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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DECLINING MEMBERSHIP OF THE ROMAN
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ST, LUCIA OVER THE LAST SIX DECADES

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OVER THE LAST SIX DECADES

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ABSTRACT

The Catholic Church in St. Lucia has lost one-third of its members over the last six decades. According to the St. Lucia 2010 Population & Housing Census there has been a decrease in households who identify themselves as Roman Catholics from 92.4% in 1960 to 61.1% in 2010. While the census shows a decrease in the Catholic population, it reveals increases of 26.5% and 7.9 % for the Protestant churches and those who claim to have no religion, respectively. St. Lucia has been predominately Catholic for over 300 years and since then the Church has been interwoven into the life and fabric of the nation. The decline in membership signalled that the Church has lost the influence it once enjoyed in the society. This sharp decline in the Catholic population is the basis for this study. Disaffiliates and Catholics are interviewed in this study. The investigation revealed that three internal (Inadequate Teaching of the Faith, The Poor Quality of Preaching and The Conduct of Priests) and two external (The Proselytising of Catholics by Protestant Churches and The Threat Posed by Secularity) factors play a major role in the decline. The findings indicate that the Catholic Church with its very weak pastoral programme contributed to the decline. The study recommends that the Church take seriously its ministry to teach, preach, and to form the congregation in the Gospels and prepare them to enter into fruitful dialogue with the Protestant churches and secularity, while upholding the truths of the Faith.

Key Words: Catholic Church, Declining Membership, Disaffiliates, Catholics, Protestant churches, Secularity, St. Lucia.



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INTRODUCTION

Rationale for Study

My interest in the declining membership of the Roman Catholic Church¹ in St. Lucia was prompted by the results of the St. Lucia 2010 Population & Housing Census which indicated a decrease in households (31.3%) who identify themselves as Roman Catholics from 92.4% in 1960 to 61.1% in 2010.² However, while the census shows a decrease in the Catholic population and other mainline Protestant churches,³ it also reveals increases of 26.5% and 7.9 % for the Protestant churches⁴ and those who claim to have no religion, respectively. Although I was aware of a movement to Protestant churches from the Catholic Church, I had no idea that the Catholic Church had lost over one third of its members.

This sharp decline in the Catholic population is alarming because Roman Catholicism has been a definitive spiritual force in St. Lucia for over three hundred years. This writer is greatly perturbed as to why so many people would leave the Roman Catholic Church. Moreover, the cultural heritage of St. Lucia is rooted in the Catholic tradition. As a concerned Catholic, I wanted

¹ The Roman Catholic Church in St. Lucia is part of the universal Roman Catholic Church, a 2000-year-old worldwide Christian organisation.

² See Appendix C; Figure 5; chart showing the St. Lucia Population & Housing Census 2010.

³ The Mainline Protestant Churches are the Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterian churches. They have decreased from 4.7% in 1960 to 2.1% in 2010. They share a common creed with the Catholic Church and together with they are regarded as authoritative institutions.

⁴ Protestant (Evangelical and Free) churches are independent Christian denominations with no traditional ties to already established Christian churches. These Protestant churches fall into ten broad recognizable families, but only a few are identifiable by international alliances. Within these groups there are a larger number of denominations and individual congregations thus making it very difficult to estimate their strength and numbers. Apart from the Baptist churches that emerged in the 1600s, the Seventh Day Adventist churches began in the 1830s and 1840s. The Pentecostals came into existence in the early 1900s (Campbell 187).

to understand the reason for this dramatic shift, and to raise awareness of this situation in an effort to help the hierarchy of the Church to address the exodus and safeguard the Catholic heritage of St. Lucia. Furthermore, I believe that it is a worthwhile venture to study the spiritual situation of St. Lucians and the conditions that have led to this sharp decline in Catholic spirituality on the island of St. Lucia

The Catholic Church has a long history in St. Lucia since its establishment in the 17th century by the French colonizers. According to Gachet, the history of St. Lucia cannot be told apart from the history of the Catholic Church because “the role of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia has been extensively interwoven with the whole of the fabric of St. Lucian life”(x). The Catholic Church built up the St. Lucian society by providing education, health care, and institutions to care for the elderly, the poor and the most vulnerable in the society. Church edifices and schools were built in every district throughout the island. Today, the Catholic Church remains at the forefront in education with St. Mary’s College and St. Joseph’s Convent as the premier secondary schools for boys and girls respectively on the island (Jn. Marie 1).

However, despite this historical legacy, the Catholic Church in St. Lucia seems to be losing its prominence among the people. During the field interviews, I was told by many disaffiliates (former Catholics who have joined Protestant churches and the unaffiliated [those who claim to have no religion]) that the Catholic Church does not teach the truth and that it was out of step with the times. One woman, who joined one of the Protestant churches, aged 39, stated that “I just could not connect faith with life. Most priests do not correct their parishioners; people can do whatever they want in the Catholic Church. Another woman, 42 years old, who joined one of the Protestant churches, said that “I felt so deceived by the church because I really did not know the Lord when I was a Catholic. I did not understand certain things and there was nowhere I could go

to find answers.” Lastly, a young man, aged 22, and unaffiliated commented “I left the Catholic Church because the homilies were so empty that I was bored to death.”

The field work also captured the viewpoints of Lay Catholics (practising and non-practising)⁵ in an effort to uncover untapped information that may be useful in stemming the mass exodus and prohibit a further decline in the membership. A 52-year-old non-practising Catholic man said, “People are making up whatever they want to believe about the Church and the priest says nothing about it. They seem to be terrified of sticking their neck out for the truth.” A practising Catholic woman, aged 26, noted, “As for the priests, they have no time for you if you are not a friend of theirs.” Another practising Catholic woman, 41 years old, said that “The priests are very arrogant believing themselves to be God. The only time they acted friendly and smiled a lot was when it was time to ask for money.”

Therefore, it can be argued that failure on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to effectively instruct its members in the faith, through its catechetical programs and preaching, to organise pastoral care for parishioners, and to meet the challenges posed by Protestant churches and secularity have led to a decline in membership of the Roman Catholics Church in St. Lucia over the last six decades.

Parameters

The study focuses on Disaffiliates (former Catholics who have affiliated themselves with other churches, particularly with the Evangelicals and the Pentecostals ⁶ and those who have

⁵ Lay Catholics are ordinary baptised members of the Catholic Church who are not ordained ministers (clergy) or vowed to life in a religious congregation. Practising Catholics are those who are regular attendances at church activities and non-practising Catholics are those who still identify themselves as Catholics and do not attend church activities except on some special occasion such as a wedding or a funeral.

⁶ In St. Lucia the two main categories of Protestant churches are Evangelicals and Pentecostals.

remain unaffiliated) and Catholics (practising and non-practising) but does not address disaffiliates who may have joined Mainline Protestant churches other religions because of the decrease in their membership. Disaffiliates are selected to obtain their reasons for leaving the Catholic Church and Catholics for their perspectives on the declining membership of the Catholics in St. Lucia over the last six decades. The sample encompasses four categories of persons as aforementioned (those who have joined Protestant churches, the unaffiliated, practising Catholics and non-practising Catholics).

A representative sample of twelve churches (six Catholic⁷ and six Protestant⁸) are chosen from six parishes around the island for this study because the Catholic Church is organised through parishes⁹ across the island, and the Protestant churches are usually established in close proximity to a Catholic Church.¹⁰ These six parishes are selected for the field research because of their geographic location.¹¹ They include Castries in the North, Marchand in the North east, Vieux-Fort in the South, Soufriere in the West, Dennery in the North east and Micoud in the south east of the island.

⁷ The churches are the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Castries, The Sacred Heart Church in Marchand, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Soufriere, Church of St. Peter in Dennery, Church of St. Lucy in Micoud and the Our lady of the Assumption Church in Vieux- Fort.

⁸ The Protestant churches include three Evangelical churches (The Seventh Day Adventist Church, Church of the Nazarene and The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) and three Pentecostals (The Bethel Tabernacle Church, God's Trumpet to the Nations Church, Victory Pentecostal Church).

⁹ "A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. the parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ's saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love" (Catechism of the Catholic Church par. 2179).

¹⁰ See Appendix C: Figure 8-19; photographs of the Catholic churches and Protestant churches in the various parishes.

¹¹ See Appendix C: Figure 6; map of St. Lucia

The participants of the study were recruited through the non-probability ¹² (snowballing and convenience) sampling techniques. The snowballing method was used for contacting Disaffiliates and non-practising Catholics. The basic strategy of snowballing involves first identifying Disaffiliates and non-practising Catholics, and interviewing them (Berg 32). These subjects are then asked for the names of other people who are former Catholics. The convenience sampling method also referred to as the accidental or availability sample was utilized to make contact with practising Catholics because this method depends on respondents' proximity and availability (Berg 33). The number of participants recruited for this study involved 58 females and 36 males.¹³

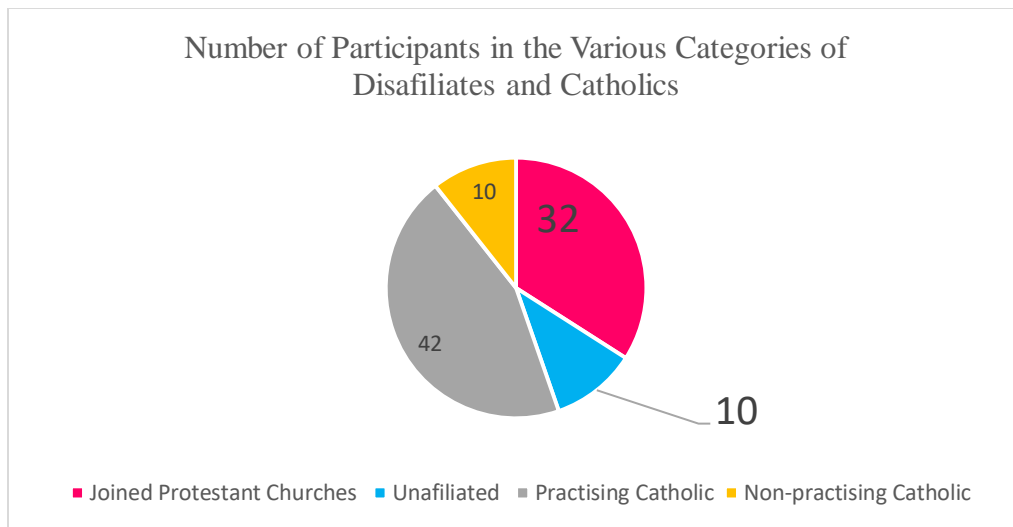


Figure 1

Pie Chart showing Number of Participants in the Various Categories of Disaffiliates and Catholics

¹² Non-probability samples offer the benefits of not requiring a list of all possible elements in a full population and the ability to access highly sensitive information and difficult to reach populations. Furthermore, non-probability sampling techniques are more commonly used for research in the Social Sciences (Berg 32).

¹³ See Appendix A: Table 1; Statistical Representation of Participants; disaffiliates and Catholics by gender.

Interviews were held with 30 Disaffiliates and 34 Catholics.¹⁴ Five focus groups were conducted with a total of 30 persons.¹⁵ Two were conducted with Disaffiliates (one with the Seventh Day Adventists¹⁶ and the other with the Pentecostals¹⁷ Three were conducted with Catholics which include the Charismatic group,¹⁸ a youth group and a group of young professionals. The focus group meetings were all held in Castries, given time constraints.

The age of participants chosen for this study is between 17 to 91 years and participants are categorised according to the guidelines for birth years by generations.¹⁹ These categories include Generation Z (born 1997- present), Millennials (born 1981-1996), Generation X (born 1965 to 1980), Baby Boomers (born 1946 -1964), and Silent Generation (born 1928 -1945).²⁰

Objectives of the Study

The core objective of this study is to investigate the main reasons why the Catholic Church in St. Lucia has lost one-third of its members over the last six decades. The study primarily intends to research findings internal and external factors, from the perspective of disaffiliates and Catholics that led to the declining membership of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia. The study will also raise awareness of the decline, underline the reasons for the decline, and fill the lacuna in the history of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia.

