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Conflict Resolution Strategies among the Clergy

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Abstract:
Conflict resolution as a field of study is relatively young. The church of Christ as an institution has an ecclesiastical mandate to lead Christians in resolving their conflicts in godly ways without engaging in adversarial ways that leave disputants ripped apart. The data revealed that an overwhelming majority of the participants were part of conflict resolution process that was family-related. The findings also, indicated that participants' experience included resolving church leadership-related, and restoration of peace in the larger community. All participants shared numerous approaches they normally use in their conflict resolution practices. These mainly included; case background, mediation, prayer, referral, use of pastoral, counseling skills, keen listening, consulting widely, seeing disputants separately, and integration of disciplines among others. In addition, the data revealed that all participants had conflict resolution experience and used a wide range of approaches. Although all participants were part of successful conflict resolution processes, they also reported that not all conflict resolution processes succeeded.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, strategies, and clergy

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Conflict is a universal phenomenon that every human being experience in life. It occurs at different levels including the intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic, intra-national, intra-religion, inter-religion, intra-races, inter-races, and even at international level (Moore 1986; Deutsch 1973; Folger et al. 1995; Apollos 2008). Conflict takes on different dimensions and can move from constructive to destructive and from mild to violent if unchecked. The church of Christ as an institution has an ecclesiastical mandate to lead Christians in resolving their conflicts in godly ways without engaging in adversarial ways that leave disputants ripped apart. The church must be the salt and the light to the world, not only by the way she resolves conflict among her members, but also by the way she promotes peace-building in the larger community. For this to happen, theological educators and pastors must be on the cutting edge in conflict resolution and peace-building.

Many theories are being developed to explain and address the universal phenomenon of conflict which is a global problem that is experienced by all human beings in every social context regardless of their social status. Conflict resolution as a field of study is relatively young (Deutsch 2000). This does not imply that conflict is a new phenomenon because it has been around as long as human beings have existed (Moore 1986). The precedent literature will cover the following areas: the development of conflict resolution theories, the contrast between the non-Western and the Western approaches to conflict resolution, contextualization with special focus on conflict resolution in Kenya, theological and biblical foundations for conflict resolution, and the role of active listening in conflict resolution. Pastors have a great influence on the people they serve because they (pastors) are privileged to meet their members at least once a week (Osore 2008), that is at least fifty-two weeks in a year.

In the Africa Inland Church (AIC), a pastor is a recognized leader not only by the church they are pastoring, but even recognized in the community. In fact, some of the pastors are invited to lead in prayer at events led by the head of the State. Furthermore, according to the AIC Kenya constitution, the Local Church Pastor is the chairman of the Local Church Council (LCC), which is a supreme administrative organ of the local church. This reflects some weaknesses on the side of the institutions that train pastors for pastoral ministry. As administrators, pastors should be trained on how to resolve leadership conflicts. For in most cases they are left unequipped and vulnerable to leadership conflicts which normally happen and affect their ministry adversely.

1.2. Historical Development of Conflict Resolution Theories

Most of the conflict resolution theories developed after War World two (Deutsch2006). The two (theories will be examined: cooperative and competition theory, Thomas-Kilmanmodel, principled negotiation, human needs theory, and conflict transformation and/or peace-building theory. Although there are other conflict resolution theories, these five are the primary ones in the discipline of conflict resolution. In addition, the study on these five has shown that they can work in many different contexts.

1.2.1. Competitive and Cooperative Theory

Morton Deutsch is one of the earliest theorists to develop a conflict resolution theory. He developed the 'cooperation and competition theory' (Deutsch 1949; 1949b; 1973; 1985; 2000; 2006). According to Deutsch, 'almost all conflicts are mixed motive, containing elements of both cooperation and competition' (2006, 24). His theory is based on two pillars: first, the 'type of interdependence among goals' of the people involved in a given situation and second, the 'type of action taken' by the parties involved (Deutsch 2000, 22). Deutsch believes that there are two types of goal interdependence: positive or negative. Simply put, the processes in either cooperation or competition determine the outcome in conflict resolution. He further observes that competition can either be 'destructive or constructive.' Deutsch adds that the major difference between 'constructive and destructive' conflict resolution process is that in the former, the disputants seek to resolve their conflicts objectively and the end result usually is a win-win situation. On the other hand, in the destructive or competitive process, usually there is a 'loser and a winner' (Deutsch 2006, 30).

Cooperative and competitive theory suggests that goals of the parties involved in a conflict are so linked and interdependent. In a cooperative situation both parties engage the conflict and both emerge winners. Conversely, in situations of competition disputants engage the conflict process but with an attitude that one wins at the 'expense of the other' (Johnson and Johnson 1989, 78). In such a case, the outcome is clear there is a winner and a loser. The correlation between the two is that in a cooperative situation, when one party increases their chances for the attainment of goals, they also increase the chances for the other party to attain their goals too. Both parties 'swim or sink together.' The opposite is also true of destructive competitive situation, one party must 'sink' for the other to 'swim' (Deutsch 1973; 2000; 2006).

1.2.2. Thomas-Kilman Theory

The Thomas-Kilman Instrument (TKI) model is one of the most dominant theories in the field of conflict resolution. His theory gained prominence in the early 1970's (Thomas-Kilman 1974). Thomas-Kilman theory states that both individuals and groups respond to conflicts with either assertiveness or cooperativeness (Thomas-Kilman 1974). TKI is designed to measure the behavior of a person in a 'conflict situation' and how one responds to those situations. 'Conflict situations' are those in which the concerns of two parties appear to be 'incompatible' (Thomas-Kilman 1974, 7). TKI states that people respond to conflict situations in one of the following five different modes: (1) competing, (2) accommodating, (3) avoiding, (4) collaborating, and (5) compromising.

1.2.2.1. Competing Mode

Thomas-Kilman describes this mode as both 'assertive and uncooperative—a power-oriented mode' (1974, 8). The 'competing' mode is a win-lose situation in which the involved parties struggle to win in a dispute at the expense of the other (Thomas-Kilman 1974; Elmer 1996; Jones 2008; Kraybill 2000; Schaubhut 2007). It is also called the forcing or dominant style (Folger, et al., 1997, 32). Disputants who prefer this style of conflict resolution normally place high value on their personal goals and have low concern for relationships (Elmer 1996; Jones 2008; Apollos 2008). This mode is very similar to Deutsch's 'competitive-destructive processes'in which one party wins while the other one loses.

1.2.2.2. Accommodating Mode

Kilman describes this mode as both 'unassertive and cooperative' (1974, 8). He sees it as the complete opposite of the competing mode.[1] Some scholars call it 'giving in,' yielding' or having 'your way' mode (Elmer 1996; Kraybill 2000). It is also referred to as 'appeasement or smoothing' (Folger et al., 1997). The accommodating mode is characterized by one person sacrificing his/her position to the other person's position or interests. Kilman concludes that accommodating might take the form of 'selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to, or yielding to another's point of view' (1974, 8). It is presumed that accommodating works well in preserving relationships. However, Jones cautions that accommodating can be 'counterproductive' because it can be interpreted as weakness, especially when used repeatedly (2008, 192). Accommodating can be summarized as a lose-win situation mode.

1.2.2.3. Avoiding Mode

The avoiding mode occurs when the avoiding person simply does not deal with the conflict (Kilman 1974). This mode is described as both 'unassertive and uncooperative' (Kilman 1974; Folger, et al., 1997). Folger and associates describe disputants in this situation as 'apathetic, isolated, or evasive' (1997, 32). They refer to this style as flight. Avoidance is similar in some ways to Deutsch's theory where disputants engage in destructive, competitive processes, whose outcome isalose-lose situation.

1.2.2.4. Compromising Mode

TKI states that the compromising mode is moderate in both 'assertiveness and cooperativeness.' The involved parties in a conflict usually see the need to cede a little and get a little of their positions (Elmer 1996, Jones 2008). It is popularly known as 'horse trading' (Folger et al., 1997, 32). More often than not, the compromising mode 'incorporates flexibility' (Jones 2008, 194). The parties involved agree to lose a little in the stake and also gain a little. Again, this mode is similar to cooperative-constructive or problem-solving as noted in Deutsch's theory.

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[1]http:www.kilmann.com/conflict.html accessed 04/27/2009

1.2.2.5. Collaborating Mode

The collaborating mode is both 'assertive and cooperative' in that it 'involves an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies their concerns. It means 'digging into an issue to pinpoint the underlying needs and wants of the two individuals.'[2] The collaborating mode is also referred to as 'care fronting,' or 'our way' (Elmer 1996; Kraybill 2000). It is also referred to as 'interactive and problem-solving style' (Folger, et al., 1997). The collaborating mode is defined by its concern for both 'self and other.' Jones further observes that this mode works well for 'generating quality solutions for important issues and relationships' (2008, 194). In this orientation, the involved parties emerge winners. It is a win-win situation. It resonates with Deutsch's theory of constructive-cooperative processes in which both disputants emerge winners. Other researchers and scholars in the field of conflict resolution expanded Thomas-Kilman's five style model by adding three more components, thus making it an eight-style conflict model (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel 2001; Ting Toomey and Yee-Jung 2002; Jones 2008). According to Ting-Toomey and associates, the rationale for this expansion was to 'account for the potentially rich areas of cultural and ethnic differences in conflict' ((2001, 46-47). The additional components include: (1) emotional expansion, (2) third party help, and (3) passive aggression (Ting-Toomey et al. 2001, 47). The expanded model provides significant insights to conflict resolution practitioners. To this end, Jones asserts 'collectivistic cultures are likely to use avoidance, accommodation, compromising, collaboration, and third-party help' (2008, 196). Conversely, individualistic cultures are inclined to 'use competition ... emotional expression and passive aggression' (Jones 2008, 196).

