



Theological Principles and Practice in Teenage Pregnancy Mitigation: The Role of the Mothers' Union in the Anglican Church of Kenya's Maseno South Diocese

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Abstract: Teenage pregnancy remains a significant social, developmental, and pastoral challenge affecting adolescents in Kenya. The problem is particularly pronounced in Kisumu County and the wider Nyanza region, where high rates of teenage pregnancy continue to undermine educational attainment, family stability, and socioeconomic development. Within this context, the Mothers' Union (M.U.) of the Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K.), Diocese of Maseno South, has played an important role in addressing teenage pregnancy through faith-based and community-centered interventions. This study examined the theological principles guiding the Mothers' Union's approach to mitigating teenage pregnancy within the Diocese of Maseno South. The study adopted a descriptive case study design and employed a qualitative research approach. Purposive sampling was used to select participants comprising Mothers' Union diocesan and parish leaders, clergy, adolescent girls aged 13–15 years, and Mothers' Union members drawn from Diemo and Greater Kisumu parishes. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, and were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and perspectives relevant to the study objectives. The findings revealed that the Mothers' Union relies predominantly on biblical teachings emphasizing sexual purity and abstinence to shape adolescent sexual behaviour. The study contributes to scholarship on church-based responses to teenage pregnancy by integrating theological and gender perspectives and offers insights for developing more inclusive, contextually relevant, and gender-sensitive interventions within faith communities.

Keywords: Mothers' Union, Teenage pregnancy, Theological Principles, Adolescent sexuality, Church-based Programmes

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1. Introduction

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant global public health challenge despite notable declines in adolescent birth rates in many parts of the world (World Health Organization [WHO], 2025). Globally, an estimated 21 million girls aged 15–19 years become pregnant each year in low- and middle-income countries, with nearly

half of these pregnancies being unintended (WHO, 2025). Adolescent pregnancy is associated with heightened risks of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, including complications such as eclampsia, puerperal infections, preterm births, and low birth weight, making it a major concern for health systems worldwide (WHO, 2025). Beyond its health implications, teenage pregnancy contributes to

educational discontinuity, poverty, gender inequality, social exclusion, and reduced economic opportunities for young mothers and their children (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2025). The burden is particularly pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where structural factors such as child marriage, gender-based violence, limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, and inadequate educational opportunities continue to drive high rates of adolescent childbearing (WHO, 2025). According to UNFPA (2025), approximately 95% of adolescent births occur in low- and middle-income countries, and pregnancy-related complications remain among the leading causes of death among girls aged 15–19 years. Recognizing the persistence of this challenge, the WHO released updated global guidelines in 2025 emphasizing the need for comprehensive interventions that address the social, economic, cultural, and health determinants of adolescent pregnancy (WHO, 2025). Recent evidence further demonstrates that achieving meaningful reductions in teenage pregnancy requires integrated, multisectoral approaches involving governments, communities, schools, families, and faith-based organizations to promote adolescent well-being and reproductive health (UNFPA, 2026; WHO, 2025).

Teenage pregnancy remains a significant public health, social, and pastoral concern globally and in Kenya. Despite sustained efforts by governments, civil society organizations, and faith-based institutions, adolescent pregnancy continues to undermine educational attainment, psychosocial well-being, health outcomes, and socio-economic development among young people. In Kenya, approximately 15% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 have ever been pregnant, while more than 250,000 adolescent pregnancies are recorded annually in health facilities, highlighting the persistence of the problem despite ongoing interventions (UNFPA Kenya, 2024). Although recent national statistics indicate a gradual decline in adolescent pregnancies, the burden remains disproportionately high in several counties, including Kisumu, where structural inequalities, poverty, gender-based violence, and socio-cultural practices continue to expose adolescent girls to heightened vulnerability (UNFPA Kenya, 2024; UNICEF Kenya, 2024).

The Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K.) Diocese of Maseno South, situated within Kisumu County and encompassing rural, urban, and informal settlement contexts, reflects many of these challenges. Within the Diocese, teenage pregnancy is viewed not only as a social and developmental issue but also as a moral and theological concern. Existing evidence associates adolescent pregnancy in the region with poverty, early sexual debut, gender-based violence, limited access to reproductive health information, harmful cultural practices, and inadequate parental guidance (Were, 2007; UNFPA Kenya, 2024). Funeral discos (disco matangas), transactional sexual relationships, and early marriages have also been identified as contextual drivers that

increase adolescent girls' susceptibility to unintended pregnancies. Consequently, many girls experience school dropout, social exclusion, economic dependency, and diminished life opportunities.

While secular institutions primarily approach teenage pregnancy through public health, educational, and socio-economic interventions, faith-based organizations often frame the issue within moral, spiritual, and pastoral paradigms. This distinction is important because the underlying assumptions informing intervention strategies differ considerably. Government and non-governmental programmes emphasize comprehensive sexuality education, adolescent-friendly reproductive health services, contraceptive access, mentorship, and economic empowerment (Mbogo, 2021; Itonga et al., 2024). In contrast, many Christian denominations prioritize sexual abstinence, moral formation, and family values grounded in biblical teachings. Although both approaches seek to reduce adolescent pregnancy, tensions frequently emerge regarding sexuality education, contraception, and the role of the Church in addressing adolescent sexual health.

Within many African Christian contexts, discussions about sexuality remain constrained by theological interpretations that regard sex as sacred and therefore unsuitable for open public discourse. Such positions have generated criticism because they may inadvertently limit adolescents' access to accurate sexual and reproductive health information. Conversely, proponents argue that faith-based approaches provide moral guidance, character formation, and supportive community structures that secular interventions often overlook. The challenge, therefore, is not merely whether the Church should participate in teenage pregnancy prevention, but how theological principles can be translated into effective pastoral practices that address the complex realities facing contemporary adolescents.

Existing scholarship further reveals contradictions in ecclesiastical responses to teenage pregnancy. Chisale and Moyo (2016), for example, observed gendered disparities in church disciplinary practices within the Lutheran Church, where young women who became pregnant were visibly subjected to disciplinary measures while male counterparts often escaped similar scrutiny. Comparable concerns arise within the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, where teenage mothers undergo disciplinary processes before readmission to Holy Communion. While such measures may be intended to uphold moral standards, they may simultaneously reinforce stigma, exclusion, and gender inequities. This raises critical theological questions regarding justice, compassion, restoration, and the Church's pastoral responsibility toward vulnerable adolescents.

The consequences of adolescent pregnancy extend beyond immediate educational disruption. Studies demonstrate associations between unintended pregnancy

and depression, anxiety, stress, intimate partner violence, reduced social support, lower relationship satisfaction, and adverse maternal and child health outcomes (Cury et al., 2017). These multidimensional effects underscore the need for holistic interventions that address not only behavioural factors but also the social, economic, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of adolescent well-being. Consequently, scholars increasingly advocate for multi-sectoral and multi-agency approaches that integrate education, health services, family support, community engagement, and faith-based participation (Mbogo, 2021).

Within the Anglican Church, the Mothers' Union (M.U.) occupies a unique position in responding to these challenges. As a women-led organization committed to strengthening Christian family life, the M.U. engages in mentorship, counselling, health education, spiritual formation, women's empowerment, and community support programmes. These initiatives reflect theological principles emphasizing human dignity, responsible stewardship, compassion, and family well-being. However, despite the M.U.'s active involvement in youth and family programmes within the Diocese of Maseno South, teenage pregnancies remain prevalent. This apparent paradox raises important questions regarding the effectiveness, theological foundations, gender responsiveness, and practical implementation of M.U. interventions.

A review of existing literature reveals that most studies on teenage pregnancy in Kenya focus on prevalence, determinants, reproductive health interventions, and socio-economic consequences. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining how church-based women's organizations operationalize theological principles in mitigating teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, limited research has explored the intersection of theology, gender, and pastoral practice in shaping faith-based responses to adolescent pregnancy. This gap is particularly evident within Anglican contexts and remains largely unexplored in the Diocese of Maseno South.