¹⁴ See Appendix A: Table 6; Statistical Representation Interviewees disaffiliates and Catholics by gender.

¹⁵ See Appendix A: Table 4; Statistical Representation of Focus Groups; disaffiliates and Catholics by gender.

¹⁶ The largest group of Protestants in St. Lucia with 10.4 % of the population in 2010 from 1.8% in 1960.

¹⁷ The second largest group of Protestants in St. Lucia with 8.9% of the population in 2010 from .05% in 1970.

¹⁸ This group has been in existence in the Catholic Church for over forty years.

¹⁹ Generation is defined as an age group cohort that shares a common position socially, in history. The various categories of generations can provide a way to understand how different formative experiences interact with the life-cycle and aging process to shape people's views of the world and influence their choices (Dimlock par. 1-2).

²⁰ See Appendix C: Figure 7; chart showing Generations and Age guidelines.

Another objective of this study is to suggest recommendations that can be undertaken by the Church in St. Lucia to stop the exodus and to encourage disaffiliates to return. This study is expected to generate discussions among the hierarchy of the Church and between the hierarchy the laity. This I hope will lead to a process of reflection and consultation that will lead to the development of strategies for combating the declining membership.

Methodology

Data collected from primary sources (interview transcripts, first hand evidence, dissertation, statistical data from the government of St. Lucia and documents from the archives of the Archdiocese of Castries) and secondary sources (published books and articles) are incorporated in the study. Sixty four interviews were conducted, 51 face to face and thirteen via the telephone.²¹ In addition, five focus groups were held.²² All interviews were audio taped and transcribed afterwards. Some notes were taken during the interviews. The names of all contributors are omitted as requested by them.²³ The participants were invited to speak freely in order to capture the essence of their feelings. The interview format is semi-structured with open ended questions.²⁴ This format provided the freedom to ask clarifying questions of the participants as new themes emerged. The interviews lasted approximately between 45 and 60 minutes. The sample size of the study is 61.7% female and 38.3% male. The guidelines for birth years by generations between the ages of 17-91 is applied in this study.

²¹ See Appendix A: Table 7; Statistical Representation of Interviewees in accordance with guidelines for Birth years by Generations.

²² See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus Groups; Disaffiliates and Catholics in accordance with Birth Years By generations.

²³ See Appendix A: Table 2 & 3; Demographics of Disaffiliates and Catholics interviewed in the study.

²⁴ See Appendix B; Interview Questionnaire for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

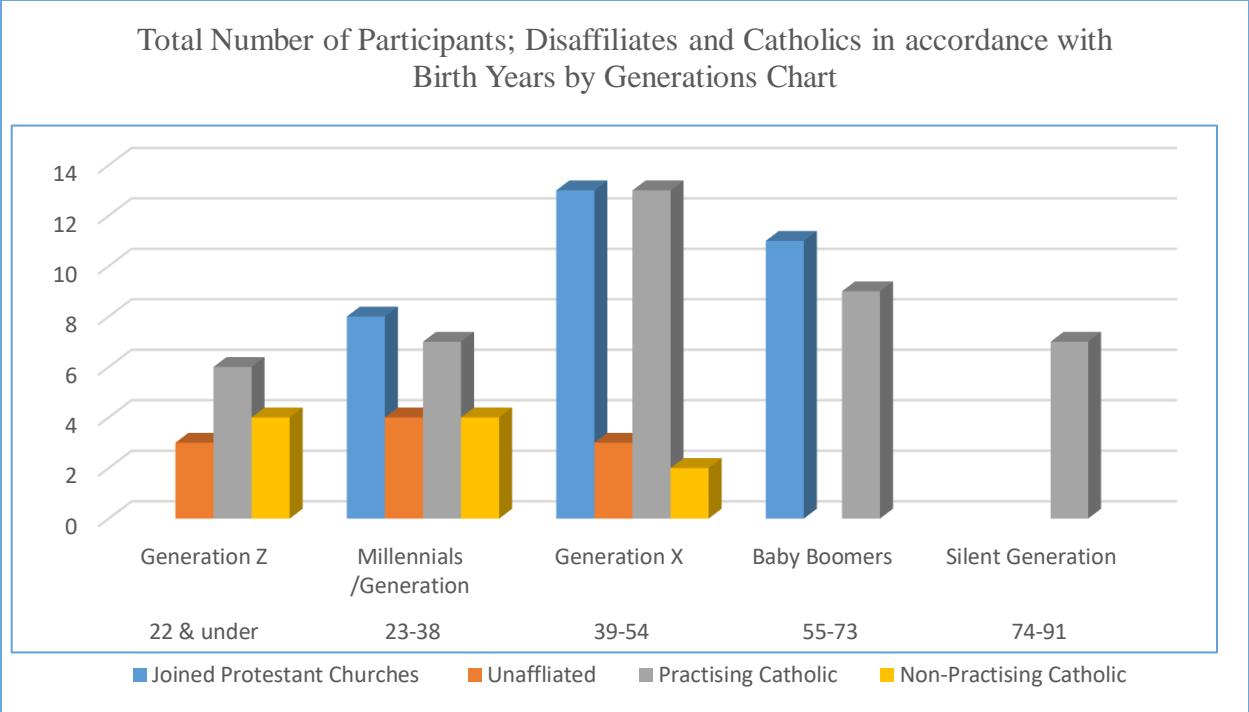


Figure 2

Bar Chart showing the Total Number of Participants; Disaffiliates and Catholics in accordance with Guidelines for Birth Years by Generations Chart

Data Utilization

This research is based on a social historical and cultural study of the participants’ views. This means investigating and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to the declining membership of the Catholic Church. The research adopts a qualitative methodology based on rich data generated from in-depth interviews.²⁵ However, statistical data collected from government sources and numbers are also utilized.

²⁵ The qualitative methodology is the more preferred choice because it allows the researcher to explore in detail people’s perspectives and obtain very rich data of a kind that would not have been possible to capture by using a quantitative methodology that involves asking a random sample of people to complete a survey of closed-ended questions with pre-set responses (Berg 3).

A qualitative analysis derived from the interviews entails inductively building from particular to general themes with the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data from multiple levels of analysis (Creswell 4). Following this process, five themes emerged and these themes are further classified into internal and external factors. The internal factors are inadequate teaching on the faith, the poor quality of preaching, and the conduct of priests. The external factors include the proselytising of Catholics by Protestant churches and the threat posed by secularity.

Chapter Outline

This study consists of three chapters. Chapter one presents the perspectives of disaffiliates and Catholics concerning the internal factors contributing to the declining membership of the Catholic Church. Chapter two examines their perspectives with regard to external factors. Chapter three attempts a critical analysis of the findings discussed in chapters one and two, and ends with recommendations and a conclusion.

Literature Review

At present, there is no existing literature on the declining membership of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia or any other island in the Caribbean. However, some literature can be found about Catholic disaffiliation on the Catholic Church in the United States of America after the 2000s. These studies focus on exit interviews with disaffiliates which began to surface after the scandal of sex abuse by priests around 2003 when a sharp decline in Catholic membership became

apparent. Previous studies from the United States of America and Europe focused on decline of Holy Mass²⁶ attendance.

This study is novel, in that it is the first of its kind for the Catholic Church in the Caribbean. Not only does this study investigate disaffiliates' reasons for their defection, but it also evaluates the perspectives of Catholics (practising and non-practising) on the declining membership.

The review examines the existing literature on the declining membership of the Catholic Church in the United States of America which is analysed only from the perspectives of disaffiliates. Several qualitative interview-based studies with disaffiliates have been conducted by Pew Research Centre and others in the United States of America inquiring about their reasons for leaving the Catholic Church.

According to Pew Research Centre (2009), in an article entitled "*Leaving Catholicism*," nearly three-quarters of disaffiliates (71%) in the United States of America who are now unaffiliated. It is also noted that more than half of disaffiliates (54%) who have left Catholicism for Protestantism mentioned that they gradually drifted away from Catholicism. The majority of those who are unaffiliated (65%) cite dissatisfaction with general Catholic teachings. Fifty six percent cite teachings on abortion and homosexuality and almost half (48%) cite church teachings on birth control and as reasons for leaving Catholicism.

Pew Research Centre (2015) in another article, entitled *The Catholic Church Membership is in Decline*, says that the decline is increasing every year. The trend towards no religion is the

²⁶ A liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church where "The same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, is present and offered in an unbloody manner through the hands of the priest at the altar." The Church describes the Holy Mass as "the source and summit of the Christian life" "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch (Catechism of the Catholic Church (1324).

key factor in the declining membership. The number of Americans professing no religion affiliation jumped from 16.1% to 22.8%. The percentage of Americans who identify with non-Christian faiths also has increased from 1.2 percentage points from 4.7% in 2007 to 5.9% in 2014. The drop in Christian share is mainly due to declines among mainline Protestants and Catholics. Catholicism has been losing most of its adherents through religious switching and no religious affiliation. More than 85% of American adults were raised Christian, but about a quarter of them no longer identify as Christians. Approximately one-third of American adults (31.7%) who were raised Catholic, but 41% among that group no longer identify themselves as Catholics. Therefore, about 12.9% American adults are former Catholics while only 2% have converted to Catholicism. The ratio of losses to gains is not prevalent in no other religious group in America.

Another article entitled, *Why I left: Exit Interviews Shed Light on Empty Pews* in “The Jesuit review 2012,” cited reasons ranging from not being able to understand the Catholic faith to not finding mentors and faith based programmes in the Catholic Church. Poor homilies and not getting anything out of the Mass are major reasons for leaving the Church. The article highlighted the obsession of some priests in only talking about money from the pulpit. The conduct of priests was also mentioned. Words used to describe the behaviour of priests include “arrogant,” “distant,” “aloof” and “insensitive” which suggest that clericalism is a problem.

The scandal surrounding the sexual abuse of minors by clergy was mentioned on numerous occasions. One man said that “What did it for me was the bishop’s refusal to list the names of paedophile priests on the diocesan web site and his non-support of the effort to lift the statute of limitations for bringing sexual abuse cases forward in the courts.” There were also sufficient reports of bad experiences on the interaction between staff and parishioners which

means that attention has to be given to improving the courtesy and the overall “customer relations” in the church.

CHAPTER ONE

**PERSPECTIVES OF DISAFFILIATES AND CATHOLICS ON INTERNAL FACTORS
CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECLINING MEMBERSHIP OF
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ST. LUCIA**

The perspectives of the various categories of Disaffiliates and Catholics on the internal factors contributing to the declining membership of the Catholic Church are presented in this chapter. The internal factors highlight issues within the Catholic Church. They are presented in descending order, starting with the most important. These factors, listed below, are amply illustrated using the participant's own words taken from focus groups and interview transcripts.