1.2.3. Human Needs Theory

The early work of a psychologist Abraham Maslow and John Burton, conflict resolution scholar, will be examined. Maslow's human needs theory states that a human being is a 'wanting animal' and restless until the most urgent needs are met (Maslow 1943, 87). Maslow refers to these needs as motives and puts them in hierarchical order. He suggests that, 'human motives are hierarchically structured, and their arrangement within the hierarchy is defined by their respective levels of urgency/intensity priority... [or] prepotent'(Maslow 1999, xiii). The term prepotent in this context is used to imply that the current need rests on the gratification of the previous need. Maslow's theory suggests that the most 'prepotent' need/motive takes the center stage until it is met; the other needs are put at the periphery (Maslow 1954; Oy Mooi 1990; Maslow 1999). Once the most prepotent motive/need is met, other needs show up. In the hierarchy of needs/motives, Maslow lists five types of needs starting with the most prepotent to the least prepotent or what he calls 'higher human motives' and lower human motives. Maslow argues that although human needs occur in hierarchy, they are interrelated. '...No need or drive can be treated as if it were isolated or discrete; every drive is related to the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of other drives' (Maslow 1943, 370). Higher human motives take precedence over other needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs occurs in five levels: physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and the self-actualization needs (Laderer 1980, 6; Maslow 1954, 80-92).

According to Maslow physiological needs include water, food, oxygen and rest. Safety needs are comprised of physical protection, and economic security. Belongingness needs include; the desire to love and to be loved, the need to accept and be accepted by others, or the need to belong to a certain community. The need for esteem focuses on the self. The individual person desires self-confidence and worthiness. In the apex of the need's hierarchy (fig 1 below), we find the need for self-actualization. At this level, the individual human being seeks to maximize and utilize his/her potential to become what he or she was created to be (Maslow 1954). Later Maslow added two more categories, thus making seven levels of human needs (Burton 1990). The sixth level includes aesthetic needs—the craving for beauty, symmetry and order. The seventh level of needs include the desire to know, to understand, and to satisfy one's curiosity (Fisher 1990, 91).

Burton adds to the work of Maslow but denies that human needs are hierarchically placed. Burton and other human needs theorists argue that 'needs do not have a hierarchical order. Rather, needs are sought simultaneously in an intense and relentless manner' (Marker 2003).Burton's human needs list is comprised of the following nine components:1) need for consistent response—it is only by consistence response that there can be learning and consistency in behavior, 2) need for stimulation—the actor's input in learning. For example, learning language, customs and skills, 3) security— without which, there is withdrawal from both response and stimulus, 4) recognition—recognition provides encouragement factor in learning, whereas responses can be positive or negative, 5) need for distributive justice—an appropriate response or reward in terms of experience and expectations, 6) need to appear rational and develop rationality—it is a function of the behavior of others. Inconsistent responses bring deviant and inconsistent behavior, 7) need for meaningful responses—unless responses are meaningful to the actor, it is interpreted as inconsistent response. This calls for clear communication. 8) need for a sense of control—it is the defense mechanism: if other needs are fully met, there is no need to control. But since the other needs are never fully met, the ability to control rather than to react to the social environment is consequently a need. 9) Need to defend one's role—the individual attempts to secure a role and to preserve a role by which he acquires and maintains his recognition, security and stimulation (Burton 1979, 72-73).

Generally, violation or denial of these needs will most likely cause conflict. Roy, a needs theorist identifies three assumptions that would normally trigger conflict. First, if basic human needs are fulfilled, conflict could be checked at the source. Second, once needs are made the basis of analysis and planning, conflict will be easier to identify and handle. Lastly, conflict arises because certain needs felt by a particular group have not been recognized—or, if recognized, have been frustrated, or not satisfactorily fulfilled (1990, 126-127).Therefore, 'successful and final resolution of any conflict must involve those needs of the parties involved that are being frustrated by the existing conditions and relationships' (Mitchell 1990, 152-153). While Maslow argues that human needs are hierarchical, conflicts resolution human needs theorists

disagree with him. Instead, they believe that the concept of hierarchy in human needs was misplaced. For example, Fisher cites Galtung who argues that hierarchical human needs as presented by Maslow was not fitting because 'it limits the range of theoretical possibilities and could be used to legitimize the superior position of intellectuals or ascetics who specialize in dealing with the higher non-material needs' (Fisher 1990, 91). One major conclusion by the human needs theorists is that a protracted and intractable conflict and psychological ailments occur whenever the human being's basic needs are violated (Maslow 1954, 80-92). This is because 'human needs are ontological and essential elements for our subsistence, even though differences in culture and education might lead to diverse interpretations and salience' (Jeong 2008, 51).

1.2.4. Conflict Transformation Theory
        In the last few decades, conflict resolution or conflict management dominated literature in the discipline of conflict studies. But in 1980s Lederach, a conflict resolution theorist, and a practitioner was forced to rethink and come up with a term that would capture the most fitting concept of conflict and its impacts on socio-anthropological and political dimensions. Lederach crafted and brought to use the term 'conflict transformation.' What does this mean? Conflict transformation is the ability 'to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships' (Lederach 2003, 14). This was fully realized in the 1990s when he founded the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University (Lederach 2003, 3-4).

2. Literature Review
        A study conducted on cooperation and competition theory revealed that 'constructive processes of conflict resolution are similar to cooperative processes of problem-solving, and the destructive processes of conflict resolution are similar to competitive processes' (Deutsch 2000, 27). The study also showed that 'constructive-cooperative processes' usually lead to positive outcomes and on the contrary, 'competitive-destructive processes' usually produce undesirable outcomes. Another study conducted on Deutsch's theory revealed that a cooperative process was responsible for 'greater group productivity, more favorable interpersonal relations, and high self-esteem' (Deutsch 2006, 29; Johnson and Johnson 1989, 54-55). Though, many studies have been carried out on Deutsch's theory, 'there are a few studies that have found competition to produce higher achievement and productivity than cooperation' (Johnson and Johnson 1989, 52). Regarding competitive and cooperative theory, Deutsch concludes; 'Good cooperative relations facilitate constructive management of conflict; the ability to handle constructively the inevitable conflicts that occur during cooperation facilitates the survival and deepening of cooperative relations' (2006, 42). Still, another study was conducted in China and East Asia to find out whether Deutsch's theory was valid for cultures outside North America. The study was conducted on by Tjosvold, Leung and Johnson among business managers and employees. Although Deutsch's theory is developed in an individualistic society and low context culture, the researchers found that it also worked in high context and collectivistic cultures. The research revealed that Chinese people used 'cooperative conflict' to boost relationship within the groups and organizations, improved productivity of both services and products, and reduced costs. The researchers also suggested that 'cooperative conflict is a viable, potentially highly constructive approach in China' (Tjosvold et al 2006, 687).
        According to Jones, the avoidance can be either 'physical and/or psychological' (2008, 232). The avoidance approach to conflict resolution can indicate the following two things, as noted by Elmer. First, it can be a sign of wisdom and maturity. Second, it can be an indication of lack of willingness to discuss important matters or 'a refusal to take a stand on a significant decision' (Elmer 1996, 39). However, Jones believes that avoidance is (1) viable when the issue is of low importance, and particularly when both the issue and relationship are of low importance, and (2) is effective for a relatively weak party dealing with a highly assertive or even aggressive opponent (2008, 191).
        A number of empirical studies have been carried out to find out the effectiveness of the TKI conflict resolution styles. For example, Filley carried out a study to find out what happens when two different styles were brought together in an attempt to resolve a conflict. Filley's study revealed that win-lose style versus win-lose style resulted in a stalemate at the rate of 80%. He also found that the win-lose style party won over the lose-win party by 90%. The study also revealed that when the lose-win party was paired with another lose-win party the end result was a stalemate, but when the lose-win party was paired with collaborative (problem-solving), the problem solver wins. It also occurred that when the problem-solver was paired with another problem-solver, an agreement was reached very fast. In addition, the study indicated that when a win-lose party was paired with a collaborative party, the win-lose party won over 50% (Filley 1975, 55).
        With regard to the nature of needs, both psychologists and conflict resolution human needs theorists agree on the nature of human needs. In his conclusion, Sandole agrees with Burton, Maslow, Sites and others on the universality of human needs. For example, Sandole observes that 'all the basic needs are universal, common to all humankind across time and space, although the means or satisfiers by which these ontological needs are met can differ across time and space' (1990, 64). Maslow would argue that for the development of a human being, these needs ought to be met. But the question is, what happens if they are not met? Human needs theorists contend that normally conflicts and violence occur when the basic needs or human needs are not met (Klineberg 1980; Kok 2009; Sandole 1990). Sandole explains that 'failure to satisfy such needs will inevitably lead to unhappiness and frustration at the very least, sometimes to physical or mental pathology, and in extreme cases even to death' (1980, 32).
        While the previous theorists discussed human needs at micro level, Paul Sites looks at it from the macro level and says 'the emotions of fear and anger combine to produce hate, or jealousy and this may be a prime cause of nations going to war even though the real reason may be masked in religious or nationalist ideals' (1990, 28). Precisely, deprivation of

basic human needs potentially leads to conflict as the involved parties try to forcefully wrestle to have access and gratification to their basic needs. Therefore, 'the process of conflict resolution should bring about social, economic, and political changes that cater to human needs' (Jeong, 2008, 29).

