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**Integrating the Spiritual Needs and Psychological Well-being to enhance the Spiritual Growth among Internally Displaced Persons in Catholic Diocese of Wau - South Sudan**

By

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**Abstract**

This study looked at both integrations of Spiritual needs and Psychological well-being to enhance spiritual growth among internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Catholic Diocese of Wau. The study used the theory of Faith Development postulated by Parker Stephen in 2011 and the Convergent Parallel Research Design. The five objectives that guided this research are: To explore suffering as a means to seek justice and peace for the internally displaced persons in Wau. To examine companionship as a tool for influencing anxiety and depression among internally displaced persons in Wau. To assess how the gospel value of forgiveness could nurture spiritual growth among internally displaced persons in Wau. To explain how reconciliation could improve socialization among internally displaced persons in Wau. The target population for this study was 500. The stratified sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 217. The instruments used were questionnaires with open-ended and closed-ended questions. The study also used a semi-structured interview guide for collecting data from participants. The quantitative data were analyzed using tables and bar charts, while the qualitative data were analyzed in a narrative form using objective themes. The study established a lack of spiritual support and counseling for the vulnerable communities to nurture their spiritual life and improve psychological well-being. The study recommends the establishment of small Christian communities, Spiritual conferences, and counseling centers to address the spiritual needs and psychological disturbance among internally displaced persons.

**Key words:** South Sudan, Catholic Diocese of Wau, Spiritual Growth, Spiritual Needs, Psychological Well-being

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### **Background to the Study**

Spiritual needs and psychological well-being are the most fundamental source for developing the faith of each person. The virtues that are important for spiritual growth at whatever stage of life are in the gospels. The research focuses on the gospel values of suffering, companionship, forgiveness, and reconciliation as a way to help Wau's internally displaced persons grow in their faith. The residents of Wau, known as Fertit, are among those displaced (fruits eater). One of these minorities lives primarily in Western Bahr el Ghazal, with Wau as its capital city and the Jur (Luo).

The transfer of Wau County to Baggri was the source of tribal conflicts. A vengeance that dates back to the early 1980s was another reason for war. Land grabbing and tribalism are the main issues that need intervention. According to Pope John Paul II, Africa's internal causes included tribalism, nepotism, racism, religious intolerance, and a desire for power. The innocent and resigned survivals of these situations of injustice are crushed and reduced to silence suffering (Pope John, 1995).

On the 24th of June 2016, several soldiers, thought by the locals to be from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), infiltrated the region residents by civilians and joined by civilians from adjacent states mounted an attack on the population in Wau, killing, burning houses, and stealing property. According to Gerard, Pope Francis stressed the urgent need for a coordinated and effective response from the political and civil society communities. He contends that the Church must address the issues posed by the enormous influx of migrants. The global migration of refugees and displaced people has resulted in the world's worst humanitarian crises of the twenty-first century, as well as their search for God (Gerard, 2021).

More than 150,000 people have been relocated or uprooted because of the armed war, and their psychological, moral, physical, and spiritual well-being has been affected. Women were raped in front of their husbands and children by soldiers who shot and killed people. Every day, men and teenagers vanished. Soldiers burned down houses and looted or destroyed property. Orphans and people with physical infirmities, and spiritual degeneration, were left in Wau because of the battle.

Internally displaced people regard the conflict as a plot to evict them from their ancestral homeland. So far, infrastructure and social fabric have been affected by conflict. Dobzhansky stated that Gospel values compelled societies to act compassionately and bravely, reform social institutions, and develop relationships. The Gospel principles encourage people to have integrity, respect for human dignity, compassion, courage, and social responsibility in their daily lives (Dobzanski, 2013).

According to Stander, Chrysostom uses Gospel values to exhort his congregation to put what they have heard in the church into practice in their daily lives. And listening to the preaching of the Holy Scriptures, he contends, is more honorable. Listening to philosophers who seek to destroy the faith has less impact on life than reading the Bible (Stander, 2003). Overall, there is a lot of trauma and anxiety in the community, which makes forgiveness and

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reconciliation more difficult. According to the researcher, a peacebuilding program that begins with forgiveness and reconciliation may encourage the process of healing.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The conflict which erupted in Wau on 24th June 2016 claimed hundreds of lives and properties. The unrest caused by war displaced more than One Hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) people who sought refuge in the bushes. Some took refuge in Churches and the protected site of civilians in Wau. Those who were unable to escape died of hunger and thirst or were killed.

Although the Catholic Diocese of Wau worked hard to alleviate spiritual disconnection among internally displaced persons, the demand is too big. The conflict left the victims with marks of despair, mistrust, and a deepened sense of insecurity. The events traumatized and weakened the spiritual development of the internally displaced persons.

The spiritual and moral injuries of the conflict remained unaddressed. Reconciliation and forgiveness become hard between the communities and the government. Women and children suffered sexual abuse and had no access to justice, compensation, and basic needs like water, food, and health services. The soldiers prevented internally displaced persons from accessing their homes. Once a teacher attempted to reach his house in Hai Baggari Jadid, he was shot to death by the soldier. Family members live in anxiety and depression, and those who lost their beloved ones remain vulnerable to severe suffering.

The situation caused by the conflict left bitterness in the mind of internally displaced persons. There is an indicator that shows a lack and unwillingness to reconcile. For example, a man stabbed his wife to death simply because she did not prepare for him water for bathing. Some internally displaced persons were at the stage of a mysterious depression, while others went under trauma that led to the loss of dignity. Some organizations were distributing drugs and condoms to men and women to prevent pregnancy, such that particular action encourages sex workers among internally displaced persons. It was an act against the mandate of procreation. This study attempts to address the spiritual need and psychological disturbance of those affected by the crisis. The current structure is not addressing the issues affecting the survivors.