Against this backdrop, this study examines the role of the Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancy within the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South. Specifically, it investigates how theological principles inform the organization's practices, evaluates the gender dimensions of its interventions, and assesses the extent to which its programmes contribute to teenage pregnancy mitigation. By integrating theological and gender perspectives, the study contributes to ongoing debates on the role of faith-based organizations in addressing contemporary social challenges and offers insights for developing more inclusive, effective, and contextually relevant pastoral responses to adolescent pregnancy.

1.2 Problem Statement

Teenage pregnancy remains a persistent challenge in Kenya despite numerous interventions by government agencies, civil society organizations, and faith-based institutions. While existing studies have extensively examined its prevalence, determinants, and socio-economic consequences, the pastoral and theological dimensions of the problem remain inadequately explored. This gap is significant because teenage pregnancy is not only a public health and developmental concern but also a pastoral challenge that affects the spiritual, emotional, and social well-being of adolescents within Christian communities.

In the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), teenage pregnancy raises complex questions regarding sexuality, morality, forgiveness, restoration, and gender justice. Adolescents who become pregnant often face multiple forms of vulnerability, including school dropout, social stigma, economic hardship, and strained family relationships. Within church settings, these challenges may be compounded by disciplinary practices that focus on moral accountability while unintentionally reinforcing exclusion and shame. In many Anglican congregations, pregnant adolescents are required to undergo processes of discipline and reconciliation before full participation in church sacramental life, whereas the male partners involved frequently remain unidentified or unaccountable. Such disparities raise important concerns about how theological principles are interpreted and applied in responding to adolescent pregnancy.

The ACK Diocese of Maseno South, located in Kisumu County, continues to experience high levels of teenage pregnancy driven by poverty, gender inequalities, cultural practices, limited sexual and reproductive health information, and changing social dynamics. In response, the Church has sought to address the problem through pastoral care, mentorship, counselling, moral instruction, and family-life programmes. Central to these efforts is the Mothers' Union (M.U.), a prominent women-led organization dedicated to promoting Christian family values, nurturing young people, and strengthening community support systems.

Despite the M.U.'s longstanding involvement in youth mentorship, counselling, empowerment, and family welfare initiatives, teenage pregnancy remains prevalent within communities served by the Diocese. This situation raises critical questions about the effectiveness of existing interventions and the extent to which they are informed by theological principles and gender-responsive pastoral practice. Although research has documented the role of faith-based organizations in social transformation, little empirical attention has been given to how the Mothers' Union specifically contributes to teenage pregnancy mitigation within the Anglican context. Consequently, the theological foundations,

practical strategies, and gender dimensions of its interventions remain insufficiently understood.

This study addresses this knowledge gap by examining how the Mothers' Union in the ACK Diocese of Maseno South employs theological principles and pastoral practices to mitigate teenage pregnancy. By exploring the intersection of theology, gender, and pastoral action, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of faith-based responses to adolescent pregnancy and provides evidence for strengthening church-led interventions that are both pastorally sensitive and socially transformative.

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the theological principles and gendered pastoral interpretations that inform the Mothers' Union's strategies and practices in mitigating teenage pregnancy within the Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K.) Diocese of Maseno South.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review of Literature

This study is anchored in the Afrocentric-Womanist paradigm and African Womanist Theology, both of which offer critical lenses for understanding the intersection of gender, culture, faith, and social vulnerability. The Afrocentric-Womanist paradigm emphasizes the lived experiences of African women, particularly their agency, resilience, and relational roles within family and community systems. Unlike Western feminist frameworks that often prioritize individual autonomy, Afrocentric-Womanism situates women within communal, spiritual, and cultural ecosystems, recognizing that solutions to social problems such as teenage pregnancy must be culturally grounded and communally driven (Kolawole, 2020; Oduyoye, 2022).