According to Lederach, the phrase 'conflict resolution' was too superficial and lacked the understanding of conflict dynamics. He argues that conflict resolution perhaps 'unintentionally' carries 'the connotation of a bias toward 'ending' a given crisis or at least its outward expression, without being sufficiently concerned with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict' (1995, 201). On the other hand, conflict transformation examines dynamics and sustainability with a goal to bring a 'broad social change' (Rupesinghe 1995, 270). Both Rupesinghe and Lederach agree that given the nature of conflict, a holistic approach is necessary which is captured in transformation and/or the peace-building concept. The advocates of conflict transformation argue that transformation looks beyond the immediate problem and seeks to address deeper socio-cultural and environmental factors responsible for the current situation (Lederach 1995; Ryan 2009). Lederach, uses his tri-lenses analogy to sum up what conflict transformation looks like.

Unlike conflict resolution and management, transformation concept does not suggest we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather points 'descriptively toward its inherent dialectic nature' (Lederach 1995, 17). Conflict transformation requires deeper changes in attitudes, the development of a civic culture based on accommodation and cooperation (Rupesinghe 1995, 270). Conflict transformation proponents advocate a holistic approach. Such an approach goes beyond the current disputants' emotional level to unearth the underlying contributing factors (Ryan 2009). Specifically, 'transformation seeks to create a framework to address the content, the context, and the structure of the relationship' (Lederach 2003, 12). Other key proponents of conflict transformation include Galtung, Rupesinghe, Stephen, Bush and Folger among others. At face value, one gets the impression that conflict transformation concept mainly focuses on the macro-conflict, but Lederach disputes this point by demonstrating that conflict transformation works at the micro-conflict level. According to Ryan, 'transformation ideas range from the personal to the global. Some focus on changing the hearts and minds of individual and local community either through spiritual change or by creating intersubjective understanding through story telling or other tools of communication' (2009, 308). In summary, conflict transformation operates at both micro and macro levels. It looks beyond the presenting problem and seeks to unearth the root causes, deal with the presenting problems, and ultimately solidify the relationship of the affected parties.

Negotiation is a process in which the involved parties engage each other in communication in an attempt to resolve a conflict and to reach the desired settlement (Apollos 2009; Byrne et al. 2009). Negotiation takes place in nearly all spheres of life and through all social contexts (Jones 2008). 'Negotiation may be informal or formal, private or public, short-term or long-term, dyadic or multiparty...' (Jones 2008, 205). Byrne and associates add that negotiation does not only engage two parties but at times an influential third party is used to negotiate the deal and save face for each party (2009). According to Folberg and associates the earlier literature viewed negotiation as a 'competitive' and adversarial 'zero-sum game' which gave the impression of 'lose-win and win-lose' situations. Fisher, Ury, and Patton (1981) refer to this situation as both 'soft' and 'hard' negotiation. While on one hand, soft negotiation focuses on the importance of maintaining relationships, on the other hand 'hard negotiation' focuses on winning at any cost (Fisher et al. 1981, 8). Fisher and associates critically evaluated this model and found that it was self-defeating. Subsequently, through the Harvard Negotiation Project, they developed a new model which is known as the 'principled negotiation' or 'negotiation on the merits' (1981, 11). It is also referred to as the interest-based approach. Principled negotiation, states that in conflict resolution, the involved parties ought to seek to separate people from the issues. To this effect, the involved parties are instructed to 'address relationships and the problem independently by listening actively, and effectively by being hard on the problem and soft on the people, in effect, looking for the interests behind the positions providing for face-saving and an interdependent search for a common ground to persuade others that the outcome will be fair' (Byrne, et al.2009, 9). The 'principled negotiation' model differs from the hard negotiation model in the sense that it takes a cooperative approach and provides an environment for disputants to enter into a win-win situation (Fisher, Ury, and Patton 1981). Methodologically, principled negotiation suggests that the conflict resolution facilitator ;1) identify the problem, 2) separate people from the problem, 3) focus on interests, 4) invent options for mutual gain, and 5) insist on using objective criteria.

Fisher and associates add that principled negotiation encourages negotiators to engage conflict resolution process with objective criteria and negotiate with objective criteria (1991). According to Fisher and associates 'objective criteria need to be independent of each side's will. Ideally, to assure a wise agreement, objective criteria should be not only independent of will but also both legitimate and practical' (1991, 85). Principled negotiation aims at getting to a solution that is agreeable to all parties by first framing each issue as a joint search for objective criteria; second, by being reasonable and open to reason; and finally, by never yielding to pressure (Fisher et al. 1991, 88-90).

Fisher and associates developed one of the most used strategies in negotiation and conflict resolution known as BATNA (Best Alternative of Negotiated Agreement). BATNA is a preferred strategy in a negotiation that involves a weaker party and a party with stronger bargaining power (Fisher, et al.1991; Lederach 1995; Coleman 2006; Jones 2008; Byrne 2009). One's BATNA is normally based on two premises. 'First, to protect you against making an agreement you should reject and second, to help you make the most of the assets you do have so that any agreement you reach will satisfy your interests as well as possible (Fisher et al. 1991, 97). Byrne and associates add that these two principles are very important in negotiation and must be communicated clearly and reframed for negotiation to be fruitful (2009).

Does principled negotiation work? Fisher and associates have a classic example of how this approach worked to settle an international dispute that existed between the Israeli and Egypt in the famous 'Camp David.' The two nations were in constant dispute over who owns the Sinai Peninsula. In this case, the Israeli and Egyptian positions were incompatible,

but when the two countries focused on their interests, a peace treaty was signed. Fisher and associates state that disputants should be helped to look beyond the opposed positions because 'when you do look behind opposed positions for the motivating interests you can often find an alternative position which meets not only your interest but theirs as well' (1991, 42).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design
The research was set in the context of the Africa Inland Church Nairobi-Kenya, and focused on selected pastors who were currently serving in the city of Nairobi. A qualitative, descriptive research design was used because, as suggested by Best and Kahn, it yields 'a detailed, thick description; inquiry in-depth; direct quotations capturing people's personal perspectives and experiences' (1993, 185). Additionally, qualitative research methods give the researcher an opportunity to interview participants in their own contexts, observe them, experience their feelings, and knowledge (Patton 2002, 4). Patton further observes that observation in qualitative research allows the researcher the opportunity to observe 'people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience' (2002, 4).

3.2. Population
The population for the study was Africa Inland Church (AIC) Nairobi pastors serving in the Nairobi area at the time the study was conducted. The rationale for choosing AIC pastors serving in Nairobi is because these pastors come from different cultural ethnic groups with different experiences that carried a potential of enriching the research. The researcher also assumed that most of these pastors grew up in the rural context, and moved to Nairobi, which is a metropolitan city. For that reason, the researcher assumed that such a population had a broad spectrum of experiences in handling conflict. Moreover, the researcher wondered if people living in Nairobi were in some ways distanced from traditional mechanisms of resolving conflicts and wondered if perhaps pastors were filling in this vacuum. The researcher's desire was to select 'information-rich-cases' (Merriam 1999), and AIC Nairobi pastors were the best study focus group for the research. Africa Inland Church in Nairobi area has a population of more than one hundred pastors. The findings of this study can only be generalized within this selected population and with care to a broader population. That is to guard what Gall and associates call 'population validity' (2003, 164).

3.3. Sample and Sampling Procedure
A purposeful sampling was used to get the best representation of the population. A'purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned' (Merriam 2002, 61). Given that AIC Nairobi area has a population of over one hundred pastors, the researcher selected twenty of them to participate in the research. Out of the twenty pastors, three of them were asked to participate in the field-testing exercise. A total of seventeen pastors participated in the actual research. To access the sample population, the researcher used what researchers call 'snowball or chain of sampling' (Gall, et al 2003, 179). Snowballing refers to a process whereby the researcher utilizes well situated people to recommend potential participants. Participants in this study came from different ethnic groups in Kenya.

The research was delimited to the Africa Inland Church (AIC) Nairobi pastors who were serving in a full-time capacity at the time the research was conducted. Although there were other pastors such as youth pastors, Christian Education pastors, part time pastors, and student pastors, their understanding and practices were not sought because that was beyond the scope of the research. Additionally, Nairobi as a metropolitan city hosts many different denominations; the perspectives of the pastors of those other denominations were not sought in this research. Also, the views of the Africa Inland Church pastors serving outside the Nairobi Area were not sought in this study. The study focused only on AIC Nairobi Area pastors serving in a fulltime capacity. AIC Nairobi Area covers all the Africa Inland churches within the geographical administrative boundaries of the city of Nairobi. All participants met the following criteria:
- Full time pastors serving in the AIC Nairobi area.
- Not less than five years of pastoral experience in urban ministry.
- Some formal theological training.
- Thirty years of age and above.
- Were either senior or associate/assistant pastors at their local churches.
- Available and willing to participate in the research.
- Male pastors with leadership positions.

3.4. Gathering of the Data
The research process was primarily facilitated through ethnographic interviews. The interview format was 'semi-structured,' which included some structured questions with further probing through open-ended questions to clarify and elicit additional information (Gall, Gall, and Borg 2007, 246). With the participants' permission, each interview was tape recorded and at the same time, the researcher gathered field notes that were recorded with sensitivity to the feelings, emotions, and body language of the participants. More importantly, the researcher employed an*emic* perspective position in the process. In research, the *emic* perspective refers to the 'participants' perceptions and understanding of their social reality' (Gall, Gall, Borg 2003, 624). The researcher led in discussions that prompted and allowed participants to share

their own stories. Researchers admit that such discussions are very important in qualitative research because the best data often comes by allowing participants to share their stories (Corbin 2008, 27).

