

Conflict Management by the Catholic Church in Kenya

Tabitha W. Magundu

R50/75124/2009

University of NAIROBI Library



0389366 6

**A Project Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the
Degree of Master in International Studies, University Of Nairobi**

November, 2012

Declaration

This research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other institution or university.

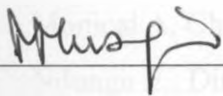
Signed 

Date 17th NOVEMBER 2012

Tabitha W. Magundu

R50/75124/2009

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors.

Sign 

Date 17/11/12

Prof. M. Mwagiru

Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS)

Acknowledgement

This research paper is made possible through the help and guidance of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this research.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor Makumi Mwangi for his guidance on the theme, organization, and grammar of this thesis.

Secondly, I would like to express my utmost gratitude to the following people who provided value advice and information that contributed to the successful completion of this thesis:

- Phillip Mwago, Diocese of Parklands
- Apiyo O, Church member, St. John the Baptist, Riruta,
- Evelyn N. Church member, St. Joseph Mkasa, Kahawa West
- Francis M. Church member, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Adams Arcade
- Jennifer K. Programme Coordinator, Radio Waumini.
- John O. Bishop, Diocese of Ngong
- Kago, M, Kanana, K and Anyango, S., Church members, St. Joseph the Worker, Kangemi,
- Martin, M., Church member, Holy Trinity, Kariobangi
- Maxwell, A. K. Laity, Holy Mary Mother of God, Githurai,
- Monical A. Church member, St. John's, Korogocho
- Ndungu E., Director. Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC),
- Paul A. D., Coordinator Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC)
- Peter, N., Laity, Holy Cross, Dandora

Finally, I sincerely thank my parents for their invaluable support and encouragement and the one above all of us, the omnipresent God, for answering my prayers and giving me the strength; thank you so much Dear Lord.

Dedication

This research paper is lovingly dedicated to my parents who have been my constant source of inspiration. They have given me the drive and discipline to tackle any task with enthusiasm and determination. Without their love and support this project would not have been made possible.

Abstract

The main objective of the study was to analyse conflict management by the Catholic Church in Kenya. The main objective was fulfilled by identifying the various types of conflicts in the Catholic Church, investigating the causes of conflict and exploring ways of managing conflict as well as expected challenges in conflict management by the Catholic Church. The research design used in this study was descriptive survey method. The target population comprised of Catholic priests, and the laity of from various regions in Nairobi. Quota sampling was used to select the sample for the study. Data was collected through interviews and the qualitative data was analysed thematically. The study established that conflicts within Kenyan Catholic Church fall under three categories: - substantive conflicts, interpersonal conflicts and information Conflicts. The study established that the leadership of Kenyan Catholic Church has the proper skill to manage conflict and the attitude of the church towards conflict is positive. Communication and Change management are major tools in conflict management within Kenyan Catholic Church. Effective conflict management in Kenyan Catholic Church is enhanced by implementation of measures to prevent conflicts, prepare for conflict and transform conflict. The study recommends that conflicts management by Kenyan Catholic Church can be improved through respect in the mediation process, availing equal opportunities for all parties to be listened, creation of a just outcome, emphasis on reconciliation, targeting the true root causes of each conflict, compromise, appreciation of individual strengths and flaws, appreciation of individual contribution to the conflict, sincere apologies, and forgiveness.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction to the Study.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem.....	2
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	3
1.4 Literature Review	3
1.5 Theoretical Framework.....	11
1.6 Hypothesis	12
1.7 Methodology.....	13
1.8 Chapter Outline.....	17
Chapter Two.....	18
The Conflict Management Process.....	18
2.0 Introduction.....	18
2.1 Understanding the Concept of Conflict	18
2.2 Types of Conflict	19
2.3 Sources of Conflict	20
2.4 Actors, Issues, Interests and Positions.....	21

2.5 Third Parties of Conflict; Their Role, Entry & Motives.....	26
2.6 Methods of Conflict Management	28
2.7 Approaches to Managing Conflict and their Outcomes.....	30
2.8 Understanding Church Conflict.....	35
Chapter Three	40
Causes of Conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.....	40
3.0 Introduction.....	40
3.1 The Birth of the Catholic Church	41
3.2 Conflict in the Midst of the Clergy	43
3.3 Disputes Between the Clergy and Congregation	45
3.4 Conflict between the Church and the Vatican	48
3.5 The Catholic Doctrine as a Source of Conflict.....	49
Chapter Four.....	57
Analysis of Conflict Management in the Catholic Church	57
4.0 Introduction.....	57
4.1 Structure of the Catholic Church in Kenya.....	57
4.2 Types of conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church.....	59
4.3 Causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.....	62
4.4 Management of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church	65

Chapter Five.....69
Conclusions.....69
 5.0 Introduction.....69
 5.1 Conclusions and Recommendations69
Bibliography72
Appendix A: Interview Questions75

Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

1.1 Introduction

An analysis of causes of conflict in Africa reveals two major patterns; one relates to ethnicity, and the other relates to religion. Amidst increasing religious diversities, which is characteristic of contemporary Africa, both latent and overt conflicts are discernible. Religion still forms the basis of major conflicts worldwide, and has seemed to serve as a prop and a justification for most wars around the world since centuries past and has even been used to justify terrorism for that matter.

