is gotten from their doctrine classes and lessons acquired before Baptism (for those who were baptised as adults), First Holy Communion and Confirmation. They also get the knowledge from daily exhortations from priest during Masses and other Church activities.

The responses do not in any way imply that the Laity in the diocese are not aware of their role as lay members of the Church, it rather highlights the fact that they get to know their role as Lay members of the church not by necessarily having access to official documents, but that this knowledge is made easier for them through other means as pastoral letters, preaching, seminars and other diocesan activities. However, their activities show that they have an understanding of what the church expects.

E. Data based on *Diakonia* (Service) from a more practical understanding.

In order to get the data from the practical understanding of *diakonia* or service, the other aspect of the questionnaire supported by two skype interviews of Samba authorities were designed. In the first part already presented, the Samba members spelt out their acquaintances with the official church documents that spell out the role and importance of the Laity in the church. In this second part of presentation of the data, the focus is on the practical activities of the Samba, which they carry out in the name of the church as the laity.

From a practical point of view, the Samba members were quick to point out one of the activities that they are doing. This is the project to provide the diocese with funds to support the education of orphans who have been victims of HIV Aids taking away their parents. As a response to the initiatives of the Samba, one of the members responded:

For some years now we decided as a group to raise funds from among us to support the project of education of orphans through the Bishop's Education Fund. The Bishop's Education Fund is a project in the Diocese of Kumbo that helps in the education of the Orphans who on the increase in the diocese. We have been able to sponsor a great number of Orphans in the diocese at least at the primary school and some in other secondary and professional training centres. We are very happy doing this and also happy to be part of putting smiles on orphan's faces

In talking about funds, that should automatically imply that some money has to be raised and in finding out what the Samba group does to get the funds to sponsor the orphans, the response I got was as follows.

The money we get is mostly from individual and free will donations from members. We have a fix amount of money that every Samba member contribute. At the same time, those who can afford more are encouraged to do so. Annually we have a special day of fund raising when we all gather in the Kumbo Diocesan Cathedral for a solemn High Mass. During this annual even, we have a special offertory procession, whereby all Samba members and everyone in church is encouraged to go for offertory and then the proceeds that is gotten from the special offertory is being added to the envelope from the individual contributions and it is then handed to the Bishop who then pts in the account of the Bishop's Education Fund project and then the money is used to pay the fees of the of the orphans in the Catholic schools

In order to know if the fund raising and sponsoring of the Orphans was something imposed on them by the church authorities or something springing from their own hearts, I got this response:

It is the initiative of the Samba people themselves. However when the Bishop Education Fund Project started, the Bishop sent out a series of Pastoral letters, presenting the issue of the rise in the number of orphans that were read in all church all over the Diocese and beyond where son and daughters of the diocese are based. The Bishop through these letters urged Christians to see what can be done. This does not imply that the Bishop imposed anything on the Samba members. As a fruit of reflection upon the situation of the Orphans presented in these Pastoral Letters, the Samba members saw the need to act and to do something for the orphans. Therefore they decided by themselves to levy each member a minimum annual contribution. This also opens up room for those who can contribute more. The issue of choosing a particular special day for fund raising day also came from the initiative of the Samba members. It has come to stay and every year the amount of money raised is increasing every year and people are happy to contribute the money.

In an attempt to have a picture of the challenges that the Samba group faces in trying to exercise their role as the laity in a more practical way, the general impression was that the initiative is moving forward amidst the daily challenges. One of the Samba officials said

Although we have been making great progress with the issue of sponsoring orphans, we have also been having some challenges in trying to exercise this noble task of sponsoring the orphans. Samba in the whole diocese is not the same everywhere or in every parish. Some Parishes are more active than others at all in some parishes of the diocese, there is no Samba at all. Samba groups in certain parishes are more active than others and contributions in terms of finances depends on the economic situation of each parish. Some Samba groups in certain parishes are more viable than others. In some parishes, the some priests do not encourage the Samba enough and as such the spirit of being active is somehow retarded. Some priests see very vibrant church groups Samba included as a treat to their authority. That explains the cold attitude of some of the priests. We have some priests especially the Chaplain who are part and parcel of the Samba and do a lot encourage the members.

It is therefore very clear that the group faces the challenges with regards to the relationship with some Parish priests who do not seem to value the efforts and initiatives that Samba is carrying out.

In order to find out the sustainability of the Samba and the initiatives they carry out, I sought to know how they intend to sustain this project of educating the orphans and got the following response:

We have been depending on the individual contributions and fund raising. We are determined to continue this work we have taken upon ourselves. We planning more activities of fund raising for the future and we also intend to step up the amount of our contribution as members. That will enable us to raise more money. One of our challenges is that we are helping orphans to be sent to the primary school, but what happens to these kids after primary school? They surely need more education in secondary school, high school and eventually universities or enter professional schools. So we have future projects of supporting them beyond the primary education level. We are also having plans for the future, that those we help and they eventually get employment will also be encouraged to take

upon themselves the sponsoring of other unfortunate kids. With those plans, we can be sure that our initiative is going to continue bearing more fruits.

From the response above, it is therefore very clear that although Samba is doing a great job, more still has to be done, if the initiative has to continue.

F. Data in relation to the feeling of the Samba members about them being part of the Laity of the church.

After seeking to know the level of knowledge of the Samba Members concerning Catholic Ecclesiology of the laity and the Practical aspects which Samba is carrying out as members of the laity, I decided to ask a general question about the feeling of the Samba members on them being part of the church and got the following responses.