The study intended to help the internally displaced persons regain confidence, trust and reconstruct the community. It encourages practicing the Gospel values to promote spiritual welfare, innovation, life satisfaction in society. It stimulates the use of spiritual needs and psychological well-being as a holistic means to help people function well in the community, embracing each other, and cope with stressful events. It intends to foster spiritual growth and psychological safety, to increase cognitive resources to enable a person to engage in community services.

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### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed to develop pastoral work to incorporate the Spiritual Needs and Psychological Well-Being of Wau Displaced Persons by addressing suffering, companionship, forgiveness, and reconciliation and then apply to the life and work of the internally displaced people. It aims at enhancing the capacity of pastoral agents to work for effective evangelization that will address spiritual needs and psychological disturbance.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To explore suffering to seek spiritual needs and psychological well-being for the internally displaced persons in Wau,
2. To examine companionship as a tool for influencing anxiety and depression among internally displaced persons in Wau.
3. To assess how the gospel value of forgiveness could nurture spiritual growth among internally displaced persons in Wau
4. To explain how reconciliation could improve socialization among internally displaced person in Wau.

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

The study used Parker Stephen's faith formation hypothesis, which he introduced in 2011. Faith development theory, according to Parker, is one of the spirituality models that a counselor might find valuable in helping persons in distress. The counselor creates a model that allows him to determine the client's stage (Parker, 2011).

According to Parker, this notion applies to all levels of faith growth. The model can evaluate the nature and role of a person's beliefs in addition to their substance. It improved the counselor's capacity to collaborate with the client constructively. This theory's philosophies portrayed all of the stages in a person's life to encourage spiritual progress. It began in childhood and continued till old age. Its ideology centers on an individual's spiritual growth at every stage of life. The theory is governed by principles that direct the counselor when presenting his duty at each level. Before commencing the counseling session, the counselor used the interview guide to speak with the client.

The transition stage's second code is about assessing the client's challenges and learning more about them. Symbols and speech are granted to probe the client at the intuitive phase. Representation aids the client in comprehending and seeing what he is going through. At the traditional level, the counselor incorporates philosophy to help the counselee piece together his history and future into a personal myth and story. At the conjunction phase, the counselor encourages the counselee to bring all of their lives together in one case. It was also known as the code of transformation from the past to the present and the future. The questionnaires guide the premise, which concludes that we all need God at some point in our lives.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The empirical literature review discussed the prior linked literature review with the current study. Its goal is to provide a solution to the research question by gathering evidence to back up the claims by the researcher.

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### **Suffering as a Way to Seek Spiritual Needs and Psychological Well-Being**

Nature does not create suffering. God is love (Deuteronomy 32:10), merciful (Exodus 34:6-7), and the giver (Genesis 22:13-14) by nature (Matthew 14:15-21). Anguish results from a human act, someone else's actions, or an unavoidable natural tragedy. That action has an immediate impact on one's own life. Suffering is a single word, but there are several causes and outcomes. According to Elmi and Zarvani, the causative evils are human choice and resulted in pain. Evils and suffering are the outcomes of non-Tao-compliant human activities (Elmi, 2016). As a result of poor human behavior, internally displaced people existed, which we called human acts that contributed to unrest in a person's life. In such an act, there is no will of God but pure human will.

Morina *et al* did a study with 39,518 adult internally displaced persons and refugees from 21 countries to investigate psychiatric illnesses in refugees and internally displaced persons after forced displacement. The approach utilized was PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews and meta-analyses. These findings reveal a significant gap in knowledge about the level of psychiatric disability among people displaced for an extended period. It is mandatory to promote sustainable global mental health policy in war-torn countries. (Morina, 2018). It is difficult to infiltrate spiritual needs and psychological well-being in a circumstance where individuals are not ready to understand what it is all about. The need for aid is pressing to help people get out of their predicament and strengthen their spiritual lives.

Then, in Ukraine, Robert *et al.* used a cross-sectional survey design with 2203 adults to find out about mental health care utilization among internally displaced persons. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine face a significant incidence of mental diseases, a treatment gap in mental health, and psychosocial support, according to the study. The findings suggest the need for a more comprehensive, trauma-informed response to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for internally displaced people (IDPs) (Roberts, 2019). The current research is to help internally displaced people in Wau deepen their faith and relief trauma, stress, and anxiety, which later may influence them to forgive and reconcile with one another.

According to Swantek, Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Suffering Body noted that suffering helped us recognize the need for communion with God and neighbor. Christ's death and resurrection do not end suffering; but, they redeem and transform it so that man can experience God's love. Suffering led to conversion and the restoration of goodness in man's heart, freeing him from evil. If we do not open up to Christ in love amid pain, the redemptive work of Christ will not transform us, and this will contribute to what is lacking in Christ's suffering. The man offers his body alongside Christ for the redemption of the world by participating in Christ's suffering (Swantek, 2019). Unfortunately, internally displaced persons take suffering literally in the theme of human understanding of suffering without reflecting on it concerning the suffering of Christ that brought about the salvation of a human person. The Holy bible affirmed that "Even though you meant harm to me, God meant it for good to achieve this present end, the survival of many people." (Gen 50:20) (The new African Bible., 2011).