Internal Factors

1. Inadequate Teaching of the Faith
2. The Poor Quality of Preaching
3. The Conduct of Priests

Inadequate Teaching of the Faith

Quotations from Focus Groups

Disaffiliates from focus group meeting spoke very strongly about the inadequate teaching of the faith in the Catholic Church. A 43-year old man who joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church, explained that "The Catholic Church does not teach you anything about the Bible." Another woman, aged 64, who joined the Bethel Tabernacle Church declared, "The Catholic

Church is not serious about teaching its members. They keep you under siege so that you can beholden to them.”²⁷

Catholics from the focus group meetings have echoed similar sentiments. A young practising Catholic woman, aged 22, said, “You can say that the confirmation class replaced the youth group, we did a lot of social activities. I still do not know what Confirmation is about.”²⁸

A young practising Catholic man, 18 years old, said, “I do not think that the people who teach catechism instructions know enough to be in that position because they cannot explain anything. It is like they tell you stuff and you must just believe what they say.” Another non-practising Catholic man, aged 19, explained, “It is hard to remain in the Catholic Church when you get nothing out of it.” An older practising Catholic woman, aged 68, remarked, “The Church simply does explain anything. The teaching is poor. People do not understand the Sacraments. I think that they believe we are too stupid to understand the doctrines.”²⁹

²⁷ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

²⁸ “Confirmation is a sacrament in the Catholic Church by which Catholics receive a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Through Confirmation the Holy Spirit gives them the ability to be a witness for Christ and a deeper commitment to the Christian life in the Catholic Church. This also builds on what begun in Baptism and is nourished by the Eucharist. Confirmation also completes the process of initiation into the Catholic Church community (Catechism of the Catholic Church par. 1285.

²⁹ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

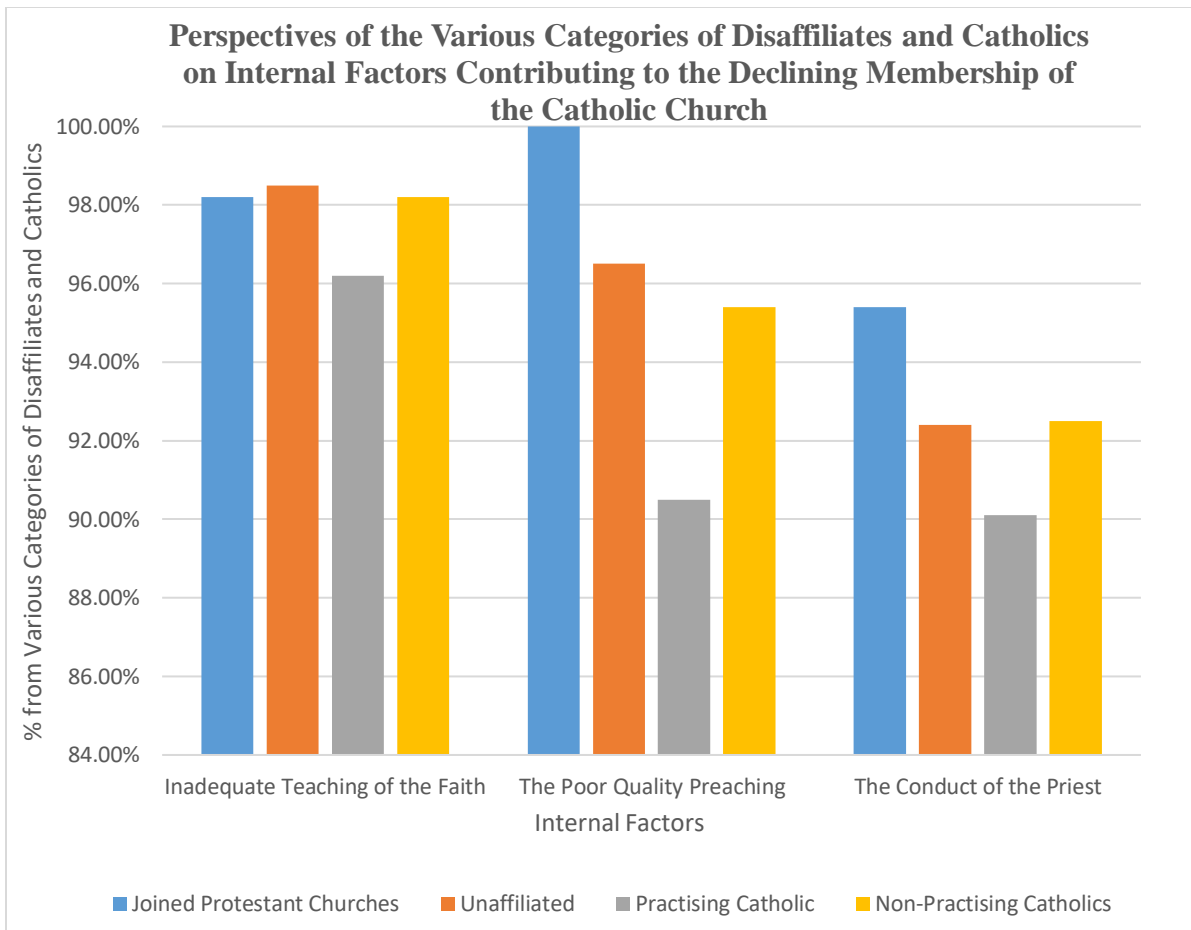


Figure 3

Bar Chart showing the Perspectives of the Various Categories of Disaffiliates and Catholics on Internal Factors Contributing to the Declining Membership of the Catholic Church

The above graph shows that 98.2% of those who joined Protestant churches, 98.5% of the unaffiliated, 96.2% practising Catholics and 98.2% non-practising Catholics have stated that the most significant factor for the decline in membership of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia is inadequate teaching of the faith.

Citations from Interviews

The citations below on the inadequate teaching of the faith consists of Disaffiliates (a woman (aged 36) who joined the Bethel Tabernacle Church and a 28-year- old unaffiliated male), and Catholics (a practising man (aged 54) and a non-practising woman, aged 40) respectively.

The catechetical programs are weak. The Church is treating its people like kindergarten children when education is now so advanced. One only gets a minimum of five years instructions if you are lucky to make your Confirmation. I had my First Communion at age eight and after a break of five years I began a period of three years instructions for Confirmation. There is no Sunday school, Bible study or other avenues to learn the faith between First Communion and Confirmation. The Catholic Church gives you “baby food” in religious instructions and I did not learn anything about the doctrines of the Church. (Dc. par. 3)³⁰

Spirituality for the laity not emphasized in the Catholic Church, you are on your own after Confirmation to sink or to swim. There are some programs in the Pastoral center for but those who can afford it. In fact it seems to me that the spiritual life is only for the priests and the religious because they down play everything for the laity and even try to

³⁰First Holy Communion is the Catholic Church marks a child or adult's first reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1322).

discourage you. We are being treated as less than. We are not learning anything because the Church does not teach much on doctrine or the Bible. (Dx. par. 2)

There are no programs in the Church to continue learning your faith after Confirmation. The Confirmation program itself is inadequate and does not prepare the kids for the real world. And the sad story is that many catechists do not even know the faith; heaven know what is being taught.” I feel that the Church has let us down. They are not taking the faith as seriously as the Protestant Churches. I went and got baptized in the Seventh Day Adventists Church because they explained to me that my baptism as baby was not valid. (Cb par. 3)

The majority of Catholics do not understand the faith. I believe that is why so many are falling prey to the Protestant churches. The instructions are very flimsy; nothing to enrich or sustain the Christian life. The Church’s modus operandi has not changed over the last sixty years. Children are at a disadvantage because their level of understanding is more advanced than how or what they are been taught. They are not challenged to grow in the faith. It seems that teaching is just not a priority for the Catholic Church. The truth is the majority of Catholics like myself have been poorly catechized (Cn par. 1)

The above citations characterize the catechesis in the Catholic Church as weak/poor. Most participants stated that the Catholic Church is not taking the catechetical instructions seriously.³¹

³¹ All the categories of the generations except the Silent Years stated that the teaching in the Catholic Church is inadequate. The most complaints came from the category of Generation X.

The Poor Quality of Preaching

Poor quality of preaching in the Catholic Church is the second highest significant factor mentioned for the declining membership. All Disaffiliates who joined Protestant churches and 96.5% of the unaffiliated along with 90.5% practising Catholics and 95.4% non-practising Catholics believe that the quality of the preaching in the Catholic Church is unsatisfactory.

Quotations from Focus Groups

The viewpoints on the quality of the preaching from Disaffiliates in focus groups meetings are very powerful. A woman, aged 33, who joined God's Trumpet to the Nations Church, said, "I was so frustrated because of the rubbish that comes from the pulpit from the priest and deacon; nothing of consequence, nothing relevant to help with issues in your life." This same complaint is manifested in a statement by a Seventh Day Adventist (a 54-year old man): "The Catholic Church does not preach on the Word of God to help you understand how you must live."³²

The opinions of Catholics from in focus groups on the quality of preaching were just as alarming. A practising Catholic woman, aged 46, declared, "The homilies are not inspiring. Some priests are content with making a joke out of the homily. They do not take the Word of God seriously." Another woman (a practising Catholic) aged 62, lamented, "I am so fed up because the priests are using the pulpit to beat us instead of preaching on the Word. Sometimes the whole homily is about name calling and disparaging us." A young Catholic man, 19 years old, remarked, "I really cannot tell you what the homily is about, most of the time, the priest just goes on and on and it really does not make sense. An older man (a practising Catholic) aged 59, moaned "It seems

³² See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

to me that the priests are becoming more and more frivolous in the liturgy and are doing things for fun rather than spirituality, that is why Catholics are losing faith and turning away from God.”³³

Citations from Interviews

Below are five quotations that speak to the quality of preaching the Catholic Church. These quotations are taken from Disaffiliates (a 41-year-old man who joined the Church of the Nazarene, an unaffiliated women (aged 50) and a woman, 26 years old who joined the Seventh Day Adventists Church) and Catholics (a practising 43-year old Catholic woman and a non-practising Catholic male, aged 37) respectively.

The homilies are what drove me away from the Catholic Church. They are not relevant and the priests or deacons are not vibrant. Some of them are so dead they put you to sleep during the homily. They act as if they do not what know goes on in the society because they are not able to relate it to the Word. I had a hunger for the Word but I was not being fed in the Catholic Church. There is nothing there to inspire or challenge you. (Dr par. 1)

I left Mass feeling very angry most of the time. This is why I left the Catholic Church. I could no longer put up with listening to what I believe nine of out ten times to be garbage. I was so disappointed because I noticed that it is mostly the local priest who behave in this manner. They seem unenlightened and ill-informed. Sometimes they use the pulpit to insult us and to settle scores with people who disagree with them and some deacons are following in the footsteps. (Dw par. 1)

³³ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

I do not know why the priests do not stick to the readings and give us with some theological insights. Instead to add insult to injury, the delivery is bad and the priest/deacon would sometimes preach for over half an hour. This is just not right because the homilies are empty; nothing to enrich your spiritual life. There are many people who are saying the same thing. We feel insulted at the Mass. Some priest especially local ones, they use the pulpit to settle scores with those who disagree with them. Sometimes I wonder why I am still going attending Mass because I get upset with the nonsense that is going on. (Cr par. 4)

It is clear to me that the homilies are not prepared. Neither priest nor deacon can give you a good sermon. This is such a shame that the clergy does not feel duty bound to inspire and uplift the congregation with his homilies especially because this is about the only source of teaching that you can get from the Catholic Church. Many times I just want to walk out of the Church during the preaching because I am tired of garbage that comes from the pulpit. (Cc par. 2)

The quotations above describe the preaching at Mass as poor. The participants expressed anger and frustration as they pointed out that the homilies are ill-prepared and lacking in substance.³⁴

³⁴ All the categories of the generations except the Silent Years complained about the quality of the preaching at Mass. The most complaints came from the category of Millennials and Generation X. The Silent Years remarked that receiving Eucharist at the Mass was more important to them.

The Conduct of Priests

The conduct of priests is the least significant of all the factors but it carries a lot of weight since in all cases more than 92.6 % of participants name it as a factor for the exodus from the Church. Approximately 95.4% of those who joined Protestant churches and 92.4% of the unaffiliated along with 90.1% practising Catholics and 92.5% non-practising Catholics have had bad experiences in dealing with priests.