We feel very happy as Samba members to be part of the lay members of the church. We are happy that our group with a traditional origin has evolved and has become part and parcel of the official groups of the Church in the diocese. We feel that the church has acknowledged that there is something good in the Nso Traditional Religion that can be used to reach God. It is as if the Church has baptised Samba and we feel proud belonging to the group and being happy to serve God in our own way through the Samba. We feel happy to be part of the Church which has seen something positive in our traditional belief. We feel that the church is not something imposed on us as aspects of our own tradition are being incorporated into the Christian faith. When we are invited to take the Lectionary procession during masses we are happy because aspects of our tradition are accepted in the church. We are very happy with Inculturation that has made it possible for our own tradition and culture to be used in worshipping God. We feel belonging to the church and we are happy the church has recognized that there is something good in the in the Samba group.

The data above therefore gives us a general view from the members of the Samba group about their participation and feeling in the life of the church. This data highlights, responses to the research questions that we set out to answer. The responses are the subjective view points of the different Samba members. To make the data more valid, we shall proceed to get the subjective views of two diocesan authorities on the issue at hand.

4.1.2. Data from Skype interview with Diocesan Authorities.

Initially when I made contacts with the diocesan authorities to get the necessary data from them about the Samba group through a questionnaire, they accepted to help respond to my questions not through a questionnaire but through a skype interview. The reason advanced was that it was a busy period and accepting to fill a questionnaire was going to be time taking and demanding given the numerous tasks in their hands. The skype interview was carried out in such a way as to seek the answers to the research question.

According to the diocesan authorities, the members of Samba have been doing a tremendous job in the diocese through their activities in the life of the diocese. According to one of the authorities this general comment about the Samba group was made:

The Samba group is a blessing to the diocese, you certainly know how it all begun with the foresight of the Mill Hill missionary. The group has been growing from strength to strength and has impacted the lives of many in the diocese. We are proud of the group and hope it continues to be a blessing to the life of the church through its activities. The group serves as a bridge between Christianity and the Nso Traditional Religion since it was a traditional group that has been transformed into a church group.

The above general comment paints a vivid picture of the fact that the Samba group is a success story in the life of the church in the diocese of Kumbo.

D. Data in relation to the Understanding of Catholic Ecclesiology of the Laity.

In seeking to know if the Samba members had full knowledge of their role and function as members of Chris's lay faithful as presented in the church's ecclesiology, the diocesan authorities had this to say:

All members of the Samba do not necessarily have knowledge about the church's official documents by reading them. I mean to say that not all of them know the various documents that specify the functions and role of the Laity in the church. Some might have read official church documents like Lumen Gentium, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and Papal documents of the church. Some of the members are not even literate enough to read these church's official documents. But when you see the tremendous work they are doing, you will see that they are putting into practice what is specified by these official documents. They try to practice what they learnt maybe from their doctrine classes, or what they hear from various preachers, or when they have retreats, or what they get

from diocesan pastoral letters that are sent out to the diocese from time to time. So I can assure you that they live practically what is theoretically presented in the church's official church documents. Through the help of the Diocesan Laity Council created by the Bishop, they get to know what is expected from them as Lay members of the church.

When I inquired further to know more about how the Christians get to know their role and functions as members of the laity, the diocesan authority asserted:

First of all, the diocese has a diocesan Pastoral plan in which basic small Christian communities are recommended for all Christians. This diocesan Pastoral Plan is drawn by the Diocesan Pastoral team and the Diocesan Laity Council. Every Christian is supposed to be part of the Small Christian communities, which meet during the week days to share the word of God and to have information about their lives about Christians. Through these Small Christian communities, the Christians learn so much about their role and function as members of the Laity of which Samba is a part. We also organize diocesan synods and periodic retreats and seminars which act as avenues for spreading the messages that are contained in official church documents and teaching. Through these basic Christian communities, the Lay people get to know their roles and deepen their faith.

From the interviews, it was therefore evident that the members have not necessarily read the documents of the church about the laity but are rather familiar with them through other sources and which is evident in living practically through the various lay movements and groups in the diocese of Kumbo. By this, I mean that the members of the Samba get to know of their role as the laity of the church through other sources in the church which among others include preaching from the priests during the various masses and services that the Christians participate in, through diocesan Pastoral letters which tackle the various elements of the role and function of the laity in the church and though doctrine in preparation for the reception of the various sacraments of the Catholic Church (Baptism, Communion, Confirmation, Confession, Anointing of the sick, Holy Orders and Marriage).

The lay Christians also get to know of their role through the various diocesan pastoral seminars, which are organised periodically for different reasons. Seeing the need for a constant reminder of the laity about their role and the need for spiritual growth, the diocese has also appointed a permanent chaplain for the Samba. Note should be taken that each group

in the diocese has a Chaplain and through these permanent Chaplains, the Christians are being schooled on the role and function as members of Christ's lay faithful. They are also schooled to know their role as the laity during the various retreats, diocesan and provincial synods. The practice of basic small Christian communities also gives the Christians the avenue to learn more and more about their role as Christians.

E. Data in relation to *Diakonia* (Service) from a more practical understanding.

In finding out what precisely the group does in the life of the diocese, the authorities were quick to identify the pivotal role they are playing in the life of the church through their initiative of the supporting the sponsoring of the orphans through the Bishop's education fund. The authorities highlighted the fact that the Samba group, which predates the arrival of Christianity to the diocese of Kumbo has transformed from part of the warring faction of the society, to a church group that has become a veritable instrument for *diakonia* or service in the life of the church. The group has gone beyond meeting and sharing food and drinks together, to a group that has interest in the plight of the poor and vulnerable of society. This transformation is reflected in the growth and expansion of the group and the activities.

The Samba group has been playing a leading role in the contributions towards the sponsoring of orphans who are on the increase in the diocese. The Samba members have made tremendous contributions and have put smiles in the faces of many orphans who can now boast of having a descent education. I don't have the exact statistics right now, but all I can tell you is that they have helped to sponsor a good number of orphans in the previous years. They have also been carrying out other activities in the life of the church like participating actively in the liturgical life of the church. Their contributions are on the rise as years go by. We are proud of the group.