3.5. Data Analysis

In addition to tape recording interviews, each interview was translated (where necessary), transcribed, coded, and stored for analysis. After each interview was completed, the researcher took time to make observer comments and also made sure the data were well stored. Also, for triangulation purposes, the researcher interviewed the presiding bishop, who in his capacity as the pastor of pastors is assumed to have broad experience in resolving conflicts. It is important, to note that the presiding bishop's input is not included in the sample population but in the field notes. He is not among the seventeen participants in the study. Even though seventeen pastors were interviewed, one of them lacked sufficient information and was disregarded. He did not answer questions adequately and was too vague. The researcher did both coding and the analysis of the collected data, searching for themes and patterns within the data that shed light on the research concern.

4. Findings

4.1. Conflict Resolution Practices and Experiences among the AIC Nairobi Pastors

All research participants demonstrated a lot of competency in conflict resolution for they all had stories to tell on how they have been resolving conflicts. More than a half of the participants shared stories related to marriages, while the rest shared stories that related to church leadership and other pastoral ministry related stories. Whereas the first half candidly shared their stories around marriages, the other half had a variety of experiences.

4.1.1. Marriage and Family Related Experiences

All the research participants shared some fascinating experiences withregard to conflict resolution. Their stories covered six major themes which includes; the impact of infidelity and HIV in marriages, marriage and marriage preparations, general family feuds, death and burial, and restoration of peace in the community.

4.1.1.1. The Impacts of Infidelity and HIV in Marriages

Seven research participants (AICNP1, AICNP5, AICNP6, AICNP8, AICNP10, AICNP14, and AICNP15) profoundly shared their experiences on how HIV/AIDS and infidelity posed threat to marriages. For instance, AICNP15 shared a story about a couple whose marriage was at the verge of breaking down because of HIV/AIDS problem. He reported that the family had 'very deep, deep issues…the husband was positive and he infected the wife and therefore there was a threat of separation.' Three other participants (AICNP5, AICNP6 and AICNP14) shared their experiences about couples that were involved in infidelity but there was no mention of HIV/AIDS. For example, AICNP14 remorsefully narrated a story whereby his conflict resolution attempts failed, and the couple divorced:

> I attempted to resolve a conflict between a man and his wife. There were claims of unfaithfulness between the two of them, which together with another elder of the church we managed to establish that. And then after establishing that, we sit down with them and talked through the issues together. And finally, we put them together, and they forgave one another. But there was someone who was playing tricks on us there. Because after we resolved that it only worked for one month, and then the lady went back to her former relationship with other people outside marriage.

In a similar manner, AICNP5 shared an experience of how he assisted a couple whose marriage was in jeopardy. The man was given to a lot of drinking with some evidence of infidelity. The research participant also pointed out that the husband had counter accusations against his wife and accused her of 'going to witch doctors and getting jujus' which resulted in keeping the couple apart and in scramble (AICNP5). He narrated:

> So, when they came in, we burned the jujus, I have talked to the man seriously. He has stopped going to the bar. He stopped the company of women, and the reports I am getting even now is that they are living together. One of the action points and things we said they needed to do as a remedial action was to change location of their residence, which they did and actually they are saying it has worked out very well. (AICNP5)

4.1.1.2. Family Feuds

Five participants (AICNP2, AICNP9, AICNP 10, AICNP12, and AICNP13) reported that they handled family related feuds. For example, AICNP10 reported of he intervened in his extended family to resolve a conflict that pitted his young brother against his own father. Primarily, the younger brother felt that it was time he severed his ties with the family's denomination, thus developing some kind of identity and independence. The research participant narrated:

> The basic problem was that my brother felt that he wanted to move away from our denomination the Africa Inland Church, to a Pentecostal movement. My father felt that as the father he had the right to dictate the terms and they got to a point where they almost fought physically. They got to a level where they would not talk to each other. At some point I was forced, as the elder brother in the family and a brother in Christ (I was not a pastor) then to intervene. And the way I did this was that one evening we sat down and as we were talking I reminded them that conflicts/differences are normal but if we make them premises through which we then judge each other, then we mess…I remember going through/[I mean it was] very tough for me.

The participant's intervention bore fruits as reported. 'Everybody is settled, there are no wrangles and there is a

lot of harmony' (AICNP10). In like manner another research participant shared an experience in which a couple was in a serious physical fight (AICNP13). According to this participant the couple was fighting because the man's financial support was dwindling without explanation. He reported that the fight between the couple broke out because, 'there was an argument. And the argument was that he was not providing for the family' (AICNP13). The research participant mediated through and led them resolve their conflict.

4.1.1.3. Marriages and Marriage Preparations
          Five participants (AICNP4, AICNP17, AICNP16, AICNP3, and AICNP13) reported that they had had experiences in handling issues to do with marriages and marriage preparations. One of the research participants narrated a vivid example that involved on the one side the young man and young girl who were planning for their wedding, and on the other side, the young man's parents. He recalled:
          I had a case where a young man was going to get married and the parents insisted that he should live in the same household and you know the city houses, where you use one door, and is not like a homestead. But the parents wanted this young man's wife be married and cook for them. They wanted to have what in *ukambani*is called, '*Kivuvamwaki.*'³The parents were feeling that their son was getting married and the mother of the son should not continue cooking. This new wife should cook. But now it means they must live together for her to cook. Because we do not have a homestead whereby you can say now that my son has married, built a house over there. They are living in rented houses. So, they needed to stay together. But my position was this son needed to delink authority ties from his father. He is going to be the small boy of his father as long as they continue living together in the same house. So, my position was when they get married, they should move out. So, that one brought us into conflict. (AICNP13)
          Initially, the bridegroom's parents disregarded the pastor's advice. But, despite the research participant's disappointment, he later reported that 'on their own, they realized later that it was not right to keep their son there [in their house], because in the city houses, we are using the same bathroom [and the] same toilet. It is only that the bedrooms are different but the sitting [the living room] is the same…. They later saw the sense' (AICNP13). Besides marriage preparations, research participants shared their experiences in restoring marriages. For example, AICNP4 reported a successful conflict resolution he was part of.
          There is this couple in fact, I joined them in marriage. And then, one year down the line, there was a lot of conflict between them. So, they came to me and told me 'we have been having this problem, and we need some help.' First of all, I told them, I would like to talk to each one of them individually and they agreed. So, I did that. I talked to the man first and then later I talked to the lady or the wife. Then later, we, the three of us came together. Then from there, of course I was neutral and not supporting any sides. And just from each of them sharing at different times because they were accusing each other; this one is not doing; this one is not doing this…. So now, after coming together, I tried to point out where each went wrong. Because after listening to them individually at different times, I was able to detect or to know where each one of them went wrong. (AICNP4)

4.1.1.4. Death and Burial
          Two of the participants (AICNP11 and AICNP15) reported that they facilitated in resolving conflicts over death and burial related incidents. Both cited experiences in which death of a family member especially a spouse led to a serious dispute. For example, AICNP11 narrated an experience in which he mediated.
          There is this woman who had separated with her husband for some years and later on she passed away. And then after the death, there arose a question on where would this particular person be buried. The parents and siblings of the deceased stood their grounds and argued that the deceased should not be buried by her husband because he had not completed paying dowry as culturally and traditionally required and in addition, they were separated by the time she died. On the other hand, the husband's side argued that they were the rightful people to bury the body of the deceased, because even though the two separated, the deceased did a good job in caring for the children. So, there was real conflict because culturally, when you have not paid the dowry especially *mbuisyantheo*⁴ you are not legally married and cannot burry the body of your spouse. So, I had to come in and give my pastoral opinion. I talked to them and showed them that the most important thing is the person who is already gone and they should not fight over the empty box or the dead body. By so doing they got convinced and the husband was given the permission to bury the body of his departed wife. (AICNP11)
          The above research participant further reported that he dealt with the conflict in two phases. Phase one involved resolving the burial conflict, while the second phase involved resolving the conflict that revolved around the custody of the motherless children. 'The family of the deceased had a feeling that they should take the children and take care of them simply because they could not trust that their father was capable of bringing them up. I had to talk to them and the parents of the man committed themselves to take children under their custody. So, the issue was resolved' (AICNP11). Death and burial conflict are not a rare thing in Kenya. Recent research by David Ngaruiya confirmed that Kenyan communities faced a lot conflict when the death of their loved ones occurred. In his introduction, Ngaruiya gave a classic example of a cross-

³ This is a Kikamba phrase referring to a young married woman who takes care of the kitchen affairs. Traditionally, she normally relieves her husband's mother from fixing and serving food.
⁴Mbuisyantheo/nzeo refers to the Akamba traditional culture that requires the family of the bridegroom to give three goats, two female and one he-goat. The he-goat is usually killed to shed blood thus binding the bride's and the bridegroom's families with the living dead. It is legally binding without which, one's marriage is termed as invalid and/or illegal.

cultural marriage of the famous Kenyan lawyer, a Mrs. M. Otieno and the widow Wambui. This case that lasted over five months for the widow (A Kikuyu) and her deceased husband of Luo ethnic community to decide on where to bury the deceased and who had the right to do so (Ngaruiya 2008). In his dissertation, Ngaruiya also cited a number of widows, and even widowers who have had protracted conflicts after their spouses passed on.