Quotations from Focus Groups

The details of Disaffiliates from the focus groups on the conduct of priests highlighted the incompetence and negative experiences regarding the behaviour, personality and attitude of some priests. A woman, 38 years old who joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church, said, “One has to be very careful how you approach some priests because they can be callous in their response.” A 52-year-old man who joined the Seventh Day Adventist stated, Some Catholic priest are very political. They openly support a certain party. They have friends who are politicians and for this reason they keep quiet when it comes to issues that oppose the Church’s teaching.³⁵

Catholics in the focus groups also had a number of complaints concerning the conduct of priests. A Catholic practising woman, aged 41, remarked, “Our priests live an upper-middle-class lifestyle and are completely disconnected with from reality. They are distant and aloof and yet they think they can come and preach to us.” Similarly, another practising Catholic woman, 46 years old, stated that “The priests act as though you are beneath them -like their slaves and won’t listen to anything you have to say because they are your lords and masters.” A practising Catholic

³⁵ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

man aged 62 also expressed his concern about the conduct of the priests: “They are openly disobedient and defiant to the bishop. Some even vilify the bishop and fellow priests in the media. They are not setting a good example and they are not acting like Christians.”³⁶

Citations from Interviews

The citations below have unveiled some serious misgivings on the conduct of priests in the archdiocese. They are taken from Disaffiliates (a 29- year old woman, who joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church and woman who joined God’ Trumpet to the Nations’ Church aged 22) and Catholics (a practising Catholic woman, aged 49, a non-practising Catholic man, aged 35) respectively.

I was so disappointed after I spoke to the priest hoping to get some advice about my marriage problems. He listened and then said that he would pray for me and that was all. He saw me several times after that and never asked how I was coping. Then I got divorced, and it is only after I got pregnant that he came to me in a very abrupt voice and told me that I could no longer be the animator because I was living in sin. He showed no compassion at all. (Dy par. 2)

The priest refused to baptize my child because the sponsors were not Catholic and I did not attend Mass regularly. He kept shouting at me and never gave me a chance to say anything. He said that I should know better but he never asked me about my reasons for choosing these people. I was so surprised at his behavior because I really did not know

³⁶ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

that this was a serious issue so I took my child to the Seven Day Adventist Church to be dedicated. But if I was his friend I am sure that he would have done the baptism.” (Df par. 1)

The thing that I hate the most is the level of arrogance among the priest. I think that they have lost their humanness and it is all about power. It appears to me that the priest are power-mongers and they are more concerned about climbing the ladder than about caring for the flock. I believe that the priests are content in maintaining an anti-intellectual environment where they he is king. They are insecure and feel threatened around people who take their spiritual life seriously. As a result, they surround themselves with people whom they can manipulate and most times these people do not know anything about the Church so nothing happens. (Ch par. 3)

The issue I have with the priests is that they are never available. I get the feeling that they keep dodging the people and pushing back to make time for their social life. . Most of them still looks out for the rich people and are quick to give them a funeral Mass In my opinion the guys are not committed. If you are not a friend of the priests nothing happens for you. The priesthood is no longer a vocation; it is a job. These guys have forgotten their role or they do not know what it means to be a priest. (Cv par. 4)

The above citations on the conduct of the priests is a source of much distress and disappointment among the participants. The Catholics in this interview felt disillusioned, and angry even though they continue to identify themselves as Catholics.³⁷

³⁷ The complaints on the conduct of priests were expressed by all categories except the category of Silent years.

CHAPTER TWO

PERSPECTIVES OF DISAFFILIATES AND CATHOLICS ON EXTERNAL FACTORS

CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECLINING MEMBERSHIP OF

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ST. LUCIA

The perspectives of various Disaffiliates and Catholics on external factors contributing to the declining membership of the Catholic Church are directly related to the challenges faced by the Church in the society. These factors, listed below, can be described as the competing voices in the society. The 2010 St. Lucia Population Census shows that the Protestant Churches have increased from 2.1% in 1960 to 26.5% in 2010³⁸ and the unaffiliated from 0.8% to 7.9% during the same period.³⁹

External Factors

1. Proselytising of Catholics by Protestant Churches.⁴⁰
2. The Threat Posed Secularity.⁴¹

³⁸ According to the Archdiocese of Castries report, “It is clear that over the past thirty years that many Catholics in St. Lucia have given up Catholic life and practice. Long ago there was greater moral pressure within families for holding on to one’s faith. Joining a “small church” was also considered unacceptable. Nowadays it is more socially acceptable to belong to what used to be known as grassroots churches (38).

³⁹ According the Archdiocese of Castries: “Many do not go anywhere. They simply stop practising their faith. In the National Census there has begun to appear a group that identifies itself as non-affiliated. Most likely there are among them” (76).

⁴⁰ According to the Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia, “Those who engage in the more aggressive form of proselytizing are the Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Adventists and Jehovah Witnesses (43).

⁴¹ “Secularity is a term coined (c. 1850) to denote a system which sought to order and interpret life on principles solely taken from the world, without recourse to belief in God and a future world”(Rolheiser 39).

Proselytising of Catholics by Protestant Churches

Quotations from Focus Groups

Quotations from focus groups indicate that Disaffiliates who participated in the sessions were very vocal about proselytising Catholics. For example, a woman who joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church aged 59 elucidated, “We have many outreach programs, crusades, radio programs to inform and educate people about the Catholic Church. The teachings are not from the Bible.” Another woman, 46 years old, who joined the Bethel Tabernacle Church explained, “We have doors are open all the time to welcome people with problems. When they come to us, we try to help them understand the truth because they are being misled in the Catholic Church.”⁴²

The Catholics expressed doubts about the Church because of what they were learning from the Protestant churches. A young practising Catholic woman, aged 25, said, “I learned a lot about the history of the Catholic Church from listening to the Seventh Day Adventist programme on the radio. This caused me to have second thoughts about the Catholic Church.” Another young woman, a practising Catholic, 38 years old lamented, “My neighbour invited me to a Seventh Day Adventist Crusade and the pastor explained that infant baptism was not in the Bible. So at the end of the week I got baptised in a pool under the water.”⁴³

⁴² See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

⁴³ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

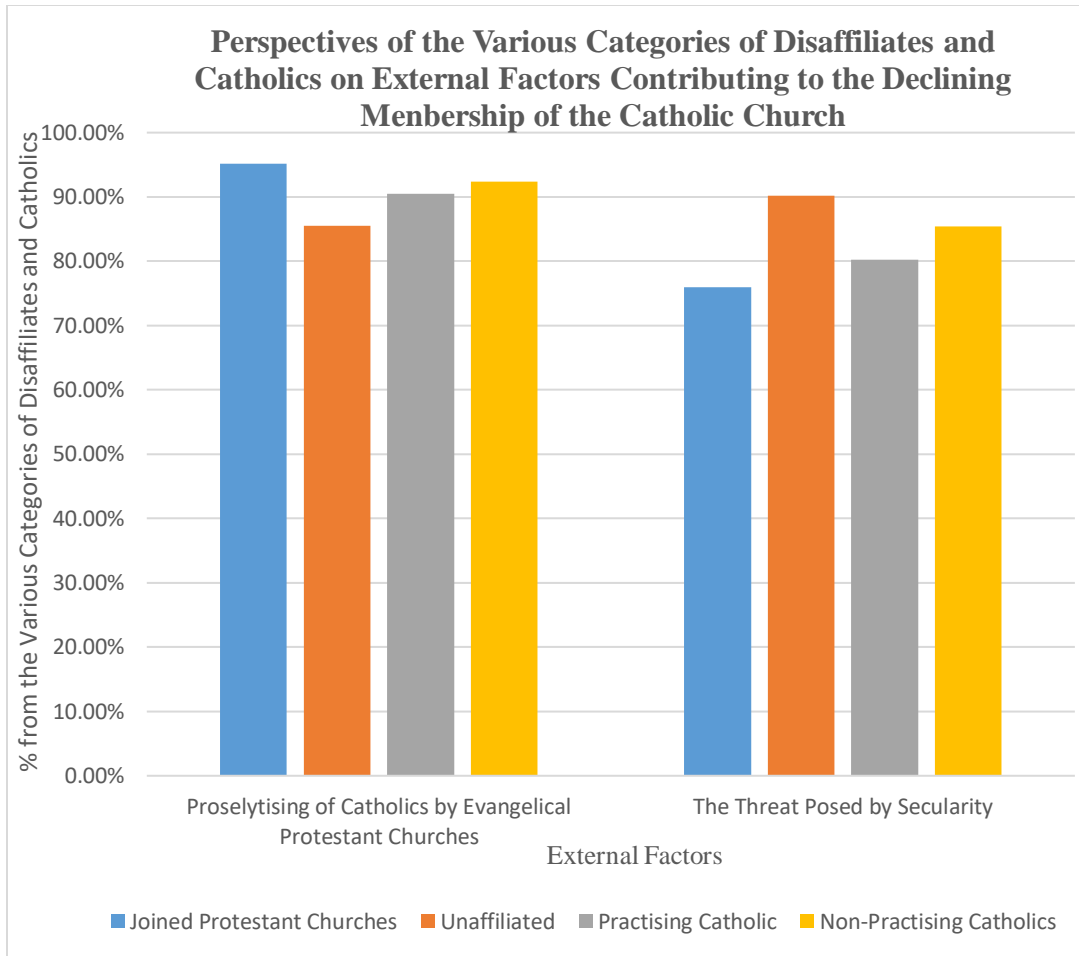


Figure 4

Bar Chart showing perspectives of the Various Categories of Disaffiliates and Catholics on External Factors Contributing to the Declining Membership of the Catholic Church

Citations from Interviews

The above graph shows that 95.2 % of those who joined Protestants churches and 85.5% of the unaffiliated compared with 90.5% of practising and 92.4% non-practising Catholics believe that Catholics are being proselytised by Protestant Churches.

The citations below illustrate the various methods of proselyting used by the Protestant churches. These citations include Disaffiliates (a 54-year-old woman who joined the Bethel Church, a 48-year-old man who joined the Adventist Church and a woman, 72-year-old, who joined the Universal Church of God) and Catholics (a practising Catholic man, 58 years old and practising Catholic woman, aged 79) respectively.

The people from the Bethel Church visited me when I was in the hospital. They treated me like family. They showed me that the saints cannot pray for you because they are dead and the Mass is man-made construction because the Eucharist is a symbol. When I was a Catholic I did not experience community in the sense that I knew people just from going to church. The ones I knew, I knew them outside of church. No one misses the fact that you stop coming. Since I left no one has ever called from the parish even though I was a regular at Sunday Mass. (Ds par. 3)

I joined the Adventist Church because my girlfriend did not want to get married in the Catholic Church. So we went to the pastor who explained that we were unevenly yoked and that it would be better for the marriage for us to belong to the same faith. So I decided to become an Adventist because I knew that my girlfriend wanted nothing to do with the Catholic Church. (Dc par.1)

My daughter is the one who opened my eyes to the errors of the Catholicism. She made me understand that the Catholic Church is a false religion because they do not teach from the Bible. For example, infant baptism, praying to the saints and praying for the dead

is not in the Bible. She told me that Catholics are going to hell. They are not saved, that I had not been baptized because I could not repent of my sins as an infant and I had not accepted Jesus as the Lord and savior. So I left the Catholic Church. (Dt par. 1)

There so much going on these days with Catholics. Some of them think that the Catholic Church is one of many and are even neglecting Sunday Mass for the preaching in these churches. Some have bought the lie that their baptism as an infant in the Catholic Church is not valid so they leave to get baptized under the water. Others join by getting married these churches or their children get them to leave. A lot of them are dedicated in one of the Protestant churches if they have godparents who are not Catholics. Sometimes they get caught when they send their children to Sunday school or summer camp. I am pretty sure that all the priests know all about this, but they do not seem not to care because they are doing nothing to reach out to them or even helps us to stay in the Church.⁴⁴ (Cs par. 5)

The Protestant churches are full of conviction and zeal for souls more than the Catholic Church. They are very aggressive when it comes to evangelization, especially the Seventh Day Adventist. They use the media to “bash” the Catholic Church and criticize us about our doctrines. Catholics are so confused nowadays more than ever because there are so many different Christian denominations and other religions in St. Lucia. They are all targeting the Catholics and sowing doubts about the faith and claiming that the Catholic Church is false. They attack Sunday worship, the Virgin Mary, praying for the dead, the

⁴⁴ “The precept of the Catholic Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass. The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in s Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2175, 2180).