African Womanist Theology further deepens this perspective by integrating Christian theology with African cultural realities. It emphasizes restoration, healing, reconciliation, and the dignity of women and girls within faith communities. According to Oduyoye (2022), African Womanist Theology challenges patriarchal interpretations of scripture that marginalize women and instead promotes a theology of life that affirms justice, compassion, and inclusion. This is particularly relevant in addressing teenage pregnancy within church settings, where moral judgment often overrides pastoral care.

These theoretical frameworks directly underpin this study by shaping how teenage pregnancy is interpreted not merely as moral failure but as a complex outcome of socio-economic, cultural, and structural inequalities. They also provide a foundation for evaluating the

Mothers' Union (M.U.) as a gendered pastoral institution within the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK). The paradigms emphasize that effective mitigation strategies must combine theological principles with culturally responsive, gender-sensitive pastoral practice.

Importantly, Afrocentric-Womanist thought aligns with empirical findings that highlight the limitations of punitive or exclusionary church responses. Instead, it supports restorative and mentorship-based interventions—an approach reflected in Mothers' Union programmes such as counselling, family life education, and youth mentorship. Thus, the theory provides an interpretive framework through which empirical realities of teenage pregnancy interventions can be critically assessed.

2.2 Empirical Review of Literature

Globally, teenage pregnancy remains a persistent public health and socio-development challenge. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) estimates that millions of adolescents aged 15–19 years become pregnant annually, with the majority occurring in low- and middle-income countries. UNICEF (2024) further notes that adolescent pregnancy is strongly associated with poverty, gender inequality, child marriage, and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Empirical studies from high-income contexts show that comprehensive sexuality education, youth-friendly health services, and community-based mentorship significantly reduce adolescent pregnancy rates (Chandra-Mouli et al., 2020). However, critics argue that these interventions often neglect spiritual and cultural dimensions, which are critical in African contexts. This highlights a gap between biomedical approaches and faith-based pastoral responses.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent pregnancy is driven by intersecting structural vulnerabilities, including gender-based violence, cultural norms, and limited reproductive health education (UNFPA, 2025). Studies in countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, and South Africa show that teenage girls in rural and peri-urban settings are disproportionately affected due to poverty and unequal gender relations (Mkhwanazi, 2021; Ngome & Odimegwu, 2022).

Faith-based institutions play a significant role in shaping community responses. However, research shows inconsistency in how churches address teenage pregnancy. While some churches provide mentorship and counselling, others adopt punitive disciplinary approaches that reinforce stigma (Chisale & Moyo, 2016). This duality reveals a tension between theological morality and pastoral care.

African scholarship further critiques the lack of gender-sensitive theology in many church responses. For example, Kalu (2021) observes that adolescent girls are often subjected to moral discipline, while male counterparts remain socially invisible in church-based responses. This reinforces gender inequality and contradicts principles of restorative theology emphasized in African Womanist thought.

In Kenya, teenage pregnancy remains a major policy and pastoral concern. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2022), approximately 15% of adolescents aged 15–19 have begun childbearing, with higher prevalence in counties such as Kisumu. Studies attribute this to poverty, transactional sex, early marriage, and limited access to adolescent-friendly reproductive health services (Were, 2007; Mbogo, 2021).

Within the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), empirical evidence shows that church-based interventions include mentorship programmes, youth rallies, counselling, and moral instruction. The Mothers' Union is particularly active in family life education and pastoral care initiatives aimed at strengthening Christian values. However, studies by Itonga et al. (2024) indicate that despite these interventions, teenage pregnancy persists, suggesting limited effectiveness or gaps in contextual adaptation.