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### **Companionship Tool for Relieving Anxiety and Depression**

Companionship is a term used to describe a partnership, which the primary goal is mutual growth and spiritual support. It encourages societies to progress mystically. Culver, Leslie Midtbo *at-el*, did a study in America utilizing mixed-method, descriptive, correlational research, and 286 of them were found eligible for inclusion. Counselors understood the need for self-care and engaged in activities that promoted a healthy lifestyle and reduced stress, resulting in a balance that facilitated good work performance, according to the findings of this study (Culver, 2011).

The description in the preceding study is the cornerstones of human growth and is accomplished with the help of Spiritual direction, therapy, and other tactics that attract people to change. The art of spiritual directors, according to Elizabeth, aims to help directees have a closer relationship with God, the unconditional, and to manifest that relationship in their lives (Elizabeth, 2019). The review by Elizabeth set this study on the right track to working for the spiritual development and psychological well-being of internally displaced persons, providing spiritual guidance and psychotherapy for relief of trauma and the growth of faith.

Richters *at-el* used qualitative research methodologies to study in Rwanda on psych trauma, recovery, and reconciliation. The participants were a group of 10-12 persons that met once a week for 2-3 hours for 15 weeks in the same neighborhood. The meeting becomes an instrument for rerouting personal, family, and community life, released previously buried difficulties from the mind. When it comes to healing the scars of a violent past and paving the way for peace, justice and caring should work hand in hand (Richters, 2010). This study appeals to charitable organizations that assist internally displaced persons to embark on counseling rather than food and non-food items that only served the physical needs while living people with trauma and depression uncured.

Many of these organizations had turned down the related activities such as trauma healing and spiritual direction that heal people spiritually and physically. Alradaydeh and Khalil noted that healthcare providers should include spiritual well-being while assessing and intervening with clients to help them build meaning, peace, and faith, which will help them feel less depressed and isolated (Alradaydeh, 2018).

### **The Gospel Value of Forgiveness could Nurture Spiritual Growth**

Many people have grasped the meaning of forgiveness and how critical it is to humanity's or lives fallen state. However, according to the study, forgiveness is a tool that helps communities mend their damaged bonds. It's a tool that permits the future to begin by closing the past.

Terry and Bilodeau used an online survey of 116 adults in Canada to investigate the impact of forgiveness on the couple's stress. They discovered that forgiveness mediates the relationship between coping and well-being, suggesting that forgiveness may act as a protective mechanism in the context of the couple's stress (Gall, 2020). Practicing forgiveness provides opportunities for spiritual healing and personal progress, and it reinforces and accepts the best practices of faith-based personal development, which necessitate constant self-effacement.

Worthington et al. identified forgiveness as one of the factors that lead to happy marriage forgiveness necessitates a focus on the other person's well-being and humble response to wrongdoing. In committed partnerships, forgiveness aims for a net positive emotional valence toward the other person based on empathy, humility, and accountability. When one feels self-condemnation over one's mistakes, good relationships also require self-

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forgiveness (Worthington, 2019). Exoneration forgiveness does not work with internally displaced people, according to the current study. The difficulties that internally displaced people faced during the fighting are indescribable. The care provider needs to create an atmosphere where internally displaced persons would find the need to forgive and reconcile with the opponent.

For this reason, a better representation of our human society, according to Pope John Paul II, is a choir made up of numerous individuals with various voices. The choir is led by the leader, who assists them in managing and combining their voices to create a charming song (Pope John, 1995). This study aims to educate communities about the value of peace and unity. Coming together to address our problems is critical to achieving long-term peace since it pleases God to see us come together in a single name of human being, despite our variety.

Women and children in Wau remained vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence during the crisis. They suffered rape, sexual harassment, and some were brutally forced into marriage without their consent whatsoever. Social support providers should focus on female survivors and those with a lower level of education and income. Forgiveness, Hill et al said, is defined as the psychological release of emotional hurt. It is a relationship process that is more about discovery and empathy than willpower (Hill, 2011).

### **Reconciliation Could Improve Socialization among Internally Displaced Persons**

People are entitled to happiness and the opportunity to interact with one another. Forgiveness and reconciliation are two approaches to finding peace. However, only a few people at the moment practiced reconciliation. People have misconstrued it, yet it provides us with complete mental and spiritual serenity. It's a tranquility that comes from knowing what you're going to get.

Taylor et al. researched in Colombia on views for reconciliation and structural change. They employed mixed-method analysis in the study, which included 184 surveys and in-depth interviews. According to the findings, long-term peace requires a structural change to improve livelihoods. Integrate reconciliation and structural reform as well to strengthen attempts to repair the social fabric in the aftermath of violence (Taylor, 2016). The current study perceives if the reconciliation process does not happen, there would be no long-term peace between internally displaced people and the government. They feared each other because of their military experience, particularly in an area where they would have to work with the government.

Melissa Tully's work on "Conflict resolution and reconciliation via recognition: Assessing an integrated peace media strategy in Kenya" was published in Kenya. The study employs criteria that using media for peace in eight and 19-episode television talk shows that broadcast in Kenya for six months and workshops held in eight areas highly affected by violent organizations. The findings imply that recognizing the other was a crucial element of the conflict resolution process, as workshop participants acknowledged their "enemies" and Kenyans from all over the country as having comparable experiences with violence (Tully, 2014). Our relationship with God, and communion with one another, is harmed because of experiencing tragedy. In terms of repairing the harm created by conflict, social media can help by quickly sharing information on forgiveness and reconciliation with the biggest possible audience. As a result, introducing it in Wau is a good move.