In seeking to know the practical challenges facing the Samba group from the view of diocesan authorities, it became evident that the challenges were almost the same with what the Samba Group members themselves highlighted. One of the authorities said "inter alia"

...The Samba is doing a great and enormous job, but shall it continue in the future given the fact that needy children are on the increase in the diocese? To use mathematical language, the funds for sponsoring the orphans are increasing arithmetically while the number of children needing help are increasing geometrically. (...) We have a challenge of looking into the future and seeing how this projects of Bishop Education fund and the Samba initiative will

sustain. Another challenge too is that giving these vulnerable children basic education and not giving them the education can help them to be self-reliant is not enough. At such more fund will be needed in future, so more initiatives are needed in order to sustain the sources of funding for the orphans. This shows that although they are doing a lot already, more still needs to be done to be done...

The diocesan authorities also highlighted the fact that with the new vision of the church after the second Vatican Council, the lay people are becoming more active and ready to sacrifice for others.

F. Data in relation to what Samba members feel about themselves as being part of the church.

According to the diocesan authorities, the members of the Samba have a feeling of belonging and of being part and parcel of the church and this is reflected in the way the members are seriously committed to their daily activities in the church. This comes out clearly in the words of the one of the priests:

Generally, after the Second Vatican Council that opened new windows in the church, the Lay people became more and more aware of their role and function as members of the church. The lay people in general have come to a great understanding that they are part of the church and are as important as the clergy. Before the Second Vatican Council, there was the feeling that the church is something of the clergy which the lay people were only invited to participate in what was not fully theirs. But presently, the feeling of the Laity is that of belonging fully to the church which is reflected in the various leading roles the Lay people are taking upon themselves. The Samba group we have in the diocese is great example of this feeling. There is that sense and feeling of belonging reflected in their daily activities. The Samba members are having that sense and feeling of belonging and through their activities we can see that feeling beings expressed. They are not just spectators in the church but they are active taking good and laudable initiatives for the life of the diocese and the church as a whole.

Conclusion

The data presentation above is what has been sieved from the raw data that was collected from the questionnaire and the skype interviews. After coding, we now had the data as it has been presented above. The questionnaire and the skype interviews presented above

therefore paint a vivid picture of the origin and the transformation of the Samba into a church group. As already indicated above, the Samba group in our case is representing the Laity in the church. The data shows how far the Samba members are aware of their role in the church, how they feel about themselves as being part of the laity in the church and how the Samba is playing that role in the life of the church through their practical activities.

CHAPTER FIVE. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction.

The presented findings were analysed and discussed following the research questions that guided the whole process of this work. These major theories that are being used in the discussion and analysis are Catholic Ecclesiology of the laity that is highlighted in *Lumen Gentium (LG) Chapter IV*, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Papal Exaltations to the Universal Church and the recent book of Pope Francis: *The name of God is Mercy*. The second theory that is used in the analysis and discussion is the theory of *Diakonia* (from a more practical understanding). These two theories will give shape and meaning to the analysis and discussion of the data that has been presented in chapter four. The data collected therefore comprises of four skype interviews; two from Diocesan authorities and two from leaders of Samba, and then responses from the 10 questionnaires that were sent to members of the Samba. Data was presented in a twofold dimension. That is to say it has been presented using the two important research questions that have guided the studies. These two research questions are:

- How does the church relate to the laity (Samba) through her official documents and official Catholic teaching?
- How does Samba (representing the laity) contribute to the church's *diakonia* in a practical way?

These two research questions are being used alongside the two theories that also facilitated the research. They include the role of the laity in the church from the perspective of Catholic ecclesiology, and the theory of *diakonia* (service) from a more practical view. The analysis and discussion will therefore follow these two research questions while taking into cognisance the two theories that were chosen as a mirror for the work.

5.1. How the Church relates to the laity (Samba).

The data presented shows that the Samba group members who represent the laity in the Catholic Church, have varying degrees of knowledge as to the existence and content of the church documents that spell out the role and function of the laity in the Church. *Lumen Gentium* especially in chapter IV, presents who the laity are and what role they should play in the church. As mentioned in Chapter IV, the laity are those members of the church who have not had special powers invested on them through the sacrament of ordinations. The

only qualification needed to be part of the laity in the church is the sacrament of baptism, which empowers the Christians to become kings, priests and prophets (Deuteronomy 18:14-22 making reference to the origin of the prophetic mission, Psalm 110:1-4 pointing to the Priestly mission of the laity, and Psalm 2 making a reference to the Kingly mission of the Laity).

The role of the laity is also specified in the Catechism of the Catholic Church especially Article 9, Paragraph 4, where the role of the Laity is specified. From the responses gathered during the interview, it is very clear that not all Christians have had access to the church's documents. Some members of Samba have never read or seen these documents which are supposed to give the road map for the laity in the church. Nevertheless, they get to acquire the knowledge about the role of the laity from other sources that have already been highlighted below and which continue to spur them into action and practical initiatives.

The data has also revealed that members of the Samba get to know the mind of the church or Catholic Ecclesiology of the laity from other sources and not necessarily from *Lumen Gentium* or other official church documents. They also get to know about their role from other sources like preaching during masses and services and from listening to Pastoral letters, Catechism of the Catholic Church, spiritual and other Catholic Literature which also give direction to Christian living as lay people or from exaltations from the Samba Chaplains who are spiritual guides to the members of the Samba.