Pope and everything Catholic. Imagine many Catholics joining the Seventh Day Adventist Church which worships on a Saturday and some have even become Muslims, yet in all of this nothing is being said or done by the Catholic Church.⁴⁵ (Cw par. 6)

The quotations above indicate that Catholics seem to be confused and are falling prey to the churches. They also highlight the frustration among Catholics on the Church's silence.

The Threat Posed by Secularity

Approximately 75.5% of those who joined Protestant churches, 90.2% of the unaffiliated, 80.2% practising Catholics and 85.4% non-practising believe that many St. Lucians including some Catholics are attracted to the ideals of secularity.

Quotations from Focus Groups

Disaffiliates from the focus groups expressed the view that many St. Lucians are turning away from God." A woman, 55 years old who joined the Bethel Church explained that many St. Lucians are turning away from God. They are making up their own truth. Another woman, aged 38, who joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church explained that nowadays, St. Lucians are more educated and some of them feel that they do not need God in their lives."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ "Times have changed. People are picking and choosing their places of worship and fellowship. They are looking for places where they feel they belong, are accepted and welcomed. They also claim that they are hungry for the word. They are attracted to the preacher who can break the word with conviction and authority and where they experience fellowship" (Quinquennial Report 76).

⁴⁶ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

Catholics from the focus groups also stated that many St. Lucians are embracing secularity. Another practising Catholic, woman, aged 26, said, “The society has become very materialistic. People no longer look out for each other. Some people have three and four cellar phones while others cannot afford to eat.” An older practising Catholic woman, aged 75, lamented that. “The country is not what it used to be, nowadays so many are turning their back on religion because the dollar is God is the society.”⁴⁷

Citations from Interviews

The following citations are taken from interviews show that secularity is common place in the St. Lucian society. These citations comprises of Disaffiliates (a 67- year-old woman who the Seventh Day Adventist, a young unaffiliated male, 29 years old,) and Catholics (a non- practising Catholic woman, aged 30, a practising Catholic man 42 years old and practising Catholic woman, 82 years old) respectively.⁴⁸

The society has changed a lot from what I knew it to be. Immorality is rampant in the society. There are so many single parents and children who are growing up without fathers. The breakdown in families is a serious problem in the society with domestic violence, so many young men in prison, and a crime rate is increasing, yet, you never hear the priest encouraging people to get married. The Catholic Church is out of touch with the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. People continue to do whatever pleases them as long as it feels right for them. They are making up their own truth and this continues to go

⁴⁷ See Appendix A: Table 5; Statistical Representation of Focus groups; Birth years by Generations for Disaffiliates and Catholics.

⁴⁸

unchallenged in the Catholic Church. The priest do not preach about these things either; it seems that they prefer to be politically correct. (Di par. 5)

It was when I went to university and I started to learn more about science and the world. I learned that, actually, it was by intuition, that there is no absolute truth to the world because there are so many people with so many different beliefs. Even within Christianity you have so many denominations and none of them agree with each other. And that is something that has stuck with me ever since -that there is no absolute truth. I believe that all knowledge, in fact, everything that humans know is constructed. I mean that it is socially constructed so I believe that religion is fabrication. (Do par. 4)

Well I guess that the church is not the sole domain all of truth and knowledge. There are other places to go to, especially the Internet to get information. Given our educational background, my generation is used to questioning everything. There are many sources and different viewpoints of spirituality available today. The Church is not relevant to me because I can find the stuff I need online and in other places that I can trust. (Cf par. 1)

The world has changed a lot, it is a very different place from what it used to be, people are doing whatever pleases them. They have pushed God out of the equation completely. I think that there is conspiracy going on with the media and television because they are promoting this kind of behaviour. Our society is no different from the world around and is following closely behind, there are some voices right here calling for “gay marriage” in St. Lucia. As usual the Church is complicit and offers no kind of opposition to these

people. In fact our Archbishop has gone on radio to say that he has no problem with the proposed “gay pride march,” whereas the Protestants have all opposed it. I think that this will be bad for the country because this will have a negative influence on young people in offering them “gay marriage” as a legitimate choice and they will accept this as truth. (Cj par. 6)

I find that the Catholic Church is very silent about the things that are happening in the Church and the society. Catholics have fallen prey to all sorts of things because they do not know their faith. They are adopting the lifestyles that is seen on television. Some of them are not taking the sacraments seriously. They are marrying on the beach. They do not bother to let their children make Confirmation, and hardly anyone goes to the Sacrament of Confession. It seems to me that there is a loss of faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.⁴⁹ The values of secularism, where man does not think about God, have penetrated our society. Materialism and so on. So far the Church is not doing anything to combat this. The priest act like they have no zeal and lack will power to deal with these issues, or is it that they are waiting for the sheep to come to them.⁵⁰ (Cu par 7)

⁴⁹ The Sacrament of Penance is the method of the Catholic Church by which Catholics **confess** sins committed after baptism and have them absolved by God through the administration of a Priest. Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1422).

⁵⁰ “The culture, values and lifestyle in St. Lucia is being reshaped by First World thinking, tastes and behaviour. Nowadays people feel freer to make choices, express opinions and see themselves at the center of their world” (Quinquennial Report 50).

The citations above underline that many St. Lucia have rejected the values of religion and God. They also expose the Catholic Church's silence on issues in the society which have left many feeling that Church is complicit.

CHAPTER THREE

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The core objective of this study is to investigate the main reasons why the Catholic Church in St. Lucia has lost one-third of its members over the last six decades, from 1960 to 2010. The study comprise forty two (42) Disaffiliates and fifty two (52) Catholics.⁵¹ The decrease in Catholic population of 31.3% is tantamount to the increase of 31.5% membership in the Protestant churches plus the unaffiliated.⁵² For most participants a combination of factors may have contributed to the declining membership of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia.⁵³ The reasons given by the various categories of disaffiliates and Catholics across the island are related to the context of their lives. There is a high degree of consistency between the reasons given by disaffiliates and Catholics. The research findings yielded four internal factors and two external factors that have contributed to the declining membership of the Catholic Church. The internal factors include: inadequate teaching of the faith, the poor quality of preaching, the irrelevance of the Church to life and the conduct of priests. The external factors include the proselytizing of Catholics Protestant churches and the threat posed by secularity.

⁵¹ The research found that the ratio of females to males is greater; women tend to be more religious and attend organised religion more than men. The highest number of participants are found in the category of generation X, the lowest number in the category of the Silent Years.

⁵² According to Jn Marie, "The Catholic Church in St. Lucia has lost many of its members to the Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventists Churches. In addition to the exodus from Catholicism to other faiths, many Catholics have given up their faith for the values of Western modern day society that has promoted materialism and individualism over community" (par. 1)

⁵³ Other factors include the Irrelevance of the Church to Life, A Hostile Church Atmosphere, Females not allowed to Preach in the Church, Females denied Ordination, Priest Sex Abuse Scandal.

Internal Factors

Inadequate Teaching of the Faith

The findings indicate that nearly all Disaffiliates and Catholics agree that the most significant internal factor responsible for the exodus from the Church is the inadequate teaching of the faith. Participants in focus groups underlined that “the teaching is poor” and that “the Church is not serious about teaching its members.” More than one person noted that there is no teaching about the Bible and it was implied that the content of the Confirmation class was replaced by social activities. A number of participants were concerned about the competence of catechists saying that they do not “know enough to be in that position” and as a result many Catholics do not “understand the doctrines.”⁵⁴

Similarly, the interviewees stated that “the catechetical programmes are weak” and “the instructions as flimsy.” While one person agreed that the catechetical program involves as much as five years of instructions, he retorted that he got “baby food” and that the program is lacking in substance. Interviewees articulate the lack of proper teaching about doctrines and griped that there is no Bible study. They quipped that this has been *modus operandi* of the Church over the last six decades. Others explained that “Children are at a disadvantage because their level of understanding is more advanced than how or what they are been taught.” Given the type of information available on the Internet, many of the interviewees opined that the “Church is treating its people like kindergarten children.” The participants felt that the Church does not take “the faith as seriously as the Protestant Churches.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See chapter one for quotations from focus groups on pages 13-14.

⁵⁵ See chapter one for citations from interviews on pages 16-17.

Many participants complained about the sporadic nature of the instructions saying that there are no “Sunday School or avenues to learn the faith between First Communion and Confirmation” and “no programs to continue learning the faith after Confirmation.” Those who admit that there are programs offered at the Cardinal Kelvin Felix Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre for spiritual enrichment mentioned that they are available only for those who can afford it. Most of the participants believe that “spirituality for the laity is not emphasised in the Catholic Church.” Therefore, they have concluded that “They are not learning anything” because “Teaching is not a priority for the Catholic Church and “The Catholic Church does not take the faith as seriously as the Protestant churches.” They lamented that the “The majority of Catholics do not understand the faith” and this may be the reason “Why so many are falling prey to the Protestant churches.”⁵⁶

Disaffiliates and Catholics have clearly indicated that the teaching of the faith in the Catholic Church is inadequate despite the fact that the instruction takes place over a five-year period. Some interviewees mused that after receiving five years of instructions they still “do not understand the faith.” This might be as a result of the poorly trained catechists as they raised. The interviewees are correct in saying that the Church has stipulated five years of instructions. However, most St. Lucians have not availed themselves nor encouraged their children to attend all five years of instructions. A large number of Catholics have not completed the initiation process and have only received two years of instructions.⁵⁷ This brings to light why many Catholics do not understand their faith and are unable to defend it.

⁵⁶ See chapter one for citations from interviews on pages 16-17.

⁵⁷ All Catholics must receive the sacraments of initiation that is Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation as members of the Church. Other sacraments such as Marriage, Holy Orders are received by those who are called to this state of life and can only be received once in a lifetime (with the exception of Marriage but only after an annulment of first marriage is granted). Anointing of the sick and Reconciliation (Confession) can be received several times as and when necessary throughout one’s lifetime.

Moreover, with the modernization of education by the Government of St. Lucia of education in the early seventies, religious education was no longer taught in schools.⁵⁸ This interrupted the Churches programmes of religious education which is an import part of the Catholic philosophy found in many Church doctrines.⁵⁹ This means that the Church has lost its foothold in the schools where the faith had been nurtured for past decades.⁶⁰ The Church has not addressed the shortfall. Organizations such as *Opus Dei*,⁶¹ and the Charismatic Renewal⁶² have tried to bring the teaching to the faithful but only a small number of people participate in their activities. It is noteworthy that the Catholic Church also believes that the teaching of the faith is a lifelong process and is part of the mandate given to it by its founder, Jesus Christ.⁶³ The findings would indicate that the Catholic Church in St. Lucia has not lived up to its mandate.

The Poor Quality of Preaching

The next most important factor that has largely contributed to the declining membership of the Catholic Church is the poor quality of preaching at the Mass⁶⁴ according to all the participants.

⁵⁸ “There existed a close marriage between Catholic Church and State. The Church played a key role in the area of education of the nation, and therefore, such a position of influence rendered it possible and maybe easy for evangelization and retention of its members. The reality today is vastly different. In many of our Catholic schools a significant percentage of their enrollment comprise of non-Catholics and even those with no religious affiliation” (Malzaire 4).

⁵⁹ (Divini Illius Magistri par. 6- 7), Gravissimum Educationis par 1- 2) and (Ivini Illius Magistri par.7-11)

⁶⁰ Although, volunteers from the various religions are allowed an allotted time to teach their adherents but the Catholics who volunteered were for the most part incompetent and are unable to pass on the faith.