4.1.1.5. Restoration of Peace in the Community

Five participants (AICNP4, AICNP12, AICNP1, AICNP13, and AICNP6) reported that they were not only fostering peace and resolving conflicts in the church, but also, restoring peace in the larger community. One of the participants shared his story how he served as a mediator between his home local church and the community around. 'There was this disagreement between church members and the community as to who owns the land. First of all, I talked to the pastor, and then I talked with the community. And later, we came down; we sat down the two groups; I was in a way mediating. I was the mediator' (AICNP4). He further demonstrated his expertise in the way he mediated and had the dispute resolved. 'Of course, you know the gospel of Jesus Christ brings peace and people together. So, in short, I was able to show them the importance of the church and how they are going to benefit and in fact, when that was resolved, even a primary school has been proposed to be built on that same place' (AICNP4). It is worth noting the importance of this point 'the restoration of peace in the community' because the data is supporting the existing literature (Moore 1986; Mayer et al. 2005). Correspondingly, another research participant reported serving the larger community and going beyond his religion's parameters. His pastoral ministry included serving the Muslim community as reported in the following:

> You see like in Kibera community, there are many pastors and people know that pastor is there to help. He does not ask for money or any fee. For that matter, whenever the problem comes between the husband and the wife is very easy to go to the pastor but not to the '*imam*[5],' or to the council of elders. Because by going to the council of elders, one must pay some money. That is given. You go to the chief, and you must pay because of the elders who are there to listen to your case. But if you come to me, I will do it for free. My aim is to see you doing well. That's all. I want to see your family move on with life. But these other people want to see your family move on with life but also want to get something from you. So, it is very easy for these community people to come to me. There are many such cases in Kibera, who come to the pastors. But for me it is a great opportunity. I counsel them and before they leave the door, I tell them Jesus loves you. (AICNP1)

4.1.2. Conflict Resolution and Church Leadership

Research findings showed that almost a half of the participants (AICNP6, AICNP8, AICNP11, AICNP13, AICNP14, AICNP16, and AICNP17) reported their participation in resolving conflicts that were related to pastoral ministry and church leadership. While most research participants reported of dealing with conflict that touched other people, AICNP8 was a sharp contrast because administratively he dealt with a conflict in which the whole thing revolved around him. The research participant further reported that in a year's time, he was served with another letter. This time he opted to accept the transfer against the wish of his local church. Notwithstanding the anger of his congregation, he decided to give it a different approach.

4.1.3. Approaches to Conflict Resolution

All participants shared numerous approaches they normally use in their conflict resolution practices. These mainly included; case background, mediation, prayer, referral, use of pastoral, counseling skills, keen listening, consulting widely, seeing disputants separately, and integration of disciplines among others

4.1.3.1. Case Background

A half of the participants (AICNP11, AICNP1, AICNP2, AICNP5, AICNP8, AICNP14, AICNP16, AICNP17) said that they used what they called doing 'case background, or understanding the problem' approach to conflict resolution. The notion of understanding the background of the disputing parties was well stated by one pastor who asserted that; 'You can draw their genogram about their life; about their grandmothers, about their family/their family tree. You dig to know each family tree. You dig also to know their beliefs...what actually do they believe... You need to understand them after understanding their roots or background' (AICNP16).

4.1.3.2. Prayer

Ten of the research participants (AICNP3, AICNP6, AICNP8, AICNP9, AICNP10, AICNP11, AICNP12, AICNP15, AICNP16, and AICNP17) reported that they used prayer as one of the major approaches in resolving conflict. For instance, AICNP3 reported of a unique experience that almost left his church split in the middle. 'One of the major things I...did during that time because of the situation and the nature of the conflict, we formed a prayer group; intercessors who were praying with me…. We [also]took some time to pray together' (AICNP3). Another participant said, 'One thing I believe in is that prayer works. So, I had first to take time to pray and also to ask God to give me the ability to use my skills as I talked to these people' (AICNP9). Probed further as to why he succeeded in resolving a conflict that involved a husband and a wife, the participant showed persistence in his strong belief in the power of prayer by stating:'I don't attribute the success to myself. I attribute it to God. And I am talking of the victory because for now the two are living together in peace; that is why I am saying there is victory' (AICNP9). Whereas, the above participants prayed for God's general intervention, AICNP8 was

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[5] Imam is an Islamic leadership position or title for the mosque leader in the community. He is the spiritual leader and leads in prayers in the Muslims' community.

more specific on his reason for prayer. 'Whenever there is a conflict, we must learn to pray and ask God. The Bible says that the heart of man is deceitful among all things. And if it is that corrupt, it means since I cannot read a man's heart, it is possible I may think I am resolving conflict, but I am not. I am being deceived. So, [there is need for] prayer' discern the heart (AICNP8). The AIC Nairobi pastors made a unique contribution to this research because most of the literature and theorists in the field of conflict resolution talk of some specific steps or methods. But these pastors took a metaphysical dimension thus going beyond philosophical and empirical explanations.

4.1.3.3. Active Listening
          All participants underscored the importance of keenor active listening in conflict resolution. For example, one of the participants stated:
          There is what we call active listening, where as they talk you can seek for clarification. Sometimes you can observe what is not said. That is what is called behavior communication. One can behave in a way that you get a message. So, I will say that the importance of listening is that it helps you to articulate actually what is going on in people's lives, to be able to sense where the problem is and also to work towards the solution. And when I look at the way Jesus used to deal with conflicts of people who were troubled, I think he was a very good listener. (AICNP17)
          Most of the participants strongly described active listening as one of the key approaches to conflict resolution. One of them asserted 'if you give someone a listening ear and let them pour out whatever they have…in a way that is healing as they speak out their bitterness. And as they see you listening of course, they are seeing somebody who is concerned. And as you begin to share with them, this is where it is reciprocated because you have already shown it' (AICNP9). It occurred to the researcher that active listening provides a forum for the disputants to share their frustrations. Participants used such phrases like 'let them pour out their hearts' (AICNP9), 'most of them don't have any place to pour their anger,''let them vomit whatever they have' (AICNP1), 'let them speak; *ekamatoe'⁶ (*letthem steam off) (AICNP14), and allow 'them to spill out their issues' (AICNP10). One participant explained listening as an approach to conflict resolution in a remarkable way. 'You try to enter into this person, you stay with him. If it is a husband and wife…you must listen to the wife, what are her concerns, listen to the husband; what is his concerns; what is he complaining about the wife. And then you bring them together…. And that would help you to now recap up and discuss with them the real issues, because you can establish the real issues from their communication' (AICNP15). Probed further what it means to enter into a person, he said; 'You must enter into the person's mind and heart to hear him. Let him or her speak her mind… and you must take time; take a lot of time with the person even if it means a whole day or a whole night' (AICNP15). The data in this case is supported by the literature. For example, Villa-Vicecio said'to listen is to enter into the being of the one telling the story endeavoring to see and hear from that person's perspective'(2009, 78).
A triangulation with the AIC presiding bishop confirmed that keen listening was very vital in conflict resolution as noted below.
          Researcher: One of the things that came out clearly from pastors is that for one to be a good conflict manager one has to have good listening skills. What do you say about that?
          Presiding bishop: Well, I just concur with them because I have been helping some areas where they were having conflicts like the Sudan. I was in their meetings. And if you want to really help those people you must listen. They will always say even rubbish but you have to listen. So listening is key to conflict resolution.

4.1.3.4. Seeing Disputants Separately Approach
          Asked about the approach they used in conflict resolution, a quarter of the participants reported that they opted to see their disputants separately (AICNP13, AICNP15, AICNP12, and AICNP1). They argued that seeing disputants separately is important because it provides a safe environment for the involved parties. On his part AICNP15 commended that this approach does not stop at seeing the disputing parties separately, but culminates at bringing them together to dialogue on the problem. The notion of seeing the disputing parties separately is also supported by the precedent literature. While Elmer's experience in Sudan showed that a mediator had to talk to the disputants separately until he (mediator) was convinced that the two parties were ready to bury their conflict (Elmer 2006), Garb on the other hand observed that mediators in the Abkhazians of former USSR separately talked to the disputants until both parties agreed on mediation procedures (Garb1996).

4.1.3.5. Third Party Approach/mediation
          While all the research participants reported having been involved in conflict resolution, three of the participants (AICNP3, AICNP10, and AICNP13) said that they either used mediation (third party) or negotiation approach to resolve conflict. For example, one of the participants reported of his experience in dealing with a conflict that developed between his choir and the church elders. 'Here in Kenya, I have found that…the elders don't want to sit with these other groups because they are going to be demeaned. So, the little that I have done in resolving conflict was for me to go and become like a messenger. Take what the [church] elders are saying to the boys or the dancers, because the elders did not want to come and sit together' (AICNP13).

4.1.3.6. Counseling Skills
          Nine participants (AICNP1, AICNP2, AICNP3, AICNP9, AICNP12, AICNP14, AICNP15, AICNP16, and AICNP17)

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⁶'Eka matoe'is a Kikamba phrase that means let them steam out. In this context it is used for parties who come flooded with bitterness, anger, and accusations. In such a situation, you allow them uninterrupted time to talk and steam out or calm down.

reported that they employed counseling skills as one of the approaches to conflict resolution. One of the participants' said that he uses counseling skills to establish the cause of the conflict between his clients. 'So, what I do is that after listening, I take them through a normal counseling process where you can know the truth of where they went wrong. You can see where they went astray' (AICNP17). Although many of the participants talked about applying counseling in their conflict resolution process, AICNP 9 talked about the ethos of a counselor. He succinctly said:

> I am talking from the church point of view because of the years I have been a pastor and seen people with problems and conflicts in the family. And you see people want to trust the one who is coming to bring some solution. And so even when we are counseling people, we should know that they come with their issues some of them which are very sensitive to tell you. And because they have put their trust in you, don't betray them…there should be some degree of confidentiality…you should be very confidential. (AICNP9)

4.1.3.7. Biblical Approach

The data revealed that all participants except two indicated that they used the 'biblical approach/biblical principles' in their conflict resolution practices. AICNP4 talked about biblical principles in a unique way as captured in his own words; 'When Jesus Christ came, he told us to love one another; to appreciate one another. Of course, we have differences and God created us in a unique way. We are all different; we are all unique so we need to love one another…. So, these are some of the principles if we apply them because Jesus Christ taught us those principles' (AICNP4). For AICNP16 the biblical approach with regard to conflict resolution means being able to 'check whether the solution agrees with the Bible. So, if it does not agree with the Bible, then I might be forced to avoid it' (AICNP16). AICNP14 agreed with this position but added that the biblical approach actually refers to the establishment of the scripture or the bible as the frame of reference for guiding the conflict resolver and the disputants through conflict resolution process.