Anika and Rettberg conducted a study in Colombia integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques on different types of reconciliation in violent circumstances from Colombia peacebuilding. The findings showed that promoting reconciliation should not be

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limited to cultures afflicted by armed conflict, as societal divisions caused by violence exist in all societies. They went on to say that the path to reconciliation necessitates knowledge of how meaning and mechanisms changed in different contexts of violence (Oettler, 2019). The researcher agreed that both the church and government had not done enough to establish the mechanisms that address and promote reconciliation among communities in the Catholic Diocese of Wau. Although there were many trials, all ended without yielding the fruits. Hence, the process lacked mechanisms.

### **Methodology**

The methodology is the approach for determining the method that will assist the researcher in determining the study's validity and reliability. It is a tool that aids the researcher in data analysis.

### **Research design**

This study currently uses a convergent parallel research design. According to Schoonenboom and Johnson's study, "mixed methods research is the sister of multimethod research in which either exclusively multiple qualitative approaches or exclusively multiple quantitative ways integrated (Schoonenboom, 2017). However, the researcher chooses the mixed method to answer the research question and investigate the research problem of spiritual development among internally displaced people in Wau.

The computable data were analyzed separately using the quantitative method, and qualitative data were coded and examined independently. Both data were discussed distinctly with the focuses on conjunction and divergence in the values expressed by the respondents. The data collection for this study used questionnaires with open-ended and closed-ended questions. The interview uses the same items in the questionnaires. But with open-ended questions, it was conducted purposefully selected from camp leaders, women, men, youths, and church personnel.

### **Target Population**

A population is a group of individuals having one or more characteristics of interest. However, population guides the researcher in considering the credibility of the sample, sample technique, and outcome of the research. According to Asiamah *et al* People, cases (organizations, institutions), and pieces of data, make up a population (Asiamah, 2017). The two communities of Fartit and Luo that form the internally displaced people were 150,000. The researcher chose to work with 500 residents selected from among the internally displaced people in the camps as a target population.

They are the eligible members who represent the internally displaced people. The knowledge they had regarding faith can provide accurate data for the research. For this reason, a good understanding of determining exposure to the intervention needed, and careful choice and combination of methods, testing of assumption, and transparent reporting are vital.

### **Description of Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

The sampling technique is a method that the researcher uses to assemble the population to identify a subset of inhabitants to work with them. The researcher used a stratified sampling technique to obtain the sampling population from the two communities of Fertit and Luo, who form the internally displaced people of 150,000. From the 500 residents, the sample of 217



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participants was the eligible number to represent internally displaced people in Wau. The non-equal sampling was used to obtain the sample sizes from each stratum.

A sample design denotes the procedure the researcher adopts to select participants for the study. The sample size of 217 was carefully fixed to draw valid and generalized conclusions. The individuals from the sampling frame participated in the primary data collection process. The participants used in this research were classified into five categories. 22camp leaders, 22 Church personnel, 52 men, 56 women, 65 youths bring the total to 217 participants. Sampling is a technical procedure used by a researcher to systematically pick a comparatively smaller number of representative things or individuals from a pre-defined population to act as subjects for observation or experiment as per the aims of his study,” Sharma explains (Sharma, 2017).

### Calculation of the Sample Size

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{D^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

$$D^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)$$

S= Sample size

$X^2$  = Table value of  $X^2 = 3.841$

N= population size

P= Population proposition (0.50)

1-P= Estimated proportion of failure

$D^2$ = Square of the maximum allowance for error set at 5%

For a population less than 10,000

nf = Desired sample size

S= Standard sample size

N= Estimated of the population size

$$nf = \frac{S}{1 + (\frac{S}{N})} = nf = \frac{384}{1 + (\frac{384}{500})} = \frac{384}{1 + 0.768} = \frac{384}{(1.768)} = 217$$

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**Table 2: Sampling Procedure Table**

Participants	Population	Sample	Percentage of Population in the Strata	Sampling Procedure
Camp leaders	50	22	10%	Stratified sampling
Church personnel	50	22	10%	Stratified sampling
Men	120	52	24%	Stratified sampling
Women	130	56	26%	Stratified sampling
Youth	150	65	30%	Stratified sampling
Total	500	217	100%	Calculated using Formula

(Krejcie, 1970)

**Source: Field Data 2020**

### **Research Instruments**

The researcher used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants, using open-ended and close-ended questions distributed across the sections. Section A was demographic information. While section B, C, D, had four questions and E had three questions. The interview guide used semi-structured, which gave the researcher room to attend to questions during the interview. Accordingly, the interview questions focused on gender, education, age, suffering, and companionship. It also emphasized the Gospel value of forgiveness and reconciliation in line with the questionnaires. That shows that the two types of instruments presented the same objective questions to the participants.

### **Pilot Study**

Pre-testing is the essential stage in research, and it helps the researcher measure the language and the questionnaires used for collecting data for the study. The researcher tested the instrument for data collection with the small Christian communities in two parishes of St. Mary and St. Joseph the worker. The feedback helped the researcher to adjust and amend the questionnaires before administering them to participants. Then it was accurate for gathering relevant information that produced a good result for the success of the research.

### **Validity of research instrument**

Validity is what shows us that the instruments used are valid and accepted. The validity, Heale, and Twycross stated that relates to the accuracy of the respondent's interpretations. Validity is known as a well-structured argument that gathers information from a range of sources to support or dispute claimed instrument interpretations (Twycross, 2015). The researcher applied content validity to measure the construct of interest of the research. The supervisors carefully checked the rationality of the research's instruments. Heale and Twycross noted that material validity is a category that considers whether the tool adequately covers all of the content included concerning the variable. Is the instrument, in other words, applicable across the complete domain of the variable (Twycross, Validity & reliability in quantitative study, 2015. )

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### **Reliability of Research Instrument**

Reliability is the device researcher used to measure the relationship between the instrument and the content of the study by repeating the test on some tool. Heale and Twycross confirmed that reliability refers to a measure's consistency when completing an instrument to measure motivation. Participants have the same responses each time during the exam (Twycross, Validity & reliability in quantitative study, 2015). The researcher used test-retest reliability to measure consistency between two tests and check the reliability of the research instrument. Test-retest reliability, according to Drost, relates to a test's temporal stability from one measuring session to the next. The procedure is to give the exam to a group of people, then give the same people the test again at a different time (Drost, 2011).