⁶¹ A group within the Catholic Church whose mission is to spread the gospel message.

⁶² A Catholic group that is dedicated to the expression of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

⁶³ Jesus chose disciples, especially “the twelve” apostles, to carry on his mission and to act with the same authority that the Father had given him. The apostles appointed other men to carry on their ministry and mission. Through prayer and the “laying on of hands,” the apostles called upon the Lord to give these new leaders the same authority to teach and lead the Church that they had received from Jesus himself. The early Christians believed that the new leaders had indeed received this authority from God. The Lord continued to confer authority to lead the Church upon the successors of the men appointed by the apostles to fulfil their ministry. Thus, there began an unbroken chain or succession of elders, beginning with the apostles and carried down to the present (Catechism of the Catholic Church 100).

⁶⁴ The weekly Sunday Parish Church Mass may be the only time of encounter and engagement with the faith for the majority of Catholics.

Those who participated in the focus groups underlined their dissatisfaction with the homilies. They feel that the clergy is not “taking the Word of God seriously.” One person remarked that “some priests are content in making a joke out of the homily” while another declared that the homily is about “name calling and disparaging us.’ Phrases used by participants to describe the significance of the homily include “not inspiring,” “nothing relevant to help with issues in your life” and “nothing of consequence.”⁶⁵

The viewpoints expressed by the interviewees were equally strong: “uninspiring,” “ill-prepared,” “lacking in substance,” “theologically unsound,” “badly delivered” and “irrelevant to life.” Commenting on the delivery of the sermons some mentioned that the homilists are not “vibrant” and “do not stick to the readings.” One person remarked, “The homilies are what drove me away from the Catholic Church.” Others spoke about the “rubbish that comes from the pulpit.” They were disheartened that the pulpit is used particularly by the local priest “to throw remarks for the people who disagree with them “instead of giving us theological insights.” Another person remarked that the pulpit is also used by deacons to settle scores. Generally, the participants felt that the local clergy seemed “unenlightened and ill-informed.”⁶⁶

The poor quality of preaching at Mass has caused much anguish and frustration among Disaffiliates and Catholics because they “felt insulted from the pulpit.” The Catholics even wondered why they were still attending the Mass since they derived “no satisfaction from going to Mass.” Some participants lamented that the priest “did not preach on the Word.”

There are a number of things that can be concluded from the above: (1) the preachers lack the zeal and enthusiasm and (2) in formation they are not properly prepared (content and methodology). Thus they lack the capacity to appeal to the imagination, communicate the Word

⁶⁵ See quotations from focus group quotations on pages 18-19.

⁶⁶ See chapter one; citations from interviews on pages 18-20

in an uplifting and inspiring manner and provide motivation, thus making the message efficacious in a way that will impinge on the consciousness of people.⁶⁷

Apart from the catechesis, the preaching at Mass is a major avenue through which Catholics learn about their faith in terms of knowledge and *praxis*.⁶⁸ The Church emphasised the importance of the sermon/homily: “bishops, with priests as co-workers, have as their first task “to preach the Gospel of God to all men,” in keeping with the Lord's command. They are “heralds of faith, who draw new disciples to Christ; they are authentic teachers” of the apostolic faith “endowed with the authority of Christ” (CCC par. 888).

In fact in *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* Pope Francis devoted several paragraphs (nos. 135-175) to encourage Catholic priests to be serious about preparing and delivering the homily.⁶⁹ Based on what the participants are saying about the poor quality of preaching and the stance of the universal Church it would seem that the Church in St. Lucia is not taking the mandate to break open the Word seriously.

The Conduct of Priests

The third most significant factor that helped to exacerbate the declining membership of the Catholic Church is the conduct of priests. A very high percentage of Disaffiliates and Catholics have complained about the behaviour of priests. The representatives from the focus group explained that the priests “act like your lords and masters.” They described their behaviour as

⁶⁷ “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14).

⁶⁸ “Faith comes through hearing” (Rom 10:17).

⁶⁹ According to Pope Francis, “in preaching at Mass, the homilist should show people how God's Word is being fulfilled in their midst, how it calls them to growth and conversion and how it prepares them to celebrate the Eucharist (Wooden par. 10). The department responsible for overseeing worship and the sacraments in the Vatican has released a “Homiletic Directory,” (a 150-page manual for preachers) which contains guidelines on how to preach appropriately.

“aloof,” “distant” and “completely disconnected from reality.” They pointed out that the priests are not setting good examples because they are “openly disobedient to the bishop,” “live upper to middle class styles,” “vilify the bishop and fellow priests in the media” and “are very political.”⁷⁰

Interviewees too shared a number complaints. The following are phrases taken from citations about the encounter with priests: “no compassion” “he kept shouting at me,” “he came to me with a very abrupt voice,” “he never gave me a chance to say anything.” Other phrases and clauses used to describe the behaviour of priests include “the level of arrogance,” “lost their humanness,” “power mongers more concerned about climbing the ladder than caring about the flock.” The clergy mix with “people whom they can manipulate” and “are content in maintaining an anti-intellectual environment where he is king.” The findings noted that they are more concerned with their “social life” and look out for “their friends” and “rich people.” Statements from other participant involves “never available,” the guys are not committed” and “the priesthood is no longer a vocation.”⁷¹

The above statements indicate that many participants felt angry, neglected and disrespected. They think that the priests have “forgotten their role” or do not know “what it means to be a priest.” The remarks of the participants highlight the lack of proper pastoral care which has left many feeling disillusioned with the Church. They seem to think that priests lack altruism which has led to an abuse of power and authority.

⁷⁰ See Chapter one, focus group quotation on pages 21-23

⁷¹ See Chapter one interview citations on pages 22-24.

These issues outlined above are well known to the universal Catholic Church. In recent times Pope Francis has referred to this issue as clericalism⁷² in the priesthood.⁷³ This was emphasised in a homily that he gave before the ordination of sixteen priests during a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on April 22, 2018.⁷⁴ It would seem that the participants are saying that the Church in St. Lucia needs to heed the advice of Pope Francis. (1Peter 5: 2-4).⁷⁵

External Factors

The Proselytising of Catholics by Protestant Churches

The research indicates that the proselytising of Catholics by Protestant churches is a major factor that led to the exodus from the Catholic Church.

Participants from the focus group boasted that they “inform and educate people about the Catholic Church” since they have been “misled by the Catholic Church.” Even the Catholics in the focus group express doubts about the Catholic doctrines” or “have second thoughts” about the Catholic belief system as a result proselytising by Protestants.

⁷² Clericalism can take on many forms, for example, a kind of dominance of the laity by the clergy outside their rightful spiritual authority (Pilon par. 2). Another form is the clericalism that assumes that the laity are simply incapable of really understanding the Church's teaching or are incapable of living up to them when the demands are high. This is the kind of deadly clericalism that Pope Paul VI hinted at ... (Pilon par.4)

⁷³ In stressing the error of clericalism, Pope Francis said that, “Clerics feel that they are superior, they are far from people; they have no time to hear the poor, the suffering, the prisoners and the sick. They have forgotten what it was to be a pastor and instead were intellectuals of religion, those who had power, who advanced catechesis of the people with a morality composed by their own intelligence and not by revelation” (Pope Francis par.2)

⁷⁴ Pope Francis told the Priest-candidates: “Always have before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to seek and save what was lost

⁷⁵ Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

The Disaffiliates among the interviewees shared their stories as to why they left the Catholic Church and point to reasons why many Catholics are leaving. They speak of the community spirit and closeness that they experience in these churches. They reminisce that people from these churches “visited me in the hospital,” and “treated me like family.” The interviewees also noted that the doctrines of the Catholic Church “are false” based on what they told by members of these churches. Even some Catholics left the Church to be able to get married to members of these Protestant churches since they consider to marry a Catholic person is to be unevenly yoked.⁷⁶

The Catholics interviewed believe that most Catholics are being “indoctrinated by Protestant churches when they attend their services.” They become convinced, for instance, that infant baptism is false and that to be truly baptised you have to be immersed in water. Many Catholics left the Church because they no longer believed in infant baptism and wanted to be baptised as adults. They noted also that some Catholics who did not believe in infant baptism but wanted to remain in the Catholic Church go over to these Protestant churches and get baptised by immersion. Many Catholics send their children to Sunday school and summer camps since similar activities are generally not offered by the Catholic Church and this proves to be a major highway leading from the Catholic Church to these Protestant churches.⁷⁷

One interviewee noted that the Protestant churches are “very aggressive when it comes to evangelization, especially the Seventh Day Adventist.” These Protestants use the media “to bash the Catholic Church. They criticize the Catholic Church about doctrines with which they disagree: “Sunday worship, the Virgin Mary, praying for the dead, the Pope, infant baptism, baptism by

⁷⁶ See citations from interviews on pages 26.

⁷⁷ See citations from interviews on pages 27-30.

pouring.” Their programs specifically “target(ing) the Catholic Church and sow(ing) doubts about the faith.”⁷⁸

The above shows that many Catholics are confused about their faith and are therefore easy prey for the Protestant churches. The interviewees felt that the Protestant churches are “full of conviction and zeal for souls more than the Catholic Church.”

The opposition from the Protestant churches to the Catholic Church comes out of the context in which they originated.⁷⁹ However, the Catholic Church has made overtures to these churches for dialogue and cooperation but have responded positively. It has been a struggle in the Archdiocese to keep the ecumenical dialogue going and Christian Unity week has not been observed in the Archdiocese of Castries for a number of years.⁸⁰

The Threat Posed by Secularity

The threat posed by secularity is a major challenge not only for the Catholic Church but also for Christianity as a whole. Focus group participants expressed that “many St. Lucians are turning away from God” and “making up their own truth.” A number of them stated that the country is not what it used to be and moaned: “the society has become very materialistic,” “people no longer

⁷⁸ See citations from interviews on pages 27-30.

⁷⁹ The Protestant (Evangelical and Free) churches grew out of a cultural tradition that reacted against the dogmatism or scholasticism of European state churches. They claim that what one believes in one’s heart is far more important than what a denomination says on paper and must be based on the Bible. They both inherit and cultivate a suspicion of Catholic doctrines (Campbell 188). Hence the stance over and against the Catholic and the other established churches is historical and combative.

⁸⁰ The churches come together for ecumenical services of national importance such as Independence Day celebrations, but do not meet on a regular basis. The St. Lucia Christian Council of churches comprises the Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist and Salvation Army. The Evangelicals and Pentecostals do not show interest any in the Council but will come together when called upon for matters which they consider of interest to them such as Abortion (Quinquennial Report 43).

look out for each other,” “the dollar is God” and “people are embracing secularity.” The Catholic Church has not responded to this secular invasion according to some participant and as a result people are losing their faith. “ The Church is not doing anything to combat this.”⁸¹

From the point of view of the interviewees some St. Lucians “have pushed God out of the equation completely,” following the lead of the secular First World countries. Inundated by secular liberal ideas they are “making up their own truth,” “adopting the lifestyles seen on television” and trumping for “gay marriage.” Among the interviewees there are those who believe that “religion is a fabrication” and spurned the idea of absolute truth. In general the interviewees opined that the values of secularism “have penetrated our society.” Others blamed the media for “promoting this kind of behavior” and advanced “that there is conspiracy going on with the media and television.” They believe that this dance with secularity has led to “many serious problems in the society” such as rampant immorality and “the breakdown in families.” What they consider to be more disconcerting is that all these things go “unchallenged in the Catholic Church” and therefore believe that the “Church is complicit.”⁸²

The issues with secularity is a worldwide phenomenon that has serious implications for Christianity because secularity it gives rise to relativism (materialism and individualism) which is in direct opposition to Christian philosophy and theology. According to the Archdiocese of

⁸¹ See quotations from focus groups on pages 30-31.