4.1.3.8. Pastoral Approach

Four participants (AICNP6, AICNP9, AICNP15, and AICNP17) reported that they engaged a 'pastoral approach' to resolve conflict. For instance, one pastor said '… since I am a pastor, I used the pastoral approach' (AICNP9). When probed further as to what that looks like he added:

> You see the bible talks of the pastor as a shepherd. Being a shepherd, it means that you must care. So, you must show that love, that concern. Because as a shepherd when one of the sheep is wounded, you are supposed to go down, lift the sheep and take it to where it can get help. Do all the necessary even to get the treatment. So, this is the kind of thing I am talking about; the shepherd approach. (AICNP9)

The pastoral and caring motif was carried further by another pastor who said,'When there is a conflict, this person who is actually not in agreement with another one, he or she is a desperate person. He or she should be shown a lot of love'(AICNP6). He added, [as a pastor] 'you help them [disputants] accept the other person the way the Lord God created them.'

4.1.3.9. Circumstantial Approach

One of the research participants suggested a unique and significant approach to conflict resolution. The response of participant (AICNP12), though he himself was not a victim of the December 2007 post-election violence referenced this historic event. Practically, he employed 'circumstantial approach.' He used preaching, made proper use of mass media (specifically radio), talked and empathized with individuals in some unique ways. For example, having counseled with a man who had lost his property in the said post-election violence, the pastor absorbed him into the visitation ministry (which the pastor heads). And through this unique approach (circumstantial approach), he (the pastor) would take this post-election victim with him to visit people of other ethnic groups that were perceived as the perpetrators of the atrocity that left him socially and economically weakened. Why did the research participant choose such an approach? The answer to this question lies in his own words:

> So that we may go together; pray and understand that these are people created after the image of God. These people we belong to the same family, the family of Christ. And just to create that impression in his mind. My idea behind this was to help him understand that, us who are in Christ are one, belong to the same family; there is no *Luo*; there is no *Kikuyu* that kind of a thing. (AICNP12)

This kind of approach obliterated the distorted perception held by this particular church member about other ethnic groups as the research participant reported later. Additionally, this research participant used some rare approaches that were not found with any other research participants. He engaged the youth in performing plays and skits that painted a real picture of what had happened and how the congregation could play an important role in resolving conflict in the larger community. He further used his pulpit in preaching messages that were geared to bring about conflict resolution. 'The first weeks after the December 2007 post-election violence we had a series of messages dealing with the love of Christ, dealing with first and the second commandments to love your neighbor as you yourself. According to this pastor, he preached messages that were geared to help his multiethnic congregation embrace reconciliation and peace in the body of Christ. For the purpose of reaching out to the larger community: 'We also had sermons sent to the '*Biblia Husema*'[7] studio [a radio program] so that they could be broadcasted hoping that many would hear and respond' (AICNP12).

Engaging radio in conflict resolution is a very powerful tool in the escalation or de-escalation conflict. However, not many scholars have written on it, nor did other participants talk about it. But the reality is that the role played by radio in conflict and conflict resolution cannot be underestimated as noted by Hamburg: 'Radio is exceedingly important because

[7]'Biblia husema'is a Kiswahili phrase when translated means the Bible Speaks. It is an AIC oriented radio progamme.

it reaches virtually every one almost all the time. Hate radio has been all too effective in inciting violence—remember its role in Rwanda and Bosnia' (Hamburg 1994, 14).

4.1.3.10. Integrated Approach

Four ofthe research participants (AICNP4, AICNP8, AICNP9, and AICNP14) reported that in their conflict resolution practice, they used a variety of approaches simultaneously. For example, one of them said '…I integrated my traditional approach plus biblical approach. Traditional means cultural approach according to our people' (AICNP4). Another supporter who subscribed to this view stated that:

> I believe as a scholar, there are so many areas you need to be exposed to. And out of my being in school and interacting with books and lecturers; you see even in counseling, there is also the clinical counseling, there is also the psychological and these are some of the things people use. And even if I am not using them, I borrow a word from them. And when I put it in my current calling or vocation then they help me. So, borrow from different areas… (AICNP9)

According to AICNP14 the Bible does not contain solution for all that human beings need. Therefore, there is need to engage general revelation. 'In case where the scripture is not clear on some things, I will be forced to look for other models that may be useful to challenges before me. So basically, the basic premise is the scripture but if it doesn't give you a clear cut method on how to go about some aspects then, you have to appeal to extra-biblical methods that are out there that you can use to help you' (AICNP14).

4.1.3.11. Referral Approach

Five of the participants (AICNP15, AICNP5, AICNP11, AICNP10, and AICNP12) suggested that they would rather refer their clients to other more competent people in case they found themselves completely limited in rendering the required assistance (resolving conflict). For example, AICNP15 said 'apart from the biblical [approach] you can…use social workers. Here we can involve them if only that social worker can be as good as those who can counsel. The local health clinics advise pastors to refer HIV/AIDS patients and the like to them' (AICNP15). While most participants would potentially refer their clients to get assistance elsewhere, AICNP5 did actually refer a couple to another pastor. Probed whether he had a specific example, he replied:

> One time I found myself, I was not given any goodies so to say. But this one party came and talked to me alone. And she really talked…convinced me and she left me having formed an opinion that she was right and the other party was wrong. So even when the other party came, I had already formed an opinion. And whatever he said, I knew it was against a background of favoring the other party. So eventually, when I realized that I could not continue with the process, I was already hooked up. And so, I referred the two to someone else because that is also allowed. I requested them if their case could be taken by someone else, which they agreed. (AICNP5)

4.1.3.12. Giving it More Time Approach

Three of the participants (AICNP13, AICNP16, and AICNP17) concurred that allowing more time for a conflict is therapeutic. In sticky and thorny situations, one of the participants reported that in such situations, 'What I do in such a case is to give time; time heals. Other than pushing for solution at that particular time…ask them to think over; sleep over the problem, so I have found that when you give them more time and discuss after sometime, those issues become clearer' (AICNP13).

4.1.3.13. Court system

Two participants (AICNP4 and AICNP17) said that they would use court system as their last resort. However, though this is one of the approaches, one of them pointed out some weaknesses in it. 'Well, there is also going to court; going to court… where the court of law will come to intervene. But again, because there is a lot of corruption… you know the court of law is not always right. I mean sometimes someone who is worth to get this piece of land can be denied if he does not have a tall relative. So that is another option' (AICNP4).

4.2. Conflict Resolution Process

All the participants shared their stories and experiences with regard to conflict resolution. They profoundly described their approaches as demonstrated in the previous pages. In the following section, the researcher will report on the reasons why conflict resolution process succeeds or fail as shared by the research participants.

4.2.1. Reasons Why Conflict Resolution Process Succeeds

All the participants responded to the question as to why they succeeded in conflict resolution process. But their responses were characterized by a variety of reasons

4.2.1.1. Prayer

Four of the participants strongly attributed their success in resolving conflict to prayer (AICNP17, AICNP3, AICNPP11, and AICNP6). When they were asked the question, 'Why do you think you succeeded?' The responses of both AICNP6 and AICNP11 were found to be very enriching. AICNP6 reported, 'I think I succeeded because I firstly did seek God's guidance on the issue… I had to intercede for the spirit of God to convict them' (AICNP6). For AICNP11, prayer was number one factor that contributed to his success.

4.2.1.2. God's Word

A quarter of the participants (AICNP5, AICNP4, AICNP14, and AICNP17) credited God's word as the main contributing factor for their success in their conflict resolution practices. One research participant described how he mediated in a married couple's conflict successfully. He stated:

> Why I succeeded; of course from a biblical point of view I was trying to pursue them from the biblical perspective showing them the intentions of God; marriage as intended by God; and what God would expect of them as people come to church and people who are married; and the need to stay together and things like that. So, the reason why I think I succeeded is because I was using the Bible and letting the bible to speak to this matter. (AICNP5)

He further revealed that the Bible was his frame of reference in conflict resolution.

4.2.1.3. Pastoral Ministry and Life Experience

Among other factors, three pastors AICNP16, AICNP15, and AICNP5 attributed their success in their conflict resolution practices to their experience. For example, AICNP5 commented, 'Yes, after using the bible as my point of reference, I also used my experience. My own life experience and also bring in the experiences of others' (AICNP5). For AICNP15, he attributed his success to his vocation and call to the pastoral ministry. 'I think it is because I took this as part of my ministry because pastors are called to a ministry of reconciliation; conflict resolution' (AICNP15). In addition, AICNP16 reflected on his industrial training as a government supervisor and said that it contributed highly to his competency in handling conflicts. He asserted that 'the government…trained us on how to handle people' (AICNP16).

4.2.1.4. Creating a Safe Environment

Two of the participants (AICNP4 and AICNP13) reported that one of the reasons they succeeded was because they created a safe environment for the warring parties. To this effect, one participant reporting on how he resolved a conflict between a youth choir and church elders. He said he succeeded because the youths 'felt we were not attacking them and then they also felt that as a pastor I was with them. I was on their side. So, we broke down the walls of these elders and the choir and there is a fight' (AICNP13). On his part AICNP4 said he succeeded because of his neutrality. 'I was neutral and was not taking sides with any person… I did not go criticizing any side. No, no, no.' (AICNP4).