### **Finding and discussion**

It addressed the respondents' findings in connection to previous research and other pertinent literature reviews. It goes into detail about the issues that are under investigation.

### **To explore suffering to seek spiritual needs and psychological well-being for the internally displaced persons in Wau**

Table 4.1: Suffering

Statement	SA	A	U	D
SD	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
(%)				
Suffering is an enemy of spiritual growth.	119(65.3)	34(18.6)	2(1.1)	16(8.7)
11(6.0)				
Suffering affects spiritual growth	99(54.4)	31(17)	10(5.5)	26(14.3)
16(8.8)				
Reduction of suffering reinforce spiritual growth	66(36.3)	70(38.5)	16(8.8)	17(9.3)
13(7.1)				
Spiritual growth dry when suffering co-exist	41(22.5)	53(29.1)	13(7.1)	49(26.9)
26(14.3)				

**Source: Field Data 2021**

The results in Table 4.1: indicate that 65.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that suffering is an enemy of spiritual growth, while 18.68% agreed with the statement. Those who remained undecided were 1.10%. It found that 8.90% of the respondents disagreed that suffering is an enemy of spiritual growth, and 6.05% strongly disagreed with the statement. The results implied that 84.06% (65.38% +18.68%) of the respondents agreed that suffering is an enemy of spiritual growth. There were 71.4% (54.4% +17%) who agreed that suffering affects spiritual growth, and the rest disagreed with the statement or remain undecided. There was 74.8% (36.3% +38.5%) agreed that reducing suffering can reinforce spiritual growth, and meanwhile, 16.4% (9.3%+7.1%) disagreed with the statement, and 8.8% remained undecided. Furthermore, 51.6% (22.5% +29.1) accepted that spiritual dry when suffering co-exists with man, but 7.1% and 26.9% disagreed with the statement, and 14.3% remained undecided.

The study sought to know how suffering is an enemy of spiritual growth. There were 65.3% of the respondents who acknowledged that intensive suffering could disorientate the whole body and making it incapable of attaining spiritual growth. It lessens the ability to do

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good to God, to oneself, and the neighbor. There was 18.6% of the participants who admitted that suffering reduces the intensity of faith in a person and renders a person seek evil ways to eradicate agony.

There were 8.7% of the respondents who indicated that suffering improves spiritual life and strengthening faith, and it gives the grace to endure the hardship of life. Suffering is not the enemy of spiritual growth. An individual suffered for the crime committed against God and humanity. Suffering helps us to concentrate on spiritual improvement and work to enhance love for God.

There was 65.3% of the respondent who confirmed that when there is suffering, no peace but self-doubting. Such situations hinder the social fabric because of fear and trauma, anxiety, and depression. While 18.6% affirmed that suffering plays a role in faith growth, it certainly brings loss of faith in God. It brings to individual poverty, insecurity, and subsequently health problem that divested human and spiritual development.

#### **CP1 indicated,**

Suffering plays a vital role in developing faith. It contributes to the healing of the wound caused by poverty, for it planted in a person the zeal to work hard not to be the prey of suffering for the rest of his life. Suffering brings an awareness that something is not going well somewhere, so it needs the attention of the people concerned. (10 Aug 2021)

#### **CL1 stated that**

Suffering has no negative impression, and it makes people more vigilant and watchful to the extent that their aggressor may think twice before attacking. He affirmed that when people are open up to themselves and others, they will not experience suffering, and if there is suffering, they may avoid it by embracing it and get life out of it (13 Aug 2021).

Likewise, the study sought to examine the effects of suffering on spiritual growth. 36.3% of the respondent reiterated that looking at Christ's suffering becomes the source of salvation to the world. Suffering from general knowledge and experience makes an individual strong in life. Likewise, 38.5% confirmed that suffering in one way or another strengthens the faith of those who put their trust and hope in God. Suffering enforces discipline and desire for a better future with confidence in God's power.

Again 38.5% acknowledged that suffering encourages solidarity among the neighbors and makes them embark on matters concerning their spiritual life. Furthermore, 36.3% gave their verdicts and affirmed that suffering teaches people patience, tolerance, and the acceptance of oneself and enables an individual to grow in faith.

#### **CP14 acknowledged,**

Suffering imposed tension and worried on individuals to prevent the growth of faith. An individual gets into a crisis of physical and spiritual, which causes sickness like trauma, stress, and loss of interest in spiritual activities (12 Aug 2021).

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**CL7 and CL9 affirmed that**

Suffering leads to depression which hinders the progress and wellbeing of a person. It causes psychological and mental disturbance that abstracts spiritual growth. It made an individual to hurt life, God and neighbor. Another CL2 noted that suffering made some people too judgmental and defensive that led to aggressiveness towards God.

The study sought to examine how to reduce suffering to reinforce spiritual growth. There were 54.4% of the respondents who gave their opinions on how reduced suffering was used to reinforce spiritual growth. An argument from 17% stated that spiritual suffering is elevating through prayer and a constant relationship with God. Accept suffering and embrace it in good faith as a way to desire the life of heaven. The 54.4% affirmed that the internally suffering could be uplift by acknowledging that God is in charge and faith is a key to change all human situations.