⁸² See citations from interviews on pages 31-34.

Castries, relativism⁸³ is prevalent in the St. Lucian society as everyone holds a personal view on everything (Quinquennial Report 50).⁸⁴

Secularity has apparently led to the loss faith and rejection of objective truth, moral values, and authoritative institutions. This evident in that many Catholics are no longer taking the sacraments seriously as indicated in their behaviour: “marrying on the beach,” “do not bother to let their children make Confirmation,” “hardly anyone goes to confession,” and no longer have faith in “the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.” The lack of response from the Church has caused some to become disheartened and believe that the Catholic Church in St. Lucia has fallen into complacency. For them the Church is out of touch with the needs of ordinary people and therefore, is irrelevant to life. ⁸⁵

Secularity is a complex phenomenon which touches the lives of everyone including religious people in various ways. Many of the interviewees have found the secular arguments and ideas more credible than the religious ones.⁸⁶ Those interviewees who are scientifically minded no longer see the Church as the domain all of truth and knowledge. However, for other interviewees secularity is seen as an enemy that connotes more darkness than light. Among the negatives of secularity are the loss of faith, breakdown of marriage, sexual immorality, weakening

⁸³ “Relativism is evident in the way people make choices and decisions. Objectivity and truth is being challenged by subjectivity and ambiguity. Moral conduct and behaviour is viewed as individualistic and subjective. People are making up their own standards and placing their own limits on moral conduct and values. This leads to intolerance and disagreements in discussions because everyone wants to have his or her own opinion on everything” (Quinquennial Report 50).

⁸⁴“Presently, there appears to be no fundamental consensus of what is true and false, what is good and evil, what is noble and what is base. Objective truth is being compromised by subjectivity and ambiguity” (Quinquennial Report 50).

⁸⁵ Many people have become “Anti- Institutionalists” because they feel the church is more concerned with itself than the needs of congregants (Chase 6).

⁸⁶ The perception of irrelevance is mostly expressed by persons in the category of the Generation Z, Generation X and Millennials who have been educated in the sciences and no longer believe that God exist. The perception of irrelevance by the unaffiliated is mostly expressed by persons in the category of the Generation Z and the Millennials who have been educated in the sciences and no longer believe that God exist. Generation Z and Millennials seem to be the least religious among the generations (Hackett at al. par. 5).

of Church authority, relativism.⁸⁷ It is also ignorance of the faith that has led many to embrace secularity.

It is already noted that secularity is a complex phenomenon. It also generates and promotes good ideas such as freedom, equality, human dignity, rationality, democracy, the movement beyond rational fear and superstition, the possibility of science, the opposite of fundamentalism and an opening of the human mind and spirit that is spoken of as an enlightenment ((Rolheiser 37). However, it promotes some ideas and values, as mentioned above, which are detrimental to human relationships and the society at large and need to be addressed by the Church in St. Lucia.⁸⁸ The St. Lucian Catholic has to follow the lead of the universal Catholic Church in taking up the challenges of secularity with the conviction that the Gospel is up to the task of engaging it.

⁸⁷ Here is a similar list by Rolheiser: the loss of faith, the weakening of divine and church authority, sexual irresponsibility, excessive individualism that undercuts community, the breakdown of family life, the depreciation of the church's contribution to civilization and quoting Pope Benedict, the dictatorship of relativism (37).

⁸⁸ The universal Catholic Church has recognized secularity as a non-negotiable given and therefore, has responded to its challenge through dialogue (*Gaudium et Spes* par. 5). According to Rolheiser, the Catholic Church should root its critique of secularity "in classical Catholic principle that the world is flawed but not corrupt (45). Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has encouraged dialogue between faith and reason,⁸⁸ and more recently John Paul II emphasized the need for this dialogue in his encyclical.⁸⁸ "The challenge for the Church is to become a gentler, more compassionate Church; forging new means of liberation and freedom for humanity, and to be experienced as a true life-giver" (Malzaire 13).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Catholic Church in St. Lucia, the Church needs to take a multifaceted approach in responding to the challenge of its declining membership. The Church must accept the truth that it has not responded to the real needs of its members and therefore contributed to its declining membership. Below are some recommendation that the Church should take into consideration as it responds to the challenges posed by the Protestant churches and secularity.

Firstly, the Church needs to ensure that the training of priests is well rounded and includes the proper integration of the four dimensions of priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral.⁸⁹

Secondly, the Church needs to restructure the catechetical programme paying attention to content, pedagogy, methodology and personnel.⁹⁰ The Church should also needs to place more emphasis on Bible studies. Counselling programs are also necessary to address personal and emotional needs.

Thirdly, Evangelization is mandate of Christ (Matt 28:19-20) and therefore the Church needs to take its evangelization ministry more seriously.⁹¹ There should be a re-evangelization of Catholics in the pews and of non-practising Catholics.

Fourthly, the Churches should take more seriously its role and mission to the society bearing in mind that the Gospels are up to the task.

⁸⁹ This is to ensure that “the clergy “develops a deep personal communion with God,” “become men who are well balanced,” and “achieve a competency in philosophy and philosophy” and “develops the skills and competencies that will empower them to be good shepherds after the heart of Christ.” (Seminar Handbook 7, 11, 13, 16)

⁹⁰ It is imperative that the Catholic Church encourage more lay people to study theology which will greatly enhance the catechetical training process. Members should also be empowered to take responsibility for their faith and avail to themselves of existing online Catholic faith programs.

⁹¹ Church documents have indicated that every baptised Catholic is a missionary disciple. Every missionary disciple should be trained in the art of evangelization.

Finally, the Church should put more emphasis on its ecumenical outreach to the Protestant churches aimed at promoting dialogue with them.⁹²

⁹² Reviving the yearly observance of Christian Unity Week might provide an opportunity for dialogue.

CONCLUSION

The literature review demonstrated that the declining membership is not unique to the Catholic Church in St. Lucia but is worldwide phenomenon affecting the worldwide Catholic community. The reasons given for the declining membership of the St Lucian Catholic Church are similar to those given in studies on the Catholic Church in the United States of America.

The declining membership in St. Lucia over the last six decades is due in part to the inadequate teaching of the faith, the poor quality of preaching and the irrelevance of the Church to life, the conduct of some priests and the secularity. The spiritual, intellectual, human, emotional and relational needs of the membership has been neglected and thus Catholics remain ignorant of the faith in terms of its theology and spirituality. Not formed in the faith Catholics fall prey to Protestant proselytising efforts and liberal secularity.

Although, the Church is aware of the decline in membership no action has been taken to address this situation. In light of the above, the Catholic Church is seen as being complacent and even complicit as Church leaders have remained silent in the face of the mass exodus from the Church. The Catholic Church needs to develop a multifaceted approach in ministering to the needs of its congregation since the vitality of the Catholic Church in St. Lucia depends on it.



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APPENDIX A

Table 1
Statistical representation of Participants; Disaffiliates and Catholics by Gender

Gender	Joined Protestant Church	The Unaffiliated	Practising Catholic	Non-Practising Catholic	Total
Female	15	4	31	4	54
Male	17	6	11	6	40
Total	32	10	42	10	94

The table above shows the number of persons by gender that are interviewed under the various categories of disaffiliates (42) and Catholics (52) by gender. The number of females (54) interviewed in the various categories is greater than the number of males (40) in all categories except in the category of the unaffiliated and non-practising Catholics. The number of females engaged (46)⁹³ in the practice of faith is much higher than the number engaged males (28). The number of disengaged males (12)⁹⁴ is greater than disengaged females (8).

Table 2
Demographics of Disaffiliates interviewed in this Study

⁹³ Joined Protestant Church and practising Catholics

⁹⁴ Unaffiliated and non-practising Catholics

DIC	G	PC/U	Age	Education	Occupation	Date	Time
Da	M	U	40	Masters	Administration	05/08/2019	7:35
Db	M	U	34	Bachelors	Teacher	05/08/2019	16:30
Dc	M	SDA	48	Certificate	Public Worker	06/08/2019	17:05
Dd	M	U	38	Bachelors	Hospitality	06/08/2019	11:00
De	F	B	36	Certificate	Clerk	07/08/2019	3:50
Df	F	GTN	22	Diploma	Nurse	07/08/2019	10:30
Dg	F	U	18	Degree	Administration	08/08/2019	12:30
Dh	F	U	19	A 'Level	Unemployed	09/08/2019	10:00
Di	M	SDA	67	Unspecified	Retired	11/08/2019	9:05
Di	F	GTN	42	Certificate	Civil Servant	11/08/2019	12:30
Dk	M	VP	45	Diploma	Electrician	12/08/2019	8:35
Dl	F	SDA	26	Bachelors	Accounts Clerk	12/08/2019	17:30
Dm	M	U	25	A 'level	Unemployed	14/08/2019	9:15
Dn	F	U	20	Diploma	Hospitality	14/08/2019	15:35
Do	M	U	29	Bachelors	Civil Servant	15/08/2019	16:30
Dp	F	SDA	50	Bachelors	Dietitan	15/08/2019	8:10
Dq	F	SDA	47	Certificate	Cashier	18/08/2019	9:00
Dr	M	CON	41	Unspecified	Plummer	18/08/2019	14:30
Ds	F	B	54	Diploma	Hair dresser	19/08/2019	10:15
Dt	F	UCG	72	Certificate	Retired	20/08/2019	11:25
Du	M	VP	53	Certificate	Farmer	20/08/2019	17:55
Dv	M	CON	70	Certificate	Retired	21/08/2019	9:20
Dw	F	U	50	Masters	Lab Technician	22/08/2019	7:05
Dx	F	U	28	Bachelors	Lawyer	22/08/2019	11:40
Dy	F	SDA	29	Diploma	Hospitality	23/08/2019	15:35
Dz	M	B	52	Certificate	Musician	23/08/2019	9:05
Daa	M	SDA	64	Certificate	Unspecified	26/08/2019	10:10
Dab	F	UCG	72	Certificate	Retired	27/08/2019	9:20
Dac	F	B	69	Unspecified	Retired	27/08/2019	14:05
Dad	M	SDA	70	Unspecified	Retired	28/08/2019	9:05

Key:

DIC - Disaffiliate Interviewee Code (Da-Dad)

G - Gender

PC – Protestant churches

U- Unaffiliated

B- Bethel Tabernacle

CON – Church of the Nazarene

GTN – God’s Trumpet to the Nations

SDA – Seventh Day Adventist

VP – Victory Pentecostal

UCG - Universal Church of God

Table 3

Demographics of Catholics interviewed in this Study

CIC	G	PC/NPC	Age	Education	Occupation	Date	Time
Ca	F	PC	74	Certificate	Retired	02/07/2019	9:05
Cb	M	PC	54	Masters	Banker	02/07/2019	17:20
Cc	M	NPC	26	Bachelors	Surveyor	03/07/2019	9:05
Cd	F	PC	25	Bachelors	Tourism	03/07/2019	13:30
Ce	F	NPC	58	Diploma	Real Estate	03/07/2019	18:15
Cf	F	NPC	30	Diploma	Nurse	04/07/2019	11:00
Cg	M	PC	17	-	Student	06/07/2019	15:30
Ch	F	PC	49	Diploma	Banker	06/07/2019	17:05
Ci	F	PC	81	Diploma	Retired	07/07/2019	10:00
Cj	F	PC	56	Cert	Retired	07/07/2019	16:00
Ck	M	PC	42	Bachelors	Teacher	08/07/2019	14:10
Cl	F	PC	78	Certificate	Retired	08/07/2019	18:05
Cm	M	NPC	17	-	Student	09/07/2019	16:00
Cn	F	NPC	40	Degree	Tourism	10/07/2019	7:05
Co	M	PC	34	Certificate	Public Servant	10/07/2019	16:30
Cp	F	PC	62	Unspecified	Retired	11/07/2019	11:00
Cq	F	PC	25	Diploma	Nurse	12/07/2019	15:30
Cr	F	PC	43	Diploma	Unspecified	14/07/2019	9:05
Cs	M	PC	58	Degree	Administration	14/07/2019	16:30
Ct	M	NPC	17	Certificate	Unemployed	16/07/2019	9:05
Cu	F	PC	82	Certificate	Retired	16/07/2019	14:20
Cv	M	NPC	35	CXC	Public Servant	17/07/2019	14:30
Cw	F	PC	79	Certificate	Retired	18/07/2019	11:00
Cx	M	PC	18	Certificate	Hospitality	18/07/2019	8:00
Cy	M	PC	42	Bachelors	Teacher	21/07/2019	17:05