Some aspects of religion make it susceptible to being a latent source of conflict. All religions have their accepted dogma that followers must live and abide by without question and this can lead to inflexibility and intolerance. At the same time, scripture and dogma are often vague and open to interpretation and hence conflict, that ultimately cannot be resolved because there is no arbiter, can arise over whose interpretation is correct. The “winner” generally is the interpretation that attracts the most followers¹. Churches exist in every society, and every society which honors basic human rights has a role for the church. Society sees churches primarily as moral guardians, helpers of the poor and needy and as being important providers of opportunities for public worship and a range of social services.

Church problems have existed since the first-century church, so it is not surprising that today’s church, which is still not perfect, would have its share of problems. The

¹ Brahm, E. *Religion and Conflict: Beyond Intractability*, April, 2005: 10. Retrieved 01 May 12012 from: [http:// w.w.w. beyondintractability.org/print/2402](http://w.w.w.beyondintractability.org/print/2402)

church has failed to speak as one voice and has over the years lost the authority that it once had in the times of the early church. People have become dissatisfied with church leadership, ownership and utilization of resources, practices and beliefs. The problem seems to stem from the thought that, the church seems more focused on the 'organization' part of the church and is leaving out the living organism in the church. The church seems to be increasingly concerned about its "agenda" rather than its God ordained purpose.

The Roman Catholic Church is no stranger to conflict despite its obvious grandeur and phenomenal success. Despite holding the world's record for longevity for any organization, it has, like most organized religious groups, experienced its share of conflict. This is very apparent today, as Catholicism struggles to be a universal church spanning widely disparate cultures which have opposing and rapidly evolving beliefs concerning democracy, human sexuality, and other issues, that have greatly contributed to strife and unrest within its parishes globally.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The Catholic Church today is faced with a major challenge of division both in ideologies and practices. This is mainly due to its strong fixed bias towards maintaining the status quo which, as seen in the question of contraception, has ironically achieved contrary results to one of the church's core purpose of preserving life. As a result, the church's own doctrines are indirectly fuelling the degradation in society that the "ideal" church is supposed to fight/stand against and protect its congregation from.

There is a marked increase in internal wrangles, for example the question of celibacy, which has resulted in an actual split of the church. Consequently, the church is

failing to achieve its core function of promoting unity and peaceful coexistence amongst mankind. The church continues to be in denial of the obvious discord in its midst, e.g. with the global sexual abuse allegations by the clergy. This is eroding the trust of the faithful hence preventing the church from playing its pivotal role of providing moral guidance to citizens of the country and is often translated as hypocrisy by non-believers.

If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.

Conflict is alive in the Catholic Church today and this study seeks to explore how this conflict arises, how it should be handled and the challenges that need to be faced if conflict is to be handled constructively and creatively.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the various types of conflicts in the Catholic Church
2. To investigate causes of conflict in the Catholic Church
3. To explore ways of managing conflict as well as expected challenges conflict in the Catholic Church

1.4 Literature Review

This chapter will review related articles in regards to identifying the causes of conflict in and organization or the church.

The Core of Conflicts

In order for leaders to develop skills in avoiding, analyzing, and addressing conflict, we have to understand what lies at the center of the problems. The authors of *Unconditional*

Excellence quotes from Ken Sandy's book, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, regarding the three major reasons serious differences arise:

Lack of Humility: Everything revolves around me, my and mine. As long as we focus on ourselves, we'll always have disharmony.

Lack of Alignment: People are at variance because they don't know where they're going. Either they think they're in agreement with others, or they don't take seriously the minor issues that separate them.

Lack of Good Communications: Too often we discover this lack after contention has erupted.²

Because communications problem lie at the core of many issues, leaders are to develop unconditionally excellent problem-solving skills. This begins when we make a choice to commit ourselves to becoming the very best in our workplace. It starts with a decision and followed by an action. Because self-centeredness or self interest is also another basic cause, only by living a covenantal life, continual modeling of humility will make leaders effective peacemakers.

The Organizational Conflict

The structuralist views the society as a construction of human beings, constructed in a particular form and manner (structure). These structures can be constructed in a manner that leads to either peace or conflict. There are different structures in society that form the basis upon which we have conflict. For example, economic structures give wealth to some and deny others and negative cultures such as a patriarchal culture which promotes violence and demeans women.