**CP18 stated,**

People with the right intention have a chance to reduce suffering on their way. For it is easy for them to know what had gone wrong. They become mindful of the situation that causes suffering, such as disagreement caused by envy or jealousy (12 Aug 2021).

**CL13 stated that**

People affected by conflict retain bitterness in their hearts which causes anxiety and depression. The only way to reduce suffering is by avoiding anything that brings resentment. When a person is confident and committed to the relationship with the divine cannot fall prey to misery (14 Aug 2021).

The study was interested in determining why spiritual growth could not happen if suffering co-exists. Respondents 29.1% stated that suffering people blame God and others because suffering made them incapable of admitting their contribution to what had happened to them. There were 22.5% of the respondents who argued that suffering destroys the mental capacity for reasoning living an individual with psychological disturbance and moral death.

**CL2 and CL4 indicated,**

Some internally displaced persons do committed suicide when the situation is unbearable. CL 3 and 12 stated that suffering makes people ineffective in life and love, and they become so selfish that they cannot share with their brothers and sisters. People no longer work for the common good but self-service in whatever they do.



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#### 4.4 To examine companionship as a tool for influencing anxiety and depression among internally displaced persons in Wau.

**Table 4.2**

	SA	A	U	D
SD				
Statement	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
F (%)				
Companionship relieve anxiety and depression	131(71.9)	36(19.7)	1(0.5)	12(6.5)
2(1.1)				
Companionship encourages spiritual growth	98(53.8)	47(25.8)	5(2.7)	22(12.1)
10(5.5)				
Companionship is applicable for relieving anxiety and depression	93(51.1)	67(36.8)	2(1.1)	16(8.8)
4(2.2)				

**Source: Field Data 2021**

The results presented in Table 4.2: indicate that majority (71.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that companionship relieves anxiety and depression. Those who agreed with the statement were 19.7%. Moreover, 0.50% of the respondents were undecided, and 6.5% disagreed with the statement, while 1.10% strongly disagreed with the statement. The results obtained imply that the majority, 91.6 (71.9%+19.7%) of the respondents, agreed with the statement that said companionship relieves anxiety and depression. There were 79.6% (53.8% +25.8%) of the participants who acknowledge that Companionship encourages spiritual growth, and meanwhile, 17.6% disagreed with the statement, and 2.7% remained undecided. Furthermore, 87.9% (51.1%+ 36.8%) affirmed that Companionship is applicable for relieving anxiety and depression.

The study sought to examine how companionship is effective in reducing anxiety and depression. The argument from 71.9% indicated that companionship assists in sharing grievance and challenges and acts as a mediator between a person and difficulties. Companion serves as a remedy for relieving anxiety and depression. It helps the victim to avoid loneliness by engaging him in dialogue.

Moreover, 19.7% added that companionship is an agency that encourages the community during difficult situations to reassure them of new hope to come. It offers quick force into life a person who wears out because of the challenge and gradually access spiritual development. Likewise, 71.9% of the participant noted that companionship helps an individual recollect himself after experiencing an uncomfortable situation like conflict or death of the beloved one. After such an event, the victim will be going through a lot of tension within. Companionship will engage them to voice out what is inside them.

#### **CP16and CP17 noted,**

Companionship is effective in preventing isolation and encourage social networks.” Another CP reported Companion helps in calming the rigidity to decrease the level of violence. It assists the community to know the meaning of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation, which pave ways for healing from anxiety and depression.

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**CP5 and CP9 indicated,**

Companionship helps people to focus and to know themselves, and to secure relationships with others. A companion helps an individual reduce stress and depression and improve on life”. Moreover, CL14 and CL15 said, “Companionship is the natural energy that increases and equips our will and desire to open to God and to defend ourselves against the aggressor of anxiety and depression.

The study sought to examine how companionship could encourage spiritual growth. 53.8% of the participants affirmed that maturity on the companion's side makes the journey more fruitful to the client. In addition, 25.8% of the respondents noted that love is another factor that aids companionship to journey with the client without fear of discouragement in the process. The client may not give up before achieving the goal. Likewise, 53.8% of the participants indicated that justice is the most factor that companionship may consider right from the beginning of the journey. It will enable the process to go on without disturbance nor complaining.

53.8% of the respondents indicated that faith is one of the factors that help the person to have the desire for God. Likewise, 25.8% of the participants stated that an up keeper or care relationship is a value that contributes to the relieving of anxiety and depression, such caution by engagement promotes spiritual growth.

**CP16 indicated,**

Appreciation is the most valuable means to be considered during accompaniment, and it prepares the ground for a good beginning and for the companion to work constructively with the client. It shows a sense of agreement and approval to what the companion is doing. (12 Aug 2021)

**CL1 and CL3 reported that**

Forgiveness plays a good role in companionship, and it prepares the atmosphere for peace and dialogue. Forgiveness brings a sense of responsibility and purpose to the life of the victims. CL5 and CL9 stated that sharing the responsibility produces good fruit in accompaniment, which means that the counselor and client know what demand is.

The study sought to determine how companionship is applicable for relieving anxiety and depression. Based on the argument, 51.1% said that companionship needs total freedom of expression based on confidentiality. It demands proper listening that motivates the client to share.

Furthermore, 36.8% of the participant noted that the language used during counseling should be known by the client and counselor for smooth facilitation. Using language that is understood could help the client communicate what troubles him in life. In addition, 51.1% of the respondents reported that companionship should be through visiting depress and abuses of the conflict to understand the situation on the ground. It will help the journey effectively for experience have a role in the healing process.