4.2.1.5. Advantages of Knowing the Disputants

Two of the participants (AICNP11 and AICNP17) indicated that among other reasons for their success in conflict resolution was the benefit of knowing the disputants. Without elaboration, one of them said, 'I understood the people and the problem' (AICNP11). So, besides understanding the parties involved, he also understood the nature of the problem. It dawned to the researcher that most of the people who sought conflict resolution from pastors were known to the pastors hence 'there is a belief that you have an advantage for knowing these [warring] parties' (AICNP17).

4.2.2. Reasons Why Conflict Resolution Process Fails

All the research participants except two reported that they had been a part of a conflict resolution process that failed.

4.2.2.1. Uncooperative Attitude

Almost three quarters of the participants reported that conflict resolution process failed because disputants came to the discussion table with an uncooperative attitude and that made it impossible to reach an agreement. To describe uncooperative attitude, participants used nuances like 'lose-lose position' (AICNP17), 'lack of win-win attitude' (AICNP12, AICNP15, and AICNP5), 'closed minds/predetermined direction' (AICNP8, AICNP11, AICNP15, AICNP2, AICNP1, AICNP17, AICNP16, AICNP12, AICNP9, and AICNP6), and 'unwillingness for dialogue' (AICNP8, AICNP2, and AICNP11). One participant said that one of the reasons why conflict resolution process fails is because 'if you have a predetermined idea in any conflict resolution you may not succeed' (AICNP15). Another research participant made a significant contribution on what uncooperative attitude looks like. Concerning the two parties that he was assisting to resolve their disputes he said:

> The two parties just decided that they were comfortable at their standoff positions and they were not willing to cede any grounds. They were not ready to sacrifice. They were right and right, and the other person was wrong and wrong and always so. And therefore, it was very difficult to bridge the gap in between the two standoff positions. (AICNP5)

The uncooperative attitude is worth noting because it supports theories for conflict resolution. This is demonstrated in the competition and cooperative theory of Deutsch and Thomas Kilman's conflict resolution styles. For example, in the Thomas-Kilman Instrument (TKI), Kilman describes avoidance style as both unassertive and uncooperative', or 'lose-lose' situation (1974, 8). Unwillingness to engage in a dialogue for the purpose of resolving conflict is a clear picture of lose-lose situation or uncooperative attitude (Kilman 1974).

4.2.2.2. Unforgiving Spirit

Two participants (AICNP6 and AICNP12) reported that the conflict resolution process was inhibited largely by lack of forgiveness in the part of the disputants. Sadly, one of the participants had this to say 'I feel I have failed where we come to a deadlock. These people are not ready to forgive each other and begin life afresh together' (AICNP12). Similar regrets were shared by another participant who stated:

I remember one case whereby one of the two could feel that he will not forgive the other party. He even went to the point of saying that even if they get to heaven, he will not forgive… it was a serious one. So, that is one of the cases I can remember. But I came to realize that, one of the parties didn't want to accept that God wants us to resolve conflicts or to forgive each other. (AICNP6)

The rest of the categories or factors that were reported as inhibitors of conflict resolution were mentioned by at most one person. However, the fact that they are not supported by others does not minimize their role in conflict resolution process. These categories include; lack of marital counseling, corruption, external influence, conflict of interests, insensitivity and judgmental attitude.

4.2.2.3. Lack of Marital Counseling

AICNP16 was the only participant who reported that the lack of premarital counseling in marriages was amain factor that contributed to a deadlock in his conflict resolution practices. The participant had dealt with two different married couples from two different local churches but they all failed. In one of the cases he narrated:

So, the more we talked the more they tried to solve it by their own ways and again that never worked…. Everyone felt they were right. And again, they were never serious with the counseling we were giving them. They were more like convinced of what they were saying. And again, that one I attributed to lack of counseling. Premarital counseling was lacking. (AICNP16)

4.2.2.4. Manipulation and Corruption

AICNP3 narrated his experience on one particular conflict resolution process that completely failed. According to this research participant the process failed because there was both manipulation and corruption involved. In his conversation he said:

I think it failed because at that time other than having a conference table, they used another method whereby they wanted to have some kind of democracy, where we voted and as a result of voting the majority had to win and that did not solve the conflict because of the majority. So sometimes as a result of not reasoning together and having sometime to discuss and come up with some solutions, if sometimes we depend on the majority, we sometimes fail. So, in this case, the failure came because the majority voted with wrong motives. I mean is because there was some corruption, whereby even after we meet together, we had some people meet together separately and secretly. (AICNP3)

Besides manipulation and corruption, the research participant revealed that lack of sober reasoning and giving the disputants time to calm down and reason logically and rationally could potentially lead to deadlock in a conflict resolution process. This contribution, though from a single research participant, is very significant because it supports what the existing literature pointed out (Villa-Vicencio 2009). Indeed, manipulation is said to be responsible for escalation and deterrence of conflict process (Jeong 2008). 'In general, manipulation via threat tends to be a primitive method of controlling contentious social relationships' (Jeong 2008, 164).

4.2.2.5. External Influence

Another pastor observed that among other factors external influence contributed largely to the stalling of a conflict resolution process he was part of. According to AICNP14, adverse external influence can be potentially detrimental to conflict resolution process and could potentially reverse the process. This kind of experience was really painful because after he successfully settled a conflict between a certain married couple, the wife was manipulated or externally influenced, which subsequently led to the dissolution of their marriage. He stated that'there was someone who was playing tricks on us there because after we resolved that; it only worked for one month, and then the lady went back to her former relationship with other people outside marriage. Subsequently, the husband was shown the door and that marked the dissolution of their marriage' (AICNP14).

4.2.2.6. Partisanship and Insensitivity

One particular participant who doubled as an associate pastor as well as a youth pastor observed that conflict resolution process could be deterred by the mediator if he or she becomes partisan and insensitive. Following a conflict resolution process that involved some young people, he confessed that the process 'failed because they thought I had taken sides in that scenario. The two who had differences thought that I was leaning on one' (AICNP10). He further confessed and owned, as captured in his own words. 'The second thing I think I failed is because I attached a lot of interests in the case that in the process of attaching my personal interests, what they call in other circles, conflict of interests…. I became insensitive to the people so that at times, I felt like I was taking a judgmental position' (AICNP10).

4.2.3. Reaching Successful Conclusion in Conflict Resolution Process

All participants shared experiences of successful conflictresolution processes. Research participants made a conclusion: 1) if the conflict ended, 2) If the disputants agreed to forgive each other, 3) if the involved parties agreed to be reconciled to one another, and 4) if the warring parties resumed normal life (life prior conflict).

4.2.3.1. Conflict Ends

Seven research participants (AICNP1, AICNP5, AICNP8, AICNP10, AICNP11, AICNP16, and AICNP17) suggested that they would conclude conflict resolution process if conflict was resolved or ended. One of them recorded that time was

not a barrier so long as the disputants were willing to resolve their conflict. 'If the people are sincerely willing to bring a resolution, even if it takes a long time, we keep on going on until we get to a point where the two parties agree, or make resolution steps which will make them move forwards' (AICNP8). Both AICNP11 and AICNP1 reported that once the disputing parties appreciated, they had a problem and dealt with it to a point whereby they agreed to work together, that is the time they made a conclusion.

4.2.3.2. Forgiveness

Fourteen research participants reported that they concluded that a conflict resolution process was successful if the disputing parties came to a point of forgiving and receiving forgiveness. Research participants indicated that when the disputants arrived at the point of forgiving each other that was a clear marker that conflict is ending. The forgiveness motif came out strongly as a common fabric in the African culture, which apparently finds support in the literature. In his study, Elmer found out that for forgiveness to take place in one of the communities in Sudan, a mediator had to negotiate with the disputants separately until they were ready to forgive each other. At that point a ceremony would be organized and the whole community would come together to celebrate the restoration of the broken relationship and unity of the community (Elmer 2006, 84-86). One African writer asserts that 'one way to reinforce forgiveness is to root it in moral framework that acknowledges our common humanity. The foundation for forgiveness can only be established when victims adopt a perspective that morally includes the perpetrators' (Murithi 2008,113-114). As noted by some research participants, forgiveness does not mean forgetting. This supports what some theorists have said. 'When you forgive others, you make it clear that you will no longer be upset with them because of what they did. You don't forget what they did, but you no longer try to punish them for doing it' (Jones 2008, 113). Forgiveness is not about forgetting (Young 2007, 224).

4.2.3.3. Reconciliation

Thirteen research participants reported that they would conclude conflict resolution process if the warring parties reconciled. That means the disputing parties resolve their conflict, put issues that made them fight behind them, hence live as brothers and sisters (AICNP2, AICNP6, and AICNP9). According AICNP6 'the objective of reconciliation [is to bring the warring parties] together' help them accept each other, live in harmony and forget all what happened and regard each other as brother and sister and live in harmony. 'Actually, we are talking of leaving that [conflict] behind we come to a solution and then we move on together in unity' (AICNP6). Once the disputants get to this point, research participants said they would conclude the conflict resolution process because 'where there is conflict people disagree and even engage in physical fight and word, so that is why you must restore the broken relationship first….In fact, what comes out of resolving the conflict is the reconciliation' (AICNP17). Another research participant commented, 'My best victory will be like when the warring parties were able to come to terms with issues and were ready to reconcile. I will count that one as a success' (AICNP2). The contribution of the research participants with regard to reconciliation as the end result in conflict resolution process fully supports the precedent literature. For example, Murithi asserts, 'If and when the process of forgiveness is successfully undertaken then the parties involved are ready for genuine healing and reconciliation to begin. Effective reconciliation ultimately consolidates peace building' (2008, 136).