A critical gap identified in Kenyan literature is the lack of studies examining how theological principles directly inform Mothers' Union practices in mitigating teenage pregnancy. Most studies focus on health or socio-economic dimensions, leaving out theological, gendered, and ecclesial interpretations of intervention strategies. Furthermore, there is limited analysis of how church disciplinary practices may unintentionally reinforce stigma and gender inequality within ACK congregations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive case study design that used a qualitative method. The qualitative design was significant because the study sought to obtain in-depth insights into the experiences, perceptions, and strategies of the Mothers' Union in mitigating teenage pregnancies. The case study approach enabled an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon within its real-life context, specifically in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South, which covered both rural and informal communities in Kisumu County, with selected parishes such as Diemo and Greater Kisumu Parishes. The area

was identified due to reported cases of teenage pregnancies (Atieno, *Kisumu's Multi-sectoral Approach to Early Teenage Pregnancies*, 2021) and active Mothers' Union involvement.

3.3 Target Population

The target population included individuals and groups directly involved in or affected by the issue of teenage pregnancies and the Mothers' Union's interventions. These included Mothers' Union leaders from Diemo and Greater Kisumu Parishes, Diocesan leaders, clergy, members of the M.U. who were also mothers, and teenage girls, both those who had experienced adolescent pregnancy and those who were at risk.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study employed a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling identified participants with direct experience of teenage pregnancies, those involved in programs and structures for mitigating adolescent pregnancies, and individuals knowledgeable about the Union's interventions for teenage pregnancies in the Diocese. Sampling was done with selected participants from Diemo and Greater Kisumu Parishes.

The sample size included five (5) M.U. leaders from the Diocesan M.U. office, five (5) M.U. members from the two parishes (Diemo and Greater Kisumu), ten to fifteen (10–15) M.U. members from the two parishes, five (5) teenagers from the two parishes, and four (4) clergy (two male and two female). This gave a total of fifty-nine (59) participants. However, this number varied depending on data saturation from the interviews.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The study adopted semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with M.U. leaders from the two parishes, clergy, and teenagers. This method allowed flexibility in probing and clarifying responses while ensuring that all key topics were covered.

Focus group discussions were held with M.U. members and teenage girls. These enabled participants to share experiences and perspectives on addressing adolescent pregnancies within their communities.

Qualitative primary data were analyzed thematically. The technique was beneficial in identifying intentions and focusing on communication trends. Transcribed interviews and FGDs were coded to identify patterns and themes related to the study objectives. The analysis was guided by the African Women's Cultural Hermeneutics framework and the Afro-centric Womanist paradigm. NVivo software was used to facilitate coding and retrieval of themes.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the study's findings, based on data collected from Mothers' Union leaders, clergy, and adolescents in the A.C.K. Diocese of Maseno South. The study's objectives and research questions guide the

analysis, which integrates perspectives from Afrocentric womanist theory and African Women's Theology. Data were presented thematically, supported with quotations from interviews and focus group discussions, as well as descriptive statistics where applicable. The study relied on primary data, which were collected through semi-structured interviews.

Table 1: The theological principles in mitigating teenage pregnancy in the ACK Diocese of Maseno South

NO.	Theological/biblical principles	Number of respondents out of 59	Percentage of respondents
1	Theology of sexual purity and moral responsibility	28	47%
2	Theology of Christian Family Life	10	17%
3	Theology of Human Dignity and Spiritual Formation	10	17%
4	Theology of mission and social responsibility	11	19%
TOTAL		59	100

Source: (Field data, 2025)

4.2 Theology of Sexual Purity and Moral Responsibility

The findings of this study indicate that the Mothers' Union (M.U.) within the Anglican Church, Diocese of Maseno South, strongly promotes sexual abstinence as the most reliable means of preventing unintended pregnancies among young people. More than half of the respondents (n = 30, 51%) reported that M.U. teachings are grounded in biblical principles of sexual purity, chastity, and abstinence, drawing on scriptural passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 6:18. One respondent affirmed this position by stating, "The body is the temple of God; therefore, no sexual immorality is allowed. It is condemned." These teachings are primarily directed toward adolescents, particularly girls, with the intention of guiding them toward morally upright and godly living while reducing the risk of early pregnancy.