**CL9 and CL12 noted that,**

Companionship is an exercise that keeps the mind busy from trauma. For example, running, walking, reading, or sometimes just talking and breathing can relieve anxiety and stress from the body.” Further, CL8 and CL13 indicated, “for therapy to be effective, it needs a professional counselor who can change and move the client towards spiritual growth.

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#### 4.3. To explicate how the gospel value of forgiveness could nurture spiritual growth among internally displaced persons in Wau

**Table 4.3: Forgiveness**

	SA	A	U	D
SD				
Statement	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
F (%)				
Forgiveness is useful for amending spiritual Dryness	139 (76.34)	25(13.7)	4(2.2)	9(4.9)
5(2.7)				
Forgiveness has impacts on spiritual amendment	98(53.8)	47(25.8)	9(4.9)	19(10.4)
9(4.9)				
Forgiveness influence the amendment spiritual Dryness	115(63.2)	51(28.0)	2(1.1)	9(4.9)
5(2.7)				
Forgiveness is needed to attain spiritual growth	94(51.6)	58(31.9)	5(2.7)	22(12.1)
3(1.6)				

**Source: Field Data 2021**

The results presented in Table 4.3: show that 90.1% (76.4+13.7) of the respondents agreed that integrating the spirit of forgiveness into life and work could amend spiritual disconnection, and meanwhile, 7.7% (4.9+2.7) disagreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained undecided. There were 79.6% (53.8 +25.8%) participants who indicated that forgiveness affects the spiritual amendment, while 10.4% disagreed and 4.9% strongly disagreed with the statement. Then 4.9% remained undecided. 91.2% (63.2 +28.0) acknowledge that forgiveness influences the amendment's spiritual dryness, and 7.6% did not accept the statement, and meanwhile, 1.1% remained undecided. Furthermore, 83.5% (51.6% +31.9) affirmed that forgiveness is needed to attain spiritual growth. Then 2.7% remained undecided and while 12.1% disagreed and 1.6% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Further, the study sought to determine why forgiveness could be useful for amending spiritual disconnection. There were 76.3% participants who noted that forgiveness allows people to reflect on life and behavior for further understanding. Likewise 13.7% of the respondents indicated that forgiveness manages the relationship between the offender and the survival to accept their mistake and agree on possible compensation.

Meanwhile, 76.3% noted that forgiveness is helpful because they cannot expect forgiveness from God if they cannot forgive each other. From the verdicts of 13.7%, it discovers that forgiveness restores the relationship between God and man. Furthermore, 76.3% of the participants indicated that forgiveness signifies a sign of new hope toward reconciliation with God and those who committed the crime against another own will. Forgiveness heals the wound caused by conflict that hinders the development of faith.

#### CP11 indicated that

Forgiveness benefits the person by letting go of the bitterness and grudge that enslave a person. It prevents revenge killing and enables the person to move forwards with life. Moreover, another CP14 reported that “if the community needs peace, they must embrace

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forgiveness. They have to change their attitude towards each other as they dwell on forgiveness, and they shall enjoy the fruits of their labor. After forgiving each other, they shall have good health of both mind and body.

Moreover, the study sought to examine what impacts forgiveness has on the spiritual amendment. The key respondents, 53.8%, noted that forgiveness plays a role in amending spiritual dryness as one forgives, God forgives and brings the individual back to him, and on the other hand, the forgiver gains back the love of the brethren, such contributions to the amendment of spiritual dryness.

In addition, 25.8% posited that forgiveness amends spiritual disconnection by subsiding the intensity of revenge and the tribalism that holds back love and peace of the individual, and then paves ways for spiritual growth. Moreover, 53.8% of the respondents indicated that forgiveness promotes kindness and love, care, and compassion among the community. It empowers people with virtues that help to remain in communion. Likewise that 25.8% of the respondents noted that forgiveness brings unity and harmony among people instead of War and revenge.

#### **CL3 and CL5 stated that,**

The absence of the God spirit in life endangers the growth of faith and blocks communities and keeps them apart from each other. Another CL7 and CL9 noted, “Forgiveness makes life alive and increases personal enthusiasm for God and to live with him. People have to be encouraged to dialogue with one another and desire the good for another person, which will help the community grow in their spiritual life.

The study also sought to examine how forgiveness influences the amendment of spiritual disconnection. The response from 63.2% of the respondents revealed that forgiveness influences and amended spiritual dryness by building trust that was a loss at the time of conflict. It strengthens the ability for the self-sacrifice of individuals who regress from the faith of the enemy.

Furthermore, 28.0% of the participants pointed out that forgiveness support community to view the effects of conflict in the light of the Gospel. Through forgiveness, people have the strength to fight back evil with good and allow spiritual growth to surface. Further, the respondents of 63.2% observed that forgiveness makes the enemy confess the crime committed against fatality. Forgiveness transforms life and keeps the connection with God, and encourages the individual to focus on God and his mercy then punishment.

#### **CP2 admitted that**

Forgiveness stimulates spiritual growth by bringing people to live in peace with one another. In Mathew 5:44-45, God said to be His children, and we must have the unconditional will to love and forgive the enemy. Likewise, CL4 and CL9 illustrated that forgiveness refreshed the post-conflict to better enlightening the person and lessen the intensity of the crime to its limited state. It empowers individuals with the grace necessary to fear God and keep the greatest commandment of love of God and the neighbor.