Through the Diocesan Pastoral plan, the Pastoral Letters of the Bishop, seminars and other events organized by the diocese, the Samba members who represent the laity here become aware of what the church expects from them which is presented in the official church documents. The Diocesan Laity Council which has been mentioned in the data presentation, is charged with the duty of following up the activities of the lay people. This council is made up of lay people who work in collaboration with the diocesan authorities to make sure that Christians are aware of their roles as members of the church. It is charged with letting the Christians to know that they are part and parcel of the church and not spectators who are there to watch the clergy. John Paul II (1987) explains this relationship of the laity and the church in the following words:

As members of God's family and his Church, we are no longer on our own. We are intimately and mystically united to the Lord and each other. Jesus says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." (John 15:4) The

Church is a living and functioning body and we as members bring diverse, but complementary gifts, talents, ministries, and responsibilities. In living out our vocation as the lay faithful, we “can never remain in isolation from the community, but must live in a continual interaction with others, with a lively sense of fellowship, rejoicing in an equal dignity and common commitment to bring to fruition the immense treasure that each has inherited (AAS 80, 600).

The second Vatican Council came as a blessing to the church, opening new windows into the understanding and vision of the church. The documents of the church that were a fruit of the deliberations of the second Vatican Council, especially the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, contributed enormously to the understanding and participation of the lay people in the life of the church. The Pre-Vatican II church did not give enough room for lay people to feel they are part and parcel of the church. The stress and focus was on the hierarchy, which left the lay people almost like spectators waiting to be told what to do by the clergy. We can thus rightfully say that the presence of the Samba in the church today is thanks to the Second Vatican Council that gave such openings for lay people to think and feel themselves as part and parcel of the life of the church.

The emergence of the Samba group in the church has also been revealed from the interviews as part of the Inculturation which is specifically explained in *Ecclesia in Africa*. This inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian message in particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the church and remaking it so as to bring a new creation. Inculturation is therefore flowing from that new understanding of the church ushered by the Second Vatican Council documents of the Church. In our context, the Samba group has thus evolved from being a pagan group into a Christian group that is doing great things for the church. This in a way helps to mend the rift and animosity that used to reign between the church and the traditional society in the Nso Fondom. Even those who are not Christians turn to see the church no longer as an enemy because of the work the Samba does without discriminating if people are Christians or not. So the documents on inculturation have also helped the laity to relate more with the church as they can now use valuable aspects of their culture to worship God and having that sense of belonging which was not fully there or lacking in the Pre-Vatican II era.

It is worth mentioning in line with the explanation of Pope Paul VI (1975) in expressing how modern man behaves asserted “inter alia”: “...modern man, no longer believe

in preachers. He believes more on witnesses, and if he believes in preachers at all, it is because they are witnesses”. This goes to show that the relationship of the church and laity is not based solely on the documents of the church or Catholic Ecclesiology. It is not enough to make the lay people be good Christians or live their lives in conformity with the dictates of the texts alone. Since the call to diaconal work is a responsibility of all the faithful, the clergy need to work hand in glove with the laity.

The leaders after explaining Catholic ecclesiology to the faithful also need to join them or be part of them in the practical aspects of the lay people, like being part of the Samba and following up the daily activities of the group, which serves as a booster or an encouragement to the group as well. The mentality of some of the church leaders leaves more to be desired. Some see viable groups like the Samba as a kind of threat to their authority and dominance over the lay people, since they are coming up with their own initiatives. Some still consider lay people as not being equal to them, which defeats the concept of mutuality that Dietrich (2004) highlights in her article in the book, *Diakonia As Christian Social Practice*.

Given the above responses from the data, it is clear that the members of the Samba after acquiring knowledge about the laity through various media of Catholic Ecclesiology also focus on living and leading a good Christian life in a practical way. Knowledge that is not put into practical use is of no benefit. That leads us to the most important aspect revealed by the data and that is how the Samba group is living *diakonia* practically. As the saying goes, all theory without practice is as good as nothing. That therefore brings us to the second part of the research question which is practice or *diakonia*. The second part of the data focuses on the application of the texts of Catholic Ecclesiology in practical real life situations of the church.

5.2. How the Laity (Samba) contribute to the church’s *diakonia* in a practical way.

The diaconate of all believers in the church is expressed in *Diakonia in Context, Chapter 3* where, by virtue of baptism, as Christians, all believers or all the baptised become ‘deacons’. By virtue of Christian baptism, all the faithful become empowered for the work of ‘*diakonia*’ or “individual *diakonia*”: This is expressed in the following words:

...all the baptized are empowered for *diakonia*. This brings us to the first and most basic expression of diaconal work, namely that of individual *diakonia*, which normally is spontaneous in everyday life and expressed through a wide

variety of good works. Individual *diakonia* may often be referred to as ordinary human behaviour that natural helpers are accustomed to do, independent of faith and worldview. It has already been stated that diaconal work in the first place, responds to the concrete needs of people. An important biblical text that has shaped this understanding is found in Matthew 25:31-46 where the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the imprisoned are lifted up as being in need of care and attention. Again, it is clear that not only Christians are moved to act when confronted with such need. The specific diaconal dimension of this story however, is the way in which Christian identity relates such action to Christ, and to his identification with those in need: "... you did it to me!" (p.47)

A number of passages in the Scriptures show the importance and the call to common deacon hood of all the faithful or believers in the church. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke10:25-37) is a very good example of diaconal work which all the Christians are called upon to carry out. We also read in Acts 6:1 where Paul urges the congregation in Jerusalem to organize a daily *diakonia*, probably a system by which the poor received their daily food and other basic necessities of life. *Diakonia* is therefore the responsibility of all the believers. It is in this context that the work of Samba and the importance of the laity in church has been taken up for investigation in this research work.