The findings further suggest that the M.U. frames abstinence as a central marker of Christian morality and virtuous character. This emphasis reflects broader church teachings that advocate sexual abstinence for all unmarried individuals based on biblical principles. However, previous studies have observed that although such teachings are officially directed at all unmarried persons, they tend to disproportionately focus on adolescent girls and single adult women, thereby shaping and regulating female sexuality (Chisale & Moyo, 2016, p. 97). In this regard, the discourse of virginity and sexual purity may function not only as a moral framework but also as a mechanism for controlling women's sexual behaviour.

Overall, the findings demonstrate the M.U.'s strong reliance on biblical teachings of purity and abstinence in its efforts to mitigate teenage pregnancy and influence adolescents' sexual conduct. Nevertheless, these teachings are often presented in exclusive and punitive ways that emphasize moral conformity while offering

limited pathways for compassion, restoration, and social reintegration for adolescent mothers who have already experienced pregnancy.

4.2 Theology of Christian Family Life

From the responses, 10 participants (17%) confirmed that M.U. is deeply rooted in the Anglican teachings concerning family life and marriage. When asked about their role in ensuring girls are taught moral responsibility, the MU chairladies and members responded that "we are guided by two main objectives that encourages parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church". This theological emphasis is based on the MU objectives, which encourage mothers to promote conditions in society favorable to stable family life and the protection of children, and to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church. (Mothers Union, n.d.). Parents, through MU, are encouraged to discuss sexuality openly with their adolescents and to guide morally and monitor their social life. During their meetings, mothers are given skills in Christian parenting, mentorship, counselling, and communication strategies to guide teenagers responsibly. The bible text on Proverbs 22: 6 "train up a child in the way he should go" is commonly used in parenting. Such skills enable mothers to guide the adolescents in making right choices in life, hence mitigating teenage pregnancies.

4.3 Theology of Human dignity and spiritual formation

From the findings, adolescents are taught godly values that shape their character, starting in Sunday school, youth fellowships, and Bible study. Prayer meetings, revival fellowships, and intercessory gatherings are organized regularly within the Diocese of Maseno South to pray for families, schools, and young people. Teenage pregnancy is therefore approached not merely as a social issue but also as a spiritual challenge requiring divine guidance and transformation. During the interview, one of the teenagers said "We are always taught that our

bodies are the temple of God, and that we should respect our bodies”. Another said, “We are told during youth rallies that we should not accept to use by men as sex objects, we are special before God”. The MU teaches girls to respect their bodies and not to engage in irresponsible sexual activities. Although the Bible narrates the significance of virginity, its emphasis is on women and girls, not men and boys. Christian education is meant to regulate and prevent young people from engaging in early sexual activity that can lead to pregnancy

4.4 Theology of Mission and Social Responsibility

The Mothers’ Union as a Christian organization, understands that its role extends into the community, as emphasized in the organization’s aim: to demonstrate the Christian faith in action by the transformation of communities worldwide through the nurture of the family in its many forms (Mothers Union, n.d.). This role is significant in social transformation and community development. Anglican theology emphasizes holistic mission involving evangelism, education, social justice, and human empowerment. The MU Chairladies responded that they sometimes carry out advocacy campaigns on gender violence, violation of girl-child rights, and other societal practices that dehumanize women. The theology of social responsibility recognizes that poverty, unemployment, family instability, and lack of education contribute significantly to teenage pregnancies. Consequently, the Mothers’ Union combines spiritual ministry with social support aimed at improving family and community wellbeing. In carrying out its mission and social responsibility. The MU annual review report of 2024 emphasized that each year, the Mothers’ Union touches the lives of millions across the globe. We do this through our unique, faith-based and community-led approach to tackling poverty, injustice and violence. We understand that these challenges are deeply interconnected. They are often rooted in broken relationships: with ourselves, with others, with God and with the environment. As such, our response is holistic, while confronting the systemic causes and consequences of marginalisation. (Mothers Union Annual Review - 2024, n.d.). This work is geared towards ensuring gender equality, women’s rights and girls’ rights are protected and no woman or child is left behind. Hence MU approach in mitigating teenage pregnancies.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The study examined the theological and biblical principles guiding the Mothers’ Union (M.U.) in mitigating teenage pregnancy within the Anglican Church of Kenya (A.C.K.) Diocese of Maseno South. It established that teenage pregnancy is not only a social

and public health concern but also a deeply pastoral and theological issue within the church context. The Mothers’ Union plays a central role in responding to this challenge through faith-based interventions grounded in Christian teachings that emphasize human dignity, sexual purity, moral responsibility, compassion, Christian parenting, and restoration of those affected.