Cz	F	PC	39	Bachelors	Accountant	21/07/2019	12:30
Caa	F	NPC	31	Certificate	Banker	22/07/2019	16:30
Cab	M	PC	19	A ' Level	Banker	22/07/2019	17:30
Cac	M	PC	57	Masters	Tourism	23/07/2019	11:15
Cad	M	NPC	22	A 'Level	Public Servant	24/07/2019	16:30
Cae	M	NPC	18	Certificate	Unemployed	24/07/2019	10:00
Caf	F	PC	17	-	Student	25/07/2019	16:00
Cag	F	PC	59	Certificate	Sales Clerk	25/07/2019	17:05
Cah	F	PC	61	Bachelors	Administration	26/07/2019	16:30

Key:

CIC - Catholic Interviewee Code (Ca – Cah)

G – Gender

P C- Practising Catholic

NPC – Non-Practising Catholic

Table 4
Statistical Representation of Focus Groups; Disaffiliates and Catholics by Gender

	Seventh Day Adventist Church	Pentecostal Church	Catholic Professionals	Catholic Youth Group	Catholic Charismatic Group	Total
Female	2	3	6	4	5	21
Male	4	3	-	2	1	9
Total	6	6	6	6	6	30

The table above shows the number of persons by gender for focus groups under the categories of disaffiliates (12) and Catholics (18). The number of females (21) interviewed are greater than the

number of males (9) for both disaffiliates and Catholics. However the number of males interviewed under disaffiliates (7) are greater than that of Catholics (3).

Table 5
Statistical Representation of Focus Groups; Disaffiliates and Catholics in accordance with
guidelines for Birth Years by Age and Generations

Age in 2019	Generations	Seventh Day Adventist Church	Pentecostal Church	Catholic Professionals Group	Catholic Youth Group	Catholic Charismatic Group
22 & under	Generation Z	-	-	-	2	-
23-38	Millennials/ Generation Y	2	2	-	4	-
39-54	Generation X	3	2	6	-	1
55-73	Baby Boomers	1	2	-	-	3
74-91	Silent Generation	-	-	-	-	2
Total		6	6	6	6	6

The table above shows the birth years by generations of disaffiliates and Catholics for Focus groups. The largest number of participants (12) interviewed fell under Generation X and the smallest number (2) under Silent Years. Two participants interviewed under the category for Generation Z are from the Catholic Youth group. The largest number of participants (4) interviewed under the category of Millennials are from the Catholic youth group and the highest numbers of participants (6) interviewed under the category of Generation X is from the Catholic

Professionals' group. The two participants interviewed under Silent years are from the Catholic Charismatic Group.

Table 6

Statistical representation of Interviewees; Disaffiliates and Catholics by Gender

Gender	Joined Protestant Church	The Unaffiliated	Practising Catholic	Non-Practising Catholic	Total
Female	10	4	16	4	34
Male	10	6	8	6	30
Total	20	10	24	10	64

The table above shows the number of persons interviewed under the various categories of disaffiliates (30)⁹⁵ and Catholics (34)⁹⁶ by gender. The number of females (34) interviewed in the various categories is greater than the number of males (30) in all categories except in the category of the unaffiliated and non-practising Catholics. The number of females engaged (26)⁹⁷ in the practice of faith is much higher than the number engaged males (18). The number of disengaged males (12)⁹⁸ is greater than disengaged females (8).

⁹⁵ Joined Protestant churches and the unaffiliated.

⁹⁶ Practising and non-practising Catholics.

⁹⁷ Joined Protestant Church and practising Catholics

⁹⁸ Unaffiliated and non-practising Catholics

Table 7

**Statistical representation of Interviewees in accordance with Guidelines for Birth Years by
Age and Generations**

Age in 2019	Generations	Joined Protestant Church	Unaffiliated	Practising Catholic	Non-Practising Catholic	Total
22 & under	Generation Z	-	3	4	4	11
23-38	Millennials /Generation Y	4	4	3	4	15
39-54	Generation X	10	3	6	2	23
55-73	Baby Boomers	6	-	6	-	14
74-91	Silent Generation	-	-	5	-	5
		20	10	24	10	64

The table above shows Disaffiliates and Catholics according to birth years by generations. The largest number of participants interviewed fell under Generation X (23) and the smallest number under the Silent Years (5). Of those who joined the Protestant Church, no participants were interviewed under the category for Generation Z and the Silent Years. Similarly, there are no participants interviewed under the category of Baby Boomers and the Silent Years for the

Unaffiliated. Likewise no participants are interviewed under the category of Silent Years for non-practising Catholics.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Disaffiliates

1. How old are you?
2. What is your level of education?
3. What is your occupation?
4. Have you joined a Protestant Church or are you unaffiliated?
5. Tell me why you have left the Catholic Church?
 - a. Was this a decision you made or something just happened?
6. Was the Catholic Church a major influence in your life?
7. What are your thoughts and feelings about the Catholic Church?
8. In your opinion, do you think that the Catholic is relevant in today's society?
9. Do you believe that you might return to the Church some time later?

Questionnaire for Catholics

1. How old are you?
2. What is your level of education?

3. What is your occupation?
4. Are you a practising or a non-practising Catholic?
5. In your opinion, why has the Catholic Church lost one-third of its members over the last six decades?
 - a. What you think are the main factors that have contributed to the declining membership of the Catholic Church?
6. Is the Catholic Church a major influence in your life?
7. What are your thoughts and feelings about the Catholic Church?
8. In your opinion, do you think that the Catholic is relevant in today's society?
9. Do you believe that you will remain in the Catholic Church?

APPENDIX C

Images and Photographs

Religious Groups	1960 %	1970 %	1980 %	1991 %	2001 %	2010 %
Roman Catholics	94.2	90.5	85.6	79.0	67.5	61.1
Protestants	2.1					26.5
Mainline Protestants	4.7					2.1
Non-Christian Religion	-					2.4
No Religion stated	0.8					7.9
Anglicans	3.8	3.4	2.7	2.5	2.0	1.6
Baptiste	0.3	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.9	2.1
Baha'i	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1
Brethren	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.1
Church of God	-	0.2	.07	1.0	1.4	1.5
Evangelicals	-	-	-	-	2.0	2.2
Hindu	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.3
Jehovah Witness	-	-	-	0.8	1.1	1.1
Methodist	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
Muslim	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.1
Pentecostal	-	0.5	1.3	3.0	5.6	8.8
Presbyterian	-	-	-	0.1	-	-
Rastafarian	-	-	-	0.3	2.1	2.0
Salvation Army	-	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.2
Seventh Day Adventist	1.8	2.4	4.3	6.5	8.4	10.4
None	-	-	0.7	1.3	4.5	5.9
Other	-	-	1.1	2.0	0.8	0.1

Not Stated	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.9
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Figure 5

Chart showing the St. Lucia Population & Housing Census 2010; Comparative Analysis of Roman Catholics and Protestants/Other Religions from 1960-2010.

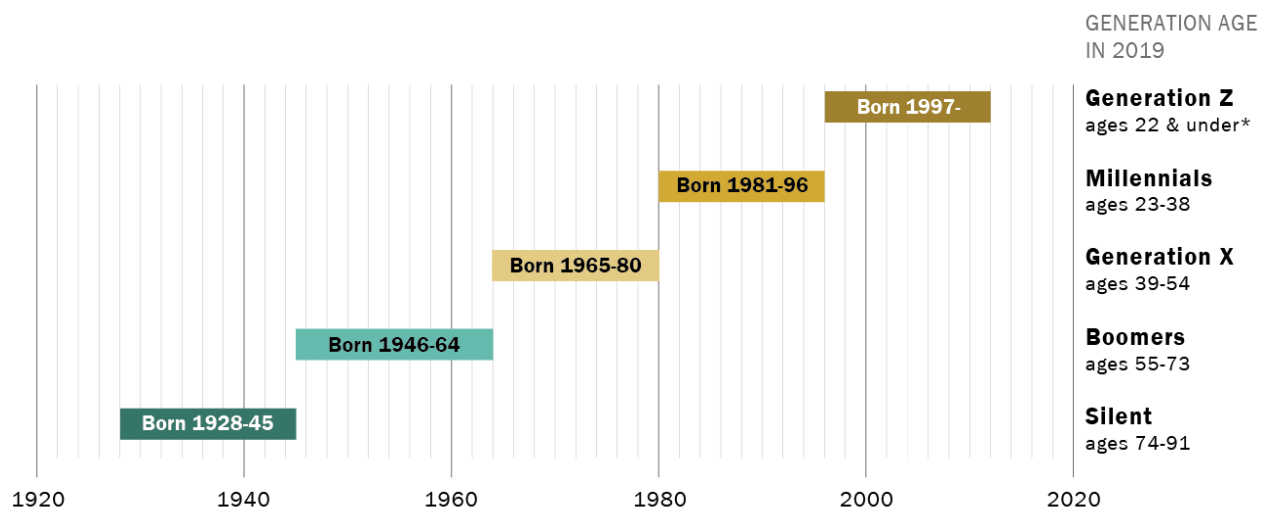
Source; www.stats.gov.lc/



Figure 6

Map of St. Lucia Showing the Catholic Church Parish Boundaries

Source; Quinquennial Report for the Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia 2009-2013.



*No chronological endpoint has been set for this group. Generation Z age ranges vary by analysis.

Figure 7

Chart showing Generations and Age Guidelines

Source; Pew Research Centre, www.pewresearch.org/generations-and-age/2020/01/06



Figure 8

The front view of the Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Castries (North)

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 26 December 2019



Figure 9

The front view of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Marchand, Castries (East)

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 22 December 2019



Figure 10

**The front view of the Catholic Church of the Assumption of
the Blessed Virgin Mary in Soufriere**

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 26 December 2019



Figure 11

Side view of the Catholic Church of St. Peter Dennery

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 29 December 2019



Figure 12

Front view of the Catholic Church of St. Lucy of in Micoud

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 29 December 2019



Figure 13

The front view of the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Vieux- Fort

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 22 December 2019



Figure 14

Front view of one Seventh Day Adventist Church in Castries

Source; <https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/seventh-day-adventistchurch-to-host-series-on-health-and-bible-principles/>



Figure 15

Front view of The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Voeux-Fort

Source;

<https://www.google.com/search?q=photo+of+the+Universal+Church+of+the+Kingdom+of+God+in+st.+lucia&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjN-KijndnoAhVyUN8KHcIdBdsQ7Al6BAgBEBk&biw=1337&bih=559#imgrc=620of3D8glgwt>



Figure 16

The Side view of the Church of the Nazarene in Castries

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 26 December 2019



Figure 17

Front view of the Bethel Tabernacle Church in Castries

Source; <https://www.blipfoto.com/entry/4258153>



Figure 18

Front view of a Pentecostal Church in Vieux- Fort

Source;

www.facebook.com/VictoryStLucia/photos/a.329808100994394/329808077661063/?type=3&theater



Figure 19

The front view of the God's Trumpet to the Nations Ministry Church

Source; Shirley Alexander, Photograph taken on 27 December 2019