The data presented above in chapter 4 has already established the fact that that Catholic Ecclesiology has a very comprehensive ecclesiology about the role and function of the lay people in the church. The social teachings of the Catholic Church is well specified in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, with *Lumen Gentium* as the main document, backed by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Papal's Apostolic Encyclicals and Apostolic Exaltations. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes these guidelines very clearly in the following words:

Lay Christians need to permeate social, political, and economic realities. "The initiative of lay Christians is necessary especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means for permeating social, political, and economic realities with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. This initiative is a normal element of the life of the Church." "Lay believers are in the front line of Church life; for them the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they in particular ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community

of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him. They are the Church.” (CCC. 899)

In stressing the practical aspect of the role of the laity in the church as well, The Catechism of the church admonishes the Laity in the following words

Lay Christians must bring Christ’s message to the whole world. “Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is the more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it.” (CCC, 900)

We shall turn our attention to the other aspect of the data, which is dealing with the practical initiatives of the Samba, which are diaconal in nature. It is therefore through the documents that the laity are called to practical action and in our case the most glaring example of Samba’s practical diaconal work is the sponsoring of the orphans in the diocese of Kumbo through the Bishop’s education fund. This falls in line with the definition of *diakonia* which in this context, Dietrich, (2014), defines as “...service for each other in mutuality, that has to include empowerment, advocacy work, humble service for people in need or the vulnerable in society, acts of mercy and charity performed by good Christian people”, (p.13). In the project, members of the Samba contribute money to pay the tuition fees of orphans in the diocese. Through this initiative taken upon by the Samba group in church, smiles have been put in the faces of many orphans.

The Samba initiative also falls in line with both the seven spiritual works of mercy and seven corporal works of mercy, which the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* recommends for daily Christian living. “The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbour in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God” (CCC. NO. 2447).The corporal works of

mercy recommended by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* could therefore be seen as practical *diakonia* in other words. These works of mercy are highlighted in the recent Book that is published by Pope Francis, which highlights God's merciful nature and which Christians are also supposed to follow.

For the work of Samba to be considered as *diakonia* the five dimensions of empowering *diakonia* suggested by the World Council of Churches which Ham, (2014) highlights in his article in *Diakonia As Christian Social Practice*.

- Visual: Whereby the work of *diakonia* has to be prophetic or looking further into the future and solving future crises now through pre-emptive measures.
- Normative: Whereby the work of *diakonia* has a standard or ethical norm that informs or sets the standards for the action of a particular group. And in this case the Standard is the Sacred Scriptures.
- Need-oriented: Whereby the spiritual and material needs of the human family are provided by "asking not only what the needs are, but also why they are present in the first place" (Ham, 2014, p.113) and also reflecting on the consequences of such needs. This reflection helps the church to intervene prophetically and holistically to solve issues.
- Contextual: Whereby the Socio-political-economic-ecological contexts in which the churches are serving informs and shapes the nature of the diaconal activities of the church. This aims at empowerment that can stand the challenges of the current world.
- Transformative: "Lifting a diaconal vision that urges and empowers us to address the needs of people and the whole creation, both locally and globally which will be effective through concrete prophetic actions towards transformative justice ... It is a matter of not just charity, or feeding people, but also of enabling empowerment within ourselves and others for transformation" (p.114)

It also came out from the interviews that the Samba is taking the initiative of sponsoring the orphans, which could be evaluated in terms of empowerment which falls in line with the Lutheran World Federation document *Diakonia in Context*. This document explains *diakonia* and highlights the fruits as Transformation, Reconciliation, and Empowerment.

5.2.1. Samba and Transformation

In line with the Lutheran World Federation document, the Samba has undergone some transformation itself as we have already highlighted that it transformed itself from a typical traditional group and found itself into the ranks of a church group that has become a veritable instrument for *diakonia* and putting of the Gospel into action. This transformation is also visible as Samba, through their scholarship scheme for the orphans and vulnerable, are able to transform the lives of these orphans into something better. Those who through lack of education and parental guidance might have ended up as criminals are now able to focus in school and to being good and responsible children in the future although this may not be an absolute guarantee that they may remain good. This transformation can also be viewed as *prophetic diakonia*, which does not wait for people to reach vulnerable situations, before it acts. It serve as a pre-emptive service of the vulnerable thus changing lives.

5.2.2. Samba and Empowerment

The Samba initiative of sponsoring orphans is a great source of empowerment. Empowerment leads to the transformation of the lives of the orphans. Through the education they receive in mission schools, they are able to secure a future by getting job and becoming responsible men and women when they grow up. Though primary education is the source and foundation of empowerment, the Samba still wonders whether primary education without further education could be enough empowerment for these vulnerable orphans. One could as well reflect whether the gesture of Samba supporting the orphans is not mere charity that just solves the current situation without looking into the future. So the Samba needs or the church needs to think about possibilities of giving these orphans more Empowerment that goes beyond primary education.

From the interviews it was revealed that the Samba in that light is reflecting about what to do with the kids who graduate from primary schools with regards to furthering education or entering professional institutions that can enable them sustain their lives in future. Once they are empowered and are self-reliant, they will also be encouraged to think about helping others in unfortunate situations like the ones in which they found themselves. This could be a long term way of sustaining the initiative.

5.2.3. Samba and Reconciliation

One may ask how the Samba is serving as a source of reconciliation. The Samba can be seen to be acting as an agent of reconciliation between Christianity and the Nso Traditional Religion. When Christianity first arrived Nso which is the seat of the Diocese of Kumbo, there was a lot of animosity between the church and traditional institutions. Some

churches were even burnt down and the first missionaries and Christians had a lot of challenges in relating with non-Christians. When Samba became a church group and sponsors orphans irrespective of their religious background, it has served as a source of reconciliation.

From the introduction and background of this study, it is mentioned that there was a hostile relationship between the Nso Traditional society and the Christian community. Christianity just started evangelization in Nso which made the Nso Traditional society uncomfortable. There was a lot of animosity and the Traditional Samba was part of the group that waged fierce resistance towards the church, to the extent of burning down some church buildings. With the Samba finding its way into the church with the same name, it changed the mentality of hostility into that of harmonious cohabitation between the church and traditional society. Since the diaconal activities of the church do not exclude any members of the society, Samba then serves as a bridge and an agent of reconciliation. There is harmony as different religions are able to live side by side with one another. This is not to say there is perfect harmony as there are sometimes differences between what the church thinks and that of typical traditional institutions.