The study sought to examine why forgiveness is needed to attain spiritual growth. A key respondent of 51.6% stated that we need forgiveness to grow spiritually quickened and credible freedom found in total forgiveness. Another reported by 31.9% showed that forgiveness cast out the sin that made people an enemy of each other and not to have the best of God’s love.

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### **CL12 and CL15 reported that**

Forgiveness paves the way to acknowledge the guilt committed in the past, and it relieves anxiety and depression to accelerate the speed of spiritual development. We need forgiveness to improve our spiritual growth lack of forgiveness leads to disgrace and loss of love. Moreover, another CL7 noted, “We need forgiveness to keep our bodies healthy and to grow in faith. However, if we do not forgive, our body sinks into pain and psychological unrest.

### **To explain how reconciliation could improve socialization among internally displaced person in Wau.**

**Table 4.8: on reconciliation**

	SA	A	N	D
SD				
Statement (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Reconciliation contributes to spiritual growth 4(2.2)	124(68.1)	38(20.8)	3(1.6)	13(7.1)
Reconciliation has positive effects On spiritual growth 12(6.6)	91(50.0)	65(35.7)	5(2.7)	9(4.9)

**Source: Field Data 2021**

Based on the results presented in table 4.4: 89.01% (68.1+20.8) of the respondents agreed that reconciliation could influence spiritual growth while 9.34% (7.14+2.20) disagreed with the statement and 1.65% remained undecided. 85.7% (50.0% + 35.7%) affirmed that Reconciliation has positive effects on spiritual growth while 2.7% remained undecided. However, 4.9% disagreed, and 6.6% strongly disagreed with the statement.

The study sought to look at the reconciliation factors that could contribute to spiritual growth. 68.1% of the respondents established that through reconciliation, one could confess and pray with confidence. Reconciliation aid the survival and the offender with the courage to voice out what disturbs their mental and spiritual life.

While 20.8% of participants indicated that reconciliation strengthens the bond between the parts in conflict by eradicating violence and grievance from the heart and builds trust among people, making them forget the suffering caused by the offender that led to the unhealthy relationship of the past.



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### **CP1 revealed that**

Reconciliation brings about the socialization of the conflicted society. Socialization is not about coming together but putting together our idea and opinion for the common good for future benefits. When the thinking and feelings agree with the life situation, the benefits are great, but if indifferent to the common good bring division among the community. (10 Aug 2021)

### **CL2 and CP6 reported,**

Reconciliation empowers people to forgive each other who had been living in conflict for years. Enablement enables an individual to engage in the service of reconciliation and reconstruction of physical and spiritual wellbeing. In addition, another CL5 indicated, “Empowerment is human security, and it makes individuals be aware of the enemy and defend his right and freedom. It is about educating the community about the danger they had gone through and the possible gap left out. Such steps to recognized reconciliation may have a fertile sold to flourish.

The study sought to understand the positive effects reconciliation has on spiritual growth. 50.0% of the respondents reported that the positive effect of reconciliation is peace of mind and heart that enable people to live the spirit of beatitude. Reconciliation brings happiness and sets the action in motion, and that for peace to happen party of the dispute must seek reconciliation.

35.7% of the respondents indicated that people could reach peacetime through military power, which reconciliation cannot achieve. But reconciliation may be possible when the right and freedom of each partner are recognized, and justice should prevail before reconciliation. Further, 50.0% dictated that reconciliation set a map road to move towards the goal in an environment where insecurity is subsiding. It enriches the relationship between friends in conflict by helping them get on the right track towards personal and community growth. 35.7% of respondents asserted that reconciliation prepares the individual to find out if he can trust and forgive the enemy. It is not enough for the offender to repent but show progress and transformation in each step taken. Moreover, 50.0% of respondents recognized that reconciliation maintains security caused by the conflict in the past and hinders the progress in conflict resolution.

### **CP7 noted that**

Reconciliation helps transform what is against the peace of the individual and society and makes them good. Reconciliation retains the security and reconciles the idea of the conflicted parties. Reconciliation plays a role that helps the parties to give up some of their demands and rights to restore peace in the community.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that suffering is part of the Christian life. Thus, there is a need to provide spiritual support to reduce the suffering, such as spiritual conferences and counseling sessions to the venerable community to nurture their spiritual life. There is a need for the establishment of small Christian communities to address the spiritual needs of the people. The study found that prayer, daily rosary, and spiritual reading are a weapon to fight the cause of suffering, which may assist the individual to seek help from God.

The study sees that fellowship should be encouraged in the areas prone to conflicts, such as Wau can contribute positively to spiritual growth. In addition, we had to maintain

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justice in all aspects to allow the development of faith. It found out that appreciation is the most valuable means to be considered during accompaniment.

The study sees that there is a need for forgiveness to attain spiritual growth. Forgiveness applies lotion that soothes the heart leaving it without harm. The study found that forgiveness creates the zeal for solidarity and a burning force that makes us love one another.

The government and spiritual leaders have to speed up the forgiveness and reconciliation process for healing among communities in the Catholic Diocese of Wau. The reconciliation process will help communities attain peaceful coexist after the conflict that destroys the social fabric.

The pastoral office of the Diocese of Wau Catholic Church has to set up a counseling center invite internally displaced persons, twice a week where the counselor listens to their grievance and help them to have psychological well-being. The pastoral office can hold a spiritual conference, workshops, and seminars where internally displaced persons learn about spiritual needs and psychological every month to improve their spiritual life.

The study recommended that the government of Wau have to build a center for reconciliation in Wau and invite internally displaced persons for dialogue. The center has to be run by the committee for forgiveness and reconciliation. Every two months, the committee has to hold a conference, workshops, and seminars to sensitize people about forgiveness and reconciliation.

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