Biblical texts such as 1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 and 1 Corinthians 6:18, which emphasize holiness, chastity, and abstinence, strongly inform the theological orientation of M.U. programmes. These scriptural foundations shape mentorship initiatives, counselling services, family life education, and youth engagement activities aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy and supporting affected adolescents. The study further established that M.U. interventions extend beyond moral instruction to include practical social and pastoral actions that address both behavioural and structural drivers of teenage pregnancy, including poverty, weak parental guidance, and cultural practices.

However, while these interventions contribute meaningfully to spiritual formation, family stability, and the restoration of teenage mothers within the church, teenage pregnancy remains prevalent within the Diocese. This persistence suggests a possible gap between theological intention and practical effectiveness, particularly in relation to gender responsiveness, contextual adaptation, and engagement with contemporary adolescent realities.

Overall, the study concludes that church-based organizations such as the Mothers’ Union remain critical actors in addressing teenage pregnancy in Kenya. Nevertheless, their effectiveness depends on strengthening theological grounding, enhancing pastoral care systems, and adopting more holistic, youth-friendly, and gender-sensitive approaches in collaboration with other stakeholders.

5.2 Recommendations

- 1. Strengthening Theological Formation by ACK Leadership**
The Anglican Church of Kenya (Diocese of Maseno South) should strengthen continuous theological education for clergy and Mothers’ Union leaders through structured training programs and refresher courses. This should be done by integrating contextual theology, African Womanist Theology, and pastoral care modules into diocesan training institutions to ensure that teachings on sexuality are both biblically grounded and pastorally sensitive.
- 2. Enhancing Mothers’ Union Mentorship Programs**
The Mothers’ Union should redesign and expand mentorship programmes for adolescents by incorporating trained counsellors, peer mentors, and recovered teenage mothers. This can be achieved

through parish-based structured mentorship groups that meet regularly to provide guidance, life skills, and moral formation in a safe and confidential environment.

3. **Integrating Faith-Based and Health Services Collaboration**

The Diocese of Maseno South should establish formal partnerships between parishes, local health facilities, and government reproductive health programmes. This should involve coordinated referral systems where churches provide moral and spiritual support while health professionals deliver accurate sexual and reproductive health education.

4. **Promoting Gender-Responsive Pastoral Practices**

Church leadership should review disciplinary procedures applied to teenage mothers to ensure fairness and gender equity. This can be done by developing diocesan pastoral guidelines that emphasize restoration rather than punishment, ensuring that both male and female contributors to teenage pregnancy are addressed equally within church discipline frameworks.

5. **Strengthening Family Life Education at Parish Level**

Mothers' Union and parish clergy should implement structured family life education programmes targeting both parents and adolescents. This should be done through regular parish seminars, youth rallies, and parenting workshops aimed at improving communication on sexuality, values, and responsible behaviour.

6. **Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Adolescents**

The Diocese, in collaboration with NGOs and government agencies, should establish youth empowerment initiatives such as vocational training, small grants, and entrepreneurship support. This should target vulnerable adolescent girls to reduce economic dependency that often leads to transactional sexual relationships.

7. **Contextualizing Biblical Teaching on Sexuality**

The Mothers' Union should contextualize biblical teachings on purity and abstinence in a way that acknowledges contemporary adolescent realities. This should be achieved through sermon guides, Bible study materials, and youth curricula that balance moral instruction with compassion, dialogue, and practical guidance.

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