We can therefore conclude that the Samba members carry this initiative without any compulsion from the church's hierarchy or authorities. The initiative springs from the members and that is trying to live the gospel in action which goes in line with the definition of *diakonia* as "the gospel in action" which is well elaborated upon in the Lutheran World Federation documents *Diakonia in Context* and *Mission in Context* published in 2009 and 2004 respectively. Therefore we can say that the Samba who stand for the laity in our case could be described as a group that specialises in diaconal activities in the church. These activities spring from within the ranks of the laity though the activities have to be sanctioned by the diocesan authorities, making sure they go in line with what the church teaches.

The Samba group according to the data presentation has challenges that are identified by both the diocesan authorities and the Samba members. These challenges have already indicated, like the initiative of contributing and raising money to sponsor the orphans is springing from the good will of the laity. That is to say that most of the initiative undertaken by lay Christians in the Catholic Church are very often suggested to them from above, through the various rungs of the ladder of leadership that is in the hands of the Clergy. This initiative from lay people through Samba gives the Lay faithful a certain sense of belonging, unlike the spirit before the Vatican II where the church was misconstrued as a

“thing or institution of the clergy” and lay Christians did not fully feel they are part and parcel of the Church.

The Initiative of Samba therefore fits the definition of *diakonia* in the words of Dietrich 2014 as “service for each other in mutuality, that has to include empowerment, advocacy work, humble service for people in need or the vulnerable in society, acts of mercy and charity performed by good Christian people” (p.13) as the lay people felt they are also part and parcel of the church alongside the clergy. Since the Catholic Church is so hierarchical, there is that apparent danger where initiatives from the lay people may be taken for granted. With the participation of the priest in the Samba like chaplains and some priests who are members, the spirit of mutuality is therefore being established in the church. That notwithstanding, there are still some members of the clergy who classify themselves to be more belonging to the church than the rest of the lay Christians and so take no interest in promoting lay initiatives which of course is against the mind of the church.

The Initiative from the Samba does not go without challenges. From the interviews it became also clear that, even some of the church’s authorities do not encourage the group enough and that in a way helps to discourage some of the laity from carrying out their duties or further initiatives. This became clear when some of the Samba members described the attitude of some priests in some parishes where they are active. Some priest tend to discourage them instead of encouraging them. It is evident in the way they attempt to hush down some of the initiatives that the Samba members may want to carry out. In spite of the few authorities with such attitudes, there are still priests who are a source of encouragement and inspiration to the Samba members or to the laity in general.

5.2.4. Samba and Inculturation.

Inculturation in Africa is often understood as the assimilation of African values, traditions and rituals into the Church’s life and praxis. It could also be seen in other words as the “Africanisation” of the Church by ridding it of foreign practices and replacing them with African traditional ones. According to Aruppe, (1990) “Inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the cultures, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation. (p. 6). Schineller, (1990) in support of the move towards inculturation stresses the importance of all cultures and highlighting that there are always good aspects in each culture which can be exploited and

used within Christianity that will make Christianity more meaningful to people of all cultures of the world. He goes further to maintain that Inculturation is so vital if Christianity is to make more meaning to an African Christian.

Although Inculturation has done a lot of good especially for the African Christian, in trying to implement it as suggested by *Ecclesia in Africa*, there has been some challenges and even abuses that go contrary to the desires of the church and even the doctrine of the church and discipline of sacraments specified in official church documents. We can still say the challenges in implementing Inculturation as per the mind of the Church does not suggest that it is not giving a new light in the church and the way the laity feel about being part of the church. Inculturation has helped many to feel they are part of belonging to the church. The members of the Samba, beside the practical *diakonia* work they carry out also take up other initiatives in the church's liturgy which are clear examples of Inculturation in practice.

A great example of inculturation implemented in the church which Samba, besides other Christian groups carries out is the Lectionary procession during Pontifical High Masses or during very great or high masses of the church. During the Lectionary Procession, the Lectionary or the Word of God is carried in a traditional procession with song and dance the Nso cultural way. The Kind of respect accorded to kings in the traditional setup or in the Nso culture is accorded to the Word of God, with the understanding that God is the Supreme King and that His word symbolizes his presence among the faithful. We can say that inculturation that follows the direction of the Second Vatican Council is a blessing especially to the entire African continent. African Christians though baptised and even confirmed still have an attachment and respect for their own traditional and cultural values. Inculturation therefore comes in as a welcomed news as they have a feeling that the church recognizes the good in their culture and so do the Samba members feel elated as active members of the laity. Inculturation therefore serves as a way of making African Christians to be more active and feel good about themselves as the laity and about being part and parcel of the Church. All these developments in the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church is thanks to the timely Second Vatican Council that that insisted on the full participation of the laity in the church.

Conclusion

So far the data analysis and discussion based on the finding points to the fact that the Samba group which represent the laity in our context, is making use of the opportunities offered to the Church by the new vision of the Second Vatican Council. The data presented also highlighted some challenges that are evident in trying to be active

members of the laity. One could therefore make a general conclusion that in spite of the challenges that Samba in particular and the laity in general face in being living Christian witnesses, there is hope for the future. The church keeps improving its mission and vision daily and the commitment of the Christians especially in the African continent, where through enculturation many souls have been won for Christ and continue to be won. With Inculturation, the Christians in the African context are able to identify themselves fully in the life of the church. They feel belonging and ready to be active members of the Church in the spirit of *Lumen Gentium* Chapter Four.

CHAPTER SIX GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study has explored how a traditional group called Samba in the Catholic diocese of Kumbo has trod its way into the ranks of the church group and expanding to the other dioceses of the country. The Samba group was chosen purposefully to represent the laity (the lay members) of the church and to see how they view themselves as members of the church and how they feel about being members of the church. The study also focused on seeing how the laity in the Catholic diocese involve or engage themselves in *diakonia* (that is service which is linked to the underprivileged and vulnerable of society), which in Roman Catholic terminology can be synonymous to the work that the church carries out through “CARITAS”. It is basically what the Catholic Church specifies in the Church’s social teachings.