4.2.3.4. Resumption of Normal Life

All the research participants suggested that they would normally draw a conclusion that the conflict resolution process was successful if the disputants agreed to resume their normal life (life prior to conflict). One of the participants cited a classic example when he said; 'For instance if it is a family, you may find that the husband was doing his duties or his things separately without the knowledge of the wife. And the wife also was doing her duties separately, but as they come together and start doing things together, reason together, work together, as the unity is now restored' [that is a success] (AICNP3).Another participant reported, 'the time I know I succeeded, is when we go to a level where these people can get to a place where they can continue with their life and can actually live well, they can now agree with each other, and they allow me to be part of their monitoring process even after I have left them' (AICNP10). Still, another research participant shared his experience in which he assisted a couple that was wrecked by conflict resume their normal life. He said; 'Initially each would use a different car going to work but now they are using the same car. The husband drops [off] the wife…. It is quite a process' (AICNP4).

These research participants reported that at this point it was appropriate to conclude the conflict resolution process. As much as successful conflict process is important and resumption of normal life is a great marker of repaired estranged relationship, more than three quarters of the participants reported that certain rituals were important to seal the deal. These included shaking of hands, hugging each other, eating together, verbally confessing, apologizing, praying together, and compensation (where necessary), among other things. All the participants except two (AICNP16 and AICNP17) subscribed to this view. In celebrating the life of victory over a conflict that caused animosity and destabilized the relationship between parties, research participants reported that based on the separate situations, they took the disputants through certain experiences. They led disputants to confess verbally and apologize to each other (AICNP5, AICNP4). Consistent with his pastoral vocation, one research participant said; 'because I am the mediator… these words are said by them [and] I seal them with prayers' (AICNP4).

Research participants reported that in addition to shaking hands and apologizing to each other, disputants marked the death of their animosity by eating together (AICNP8, AICNP9).'We can sit together and eat the same food. We are no longer enemies; we have reconciled; we have put things back to normal' (AICNP9). The density of conflict is so critical because it severs relationships as noted by one research participant.'It is not easy for people to eat together when there is a

conflict' (AICNP9).

Another participant supported this thought and reflectively talked about conflict resolution from his culture and how it was concluded. He explained; 'these people would sit, they would agree, and occasionally there were rituals and ceremonies. People may slaughter a goat and eat together. And you know whenever people eat together, [it] is a sign that they have agreed. It is hard to find yourself sharing in a meal with a person you don't agree with' (AICNP8). The concept of slaughtering a life breathing animal and shedding blood with regard to conflict resolution appeared to be a significant marker among the research participants in their endeavors to resolve conflicts (AICNP11, AICNP6, AICNP14, AICNP4, and AICNP2). 'As a way of sealing the deal, people would like to slaughter something so that people may eat together. The slaughtering of the animal was the culmination of everything to seal the deal.

This concept was also echoed by another participant who said 'the blood that is shed acted as a covenant binding these two parties and you know where the blood has been shed, it means that if you break that vow, or if you break that covenant, then, …a curse might come on you' (AICNP4). The concept of sharing in a meal runs through most of the Kenyan communities as echoed by the presiding bishop whose contribution was sought for triangulation purposes. He confirmed that besides eating together, in his culture conflict resolution was culminated with the elders and the disputants sharing in a drink. In his own words he said; 'in our culture reconciliation was brought about by drinking milk together from one glass or gourd. 'It is of paramount importance to underscore that this piece of data finds a special place in literature.

Rituals and symbols are generally used to protect and promote cohesion in the African communities. In this regard, Elmer found that the guarding of peace and unity in the society even included putting a curse against anyone who may think of reigniting conflict (Elmer 2006). Brock-Utne concurs with Elmer and points out that a curse was used among some communities in Uganda, Kenya and Southern Sudan as a deterrent for anyone who might think of doing anything that could jeopardize the peace and unity of the community (Brock-Utne 2001). It appeared that conflict resolution process was likely to be concluded not only with positive results but even with negative results. In the following section, the researcher will briefly discuss the negative conclusion of a conflict resolution process. Participants reported that they concluded conflict resolution process if the following symptoms were present; if the situation worsened, if disputants withdraw, if the process suffered a deadlock, or if the disputants assumed a standoff position.

4.2.4. Conclusion Made due to Deadlock in Conflict Resolution Process

Five of the research participants (AICNP3, AICNP5, AICNP8, AICNP10, and AICNP12) commented on this category suggesting that conflict resolution process did not always end up on a successful note. For instance, one of the research participants, pointed out that he would declare that conflict resolution process failed, if the situation went from bad to worse.' If the situation worsens sometimes you may feel like you have failed but is only that you have played your role… give them the responsibility because at the end of the day the responsibility is theirs' (AICNP3). But according to AICNP5, the time he would conclude that the process failed is if the parties took standoff positions. 'You will be made aware that the process may lead you to a deadlock or a dead end when the two parties (people) assume standoff positions… or they don't want to relent, but they are just there. Then you will tell that possibly the direction may not be right' (AICNP5). Also, another pastor explained that the time he would declare that the process has failed is, if the parties were neither willing to forgive each other nor willing to be reconciled. 'I feel I have failed where we come to a deadlock. These people are not ready to forgive each other and begin life afresh together. So, there are a few that I have felt that these people are not ready to reconcile' (AICNP12). Similarly, another research participant stated 'I may come to a conclusion that we need to end it, if I find people are not willing to come to a resolution of their conflict' (AICNP8). Besides deadlock, standoff positions, and relentlessness of the disputants, it emerged that a conclusion could be reached if the disputants chose to withdraw and stop the process in the middle. One research participant said:

> I think the only time I can make, or I ever make a conclusion that I have failed is for example, when I got to a place whereby we have not got to agreement, I mean we have not got to a place where we are in harmony and the process stops and these people never again return. And they say they will not want to return… [and] I can see the problem is still going on. It is clear that I have not succeeded (AICNP10).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

In this document, we discussed different theories about conflict resolution. Understanding these theories and their practices is deemed critical if theological institutions that are equipping pastors and other people helpers (e.g. chaplains) could factor into their curriculum courses that can address conflict and conflict resolution. These theories have been developed and used in the world over. We therefore, recommend that theological educators and theological institutions consider using principles that are compatible with biblical teachings and relevant to their contexts. This is because 'human conflict is a subject that deserves the most careful and searching inquiry. It is a subject per excellence for public understanding. Yet today's education has little to say on the subject' (Hamburg 1994, 5-6). Jones agrees with Hamburg and also asserts that 'a large part of the problem is that students are not taught how to deal with conflict and how to create communities in which social aggression is not acceptable' (2006, 239).

The most invaluable thing theological institutions and theological educators could do is to change this trend by introducing conflict resolution into pastoral training package. On his part, Hamburg emphasizes that education all around the world should be designed to help the entire human fraternity understand its interdependence, similarities and the need to engage in 'constructive conflict resolution' (1994, 7). Hamburg pinpoints some specific institutions through which

this kind of education can be channeled through in order to have some transformative impacts on the larger community. These include family, schools, the media, and community organizations. He further contends that education through these institutions ought to be a tool for de-escalating conflict. According to Hamburg's position which this researcher is in full support, is that education 'must serve to enlarge our social identifications in light of common characteristics and superordinate goals. It must seek a basis for fundamental human identification across diversity of cultures in the face of manifest conflict. We are, in fact, a single interdependent, meaningfully attached, worldwide species (1994, 6). If theological institutions could take up this challenge and enshrine conflict resolution education courses into their curriculum, then we will have more conflict resolution resolvers. That means we will have more people equipped to de-escalate conflict and violence in our community. It should not be construed that by equipping more people, all conflict will disappear. No. The sole purpose is to reduce and even equip people with tools to deal with conflict in a constructive manner.

Based on this study we conclude that a conflict resolution process was bound to fail if the disputants came to the conflict resolution table with uncooperative attitude, unforgiving spirit, and closed mind among other factors. It occurred that, it is not the expertise of the pastor or lack of it that led to a standoff, but it depended on the attitude and the response the disputants brought to the discussion table. The study also showed that there are times when the process failed because the pastor was incapable of handling certain situations. Similarly, the study indicated that a conflict resolution process did not succeed because the pastor had a lot of expertise and experience, but in addition to these things, disputants were available and willing to work together until a solution was found. Conflict resolution process was terminated on either a positive or a negative note. A conflict resolution process was terminated positively if the conflict ended (was resolved). On the other hand, a conflict resolution process ended negatively whenever the disputing parties were uncooperative and assumed a standoff position. Depending on the magnitude of the issue and the parties involved, when conflict resolution process ended positively, there was forgiveness, and reconciliation between the disputants. The conclusion in this case was crowned with some kind of celebration that included eating and drinking together. In some ethnic groups a curse was put against anyone who might ignite the fire of conflict. In addition, disputants resumed their normal life that is life prior to conflict.

5.2. Recommendations

There is need for a study to find the feelings and what different ethnic groups think and perceive each other may be helpful because it will perhaps help the church deal with the underlying causes of tension and conflict. The study showed that this issue is so huge and astounding that it surfaces in the Christian fraternity. Given that, Kenya is multiethnic country, a situation that makes it open to ethnic conflicts, we recommend that a further study on conflict and conflict resolution be conducted in all theological seminaries to establish whether they see it as a problem and what their response is. We also would like to recommend that since conflict and violence is affecting not only Christian, a mega study be conducted to find out whether education in Kenya is designed to respond to ethnicity and conflict.

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