The Catholic Church has a well organised and structured social teaching that is visible in the different documents. These different documents, specify the structure of the church and make clear distinctions about the lay members of the church and the clergy. It specifies what each and every member of the church is expected to do and should do. The master piece that specifies these differences and functions of the various members of the Church is *Lumen Gentium* particularly in Chapter IV, which spells out the role of the laity in the church. This great document was a fruit of the Second Vatican Council that shed new light into the vision of the Church. The study has therefore explored the document and others, including The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the other Papal Apostolic Exhortations and Encyclicals that guide the role of the Laity in the Church.

The Second Vatican Council addressed the role of the laity by teaching that this role is based on Baptism by which the laity “are made one body in Christ and are established among the People of God” (*Lumen Gentium*, 31). This teaching is discussed in greater detail in LG 32-37 and also in *Gaudium et Spes* 43 and in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 2-7. Pope John Paul II, particularly in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, bases the lay apostolate on the mystery of the Church. “I am the vine and you are the branches” (Jn 15:5; CL 20). The lay people are sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission of Jesus Christ (CL 29). A secular character is peculiar to the laity. So this great Pope states: “Thus for the lay faithful, to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well” (CL 15).

Distinctive about both approaches is that both Vatican II and Pope John Paul II consider the lay faithful primarily as called to evangelize the secular order. Before Vatican II many in the Church defined the lay apostolate as a participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy (i.e. of the clergy). This view was thus changed after the Second Vatican Council where the church is seen as that of the Clergy and the laity working together in mutuality for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

This study used the Samba group and its activities to highlight how the laity in the particular church are feeling about their role in the Church and how they are putting in efforts to put the gospel values into action which in Lutheran terminology is known as *diakonia*. The Samba group is a special group in the particular diocese and through the interviews with its members, the study has come out with answers to the research questions that have sought to know from the beginning of the study. The research questions that guided the work have been:

- How does the Church relate to the Laity (Samba) through her official documents and official Catholic teaching?
- How does Samba that represents the laity contribute to the church's *diakonia* in a practical way?

The research questions were explored with the guide of the theory or analytical framework which include: Catholic Ecclesiology of the laity and *Diakonia* (from a more practical understanding). These two main theories have therefore guided the exploration of the research questions that we have highlighted above.

From the research, a lot has been revealed. Firstly, there is a great acknowledgement that the Second Vatican Council, opened a new window into the life of the Catholic Church. As seen already in the course of the research, the Church before the Second Vatican Council, was seen to be something belonging to the Clergy, while the lay people were just like observers who obeyed the commands and ideas of the Clergy without questioning. The Church was a "Clergy Centred Church" But with the coming of the Second Vatican Council, a new understanding and vision for the church set in. This is very evident from the Dogmatic constitution of the Church especially in Chapter four of "*Lumen Gentium*" which spells out the functioning and the role of the lay people in the Church.

Lumen Gentium chapter four therefore makes it very clear that the lay people in the church are unique because they hold a special place in the function of human society. It explains further that their very engagement in secular activities can transform their ordinary

work into apostolic work. Their work touches lives and changes hearts directly or indirectly and here we can say that *diakonia* finds its place. The Lay people live in communities and understand the problems and difficulties of the society more than the clergy who spend a lot of their time in church premises. So for an effective church to be established, the Clergy must work hand in glove with the lay people.

But by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer (LG 31).

Interestingly, the Catholic Church has a great deal to say about lay people. Pope John Paul II emphasized the role of the laity in his 2000 apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*. Pope John Paul II explains that the church needs to rediscover the vocation of the laity who play an important part in the new evangelization, simply put: The laity, not just the priests can bring the love of God to all people. Lay people have a real vocation that is an essential mission in the Church. The word “mission” should not be taken lightly.

In the document *Lumen Gentium* a principle document from the Second Vatican Council, the Church says, “The laity by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God.” Lay persons are unique because they hold a special place in the function of human society. They can affect laws, cultural attitudes, and social systems in the many places they live and work. The laity have an influence that the bishops do not have. Their very engagement in secular activities can transform their ordinary work into apostolic work that touches lives and changes hearts. The Samba group has taken upon itself to start the initiative of supporting the plight of the orphans and vulnerable in the diocese by sponsoring them in the primary education level. This goes a long way to show how the lay people are becoming more and more aware of their

role and functions in the church of today, which was the case of the case in the church before the Second Vatican Council.

The research has also identified the challenges that Samba is facing and the lay people in general in exercising their rights and duties as lay members of the church. The data identified the challenge of Inculturation and that of raising money that can eventually give the orphans more education or empowerment that can help them live decent lives or succeed in helping themselves and others. The church therefore needs to keep reminding the Christians about their place in the life of the church. The church needs to give the lay people more active roles within the church that can make them be aware of their value as Christians who are also worth like the Church leaders working together in mutuality. That is the vision Pope John XXIII before convening the Second Vatican Council which has opened up the church for the laity to feel they are an essential part and parcel of the whole church.

One could therefore conclude this research work by asserting that the laity are becoming more and more aware of their role in the church. These lay people are becoming more and more active and this is very visible especially in the Diocese of Kumbo. More and more Christians are becoming active and participating in the work of the church. It is true that the church is both a Divine and Human institution. The Divine part is always perfect but the human part is always erring from time to time and this explains why the church keeps adjusting some of the teachings given the present realities. That explains why the language of Catholic Ecclesiology has changed after the Second Vatican Council. That explains why the lay people are getting more and more involved in the activities of the church, with the hope of one day gaining eternal life.

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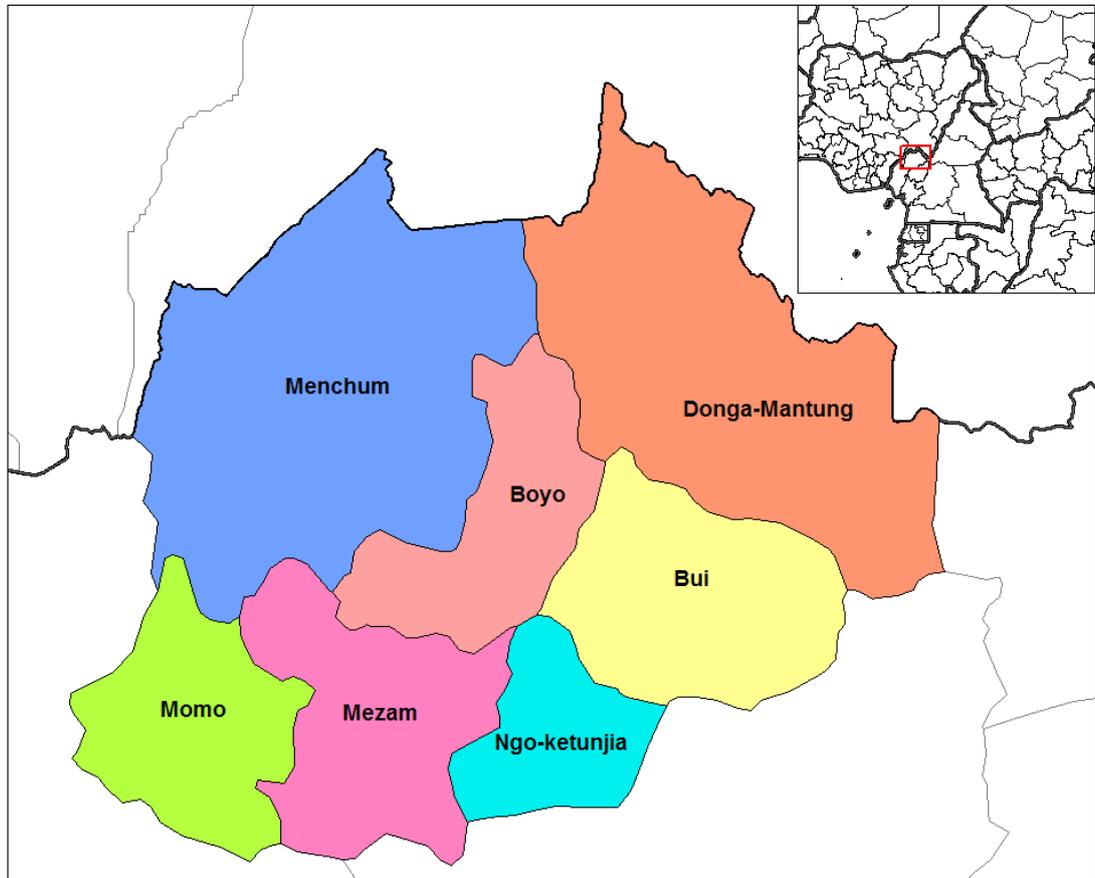
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APPENDIX. 1: Map of Cameroon, showing the ten regions of the country. N.B. The Catholic Diocese of Kumbo is found in the North West Region.



APPENDIX. 2. : Map of the North West Region of Cameroon, showing the seven administrative division. NB. Bui and Donga-Mantung Divisions form the Catholic Diocese of Kumbo



APPENDIX. 3.1: Questionnaire For Samba Members

1. Do you know the difference between the Clergy and the Laity in the context of the Catholic Church? Please explain briefly the difference.

2. Do you know any Church documents or Pastoral Letters that have spoken about the difference between the Laity and the Clergy?

3. Can you explain briefly what the role of the Laity is in the church?

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4. Apart from going to church on Sundays and days of Obligation, what other activities do you carry in the name of the church on other days of the week?

5. Are there any diocesan pastoral letters that have encouraged you to take initiatives towards the poor members of the Christian community?

6. Do you feel more an active Christian than you were some years ago?

7. What has been the reaction of the Diocesan authorities towards the initiatives of the Samba group?

8. Have these activities encourage other Christians to be more active in the Church than before the Samba became a church group?

9. What are the future plans for Samba to continue their good work within the Christian Community?

10. Besides the Work the Samba does for the less privilege kids, what are the spiritual activities you carry out to become better Christians?

APPENDIX 3.2: Questionnaire For Skype Interviews (Samba Members)

1. Good afternoon and thank you for sacrificing your time, and money to be online in order to me an interview regarding the Samba group which you happen to be some of the Key leaders. How did Samba start and finally becoming a church group?

2. What initiatives and activities has the Samba been carrying out in the Diocese of Kumbo and beyond?

3. Are the initiatives of Samba motivated by any official Church documents from the Vatican or the country or Diocese?

4. What are the challenges for Samba in acting as a Lay Church group in the diocese?

5. Do you feel as belonging or being part and parcel of the Church?

6. What are the future plans of Samba in expanding the group and also in sustaining the activities of the group?

7. What is the general feeling of the Samba members, about themselves as part of the Laity of the Church?

APPENDIX 3.3: Interview Guide For Skype Interviews (Diocesan Authorities

1. Good afternoon Rev.... and thanks a myriad for accepting to sacrifice this time to grant me an interview about the role of the Samba in the diocese. How did Samba become an official church group in the diocese of Kumbo?

2. What activities has Samba been carrying out in the diocese that are worth praising?

3. Are there any Church documents that back or motivate the activities of the Samba group?

4. How is the church trying to motivate or enhance the initiatives of the Samba group? Do members feel that they are part and parcel of the church?

5. Has the church encountered any difficulties in dealing with the Samba group as they take up initiatives in church?

6. How do the Samba members see themselves or feel as part of the Laity of the church?