² Allan M. Ross and Cecil Murphey, *Unconditional Excellence: Answering God's Call to Be Your Professional Best*. Avon: Adams Media Corporation, (2002);pp 254-255

“Not all conflict is bad”. This is a statement that is often heard uttered by church leaders and conflict resolution experts. They say this with the understanding of the two types of conflict, where “managers should stimulate functional conflict and prevent or resolve dysfunctional conflict.”³ The functional understanding of organizational conflict perceives conflict as a productive energy; one that can motivate members of the organization to increase their knowledge and skills, and their input to organizational innovation and productivity. Nelson and Quick defines it as “a healthy, constructive disagreement between two or more people” which can “produce new ideas, learning, and growth among individuals,” that can “improve working relationships.”⁴

The dysfunctional understanding of organizational conflict is rooted in the idea that organizations are created to accomplish goals by making structures that perfectly define job responsibilities, authorities, and other job functions. This understanding of organizations and conflict causes problems because it is “an unhealthy, destructive disagreement between two or more people” which takes focus away from the work to be done and “places the focus on the conflict itself and the parties involved.”⁵

Traditionally conflict has been regarded as abhorrent in organizations. When seen as behaviour intended to obstruct the achievement of another person's goals, it is easy to understand the belief that a healthy organizational climate should reflect complete harmony. However, this unitarist view, espoused by Drucker, 1989 and Handy, 1987 and others, is no longer paramount. Conflict can be a positive force that stimulates interest

³ Sims, R. R. (2002). *Managing Organizational Behaviour*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc. p 246

⁴ Nelson, D. L. and Campbell J.Q. (1997), *Organizational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges*, 2nd Ed. New York: West Publishing Company. pp378-379

⁵ Ibid

and creativity, identifies and assists in resolving problems and promotes group cohesion". It can also be a stimulus for organizational learning⁷. Vecchio, Hearn and Southey suggest that conflict is not necessarily good or bad but inevitable, and it is only the effect that conflict has on performance that should be judged⁸. Too much or too little conflict can be detrimental to organizational performance. Too much conflict leads to chaos and disorder, while too little can result in complacency and lack of innovation. The implication is that conflict must be managed.

Sources of conflict include communication, structure, personal variables and organizational boundaries Bryans and Cronin identify the opportunity for conflict between parties; that is, between corporate and individual goals, between departments or groups, between the formal and informal organization, between manager and managed, between the individual and the job, and finally between individuals⁹. However, while these factors are standard in organizations, the amount of conflict varies. Conflict erupts when the actions of one person or group are perceived or felt by another person or group to be preventing, blocking, or interfering with the effective actions of the other group. Only then must conflict be managed.

Yperen writes that church conflict is fostered by structural systemic problems through its own constitutions and by-laws¹⁰. He stresses that the church's inadequate response to conflict is part of the system dynamic, a structure that underlies the way the church functions and makes decisions, that create climate for conflict and increases the

⁶ Mullins, L.J. (1993), *Management and Organizational Behaviour*, 3rd Ed., London: Pitman.

⁷ Pascale, R. (1990), *Managing on the Edge: How the Smartest Companies Use Conflict to Stay Ahead*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

⁸ Vecchio, Hearn, G. and Southey, G. (1992), *Organizational Behaviour: Life at Work in Australia*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

⁹ Mullins, L.J. (1993). *Management and Organizational Behaviour*, 3rd Ed., London: Pitman

¹⁰ Yperen, J.V. (2002). *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, Chicago: Moody Publishers.

time and effort that will be required to resolve it. Hugh F. Halverstadt draws on various principles of organizational dynamics based on power relationships¹¹. According to Halverstadt, conflict in the church occurs in voluntary institutions whose structures and processes permit and even entice unaccountable uses of power. He also notes that the imbalance of economic dependence of church 'employees' and volunteers further confounds church conflict and this imbalance of financial dependence sets up manipulative exercises of power. Pressures for and against personal and social change and vulnerability to power plays in voluntary systems exacerbate church conflict.

Palmer¹² identifies underlying causes of conflict as faulty and leadership and administration where relationships within the organizational structure are unclear. Leadership that is viewed as too autocratic, too weak or too political creates an organization that has no guidance and is both passive and demoralized. Poorly defined responsibilities due to the church's lack of proper review of roles as changes take place has been a source of disharmony within the people serving in the church.

There are many strategies for reducing conflict, including standardization of rules and procedures; shared behaviours; planning and scheduling, which encourage shared values and norms; negotiation and bargaining, which acknowledge differences and strive for acceptance or resolution; and putting aside differences in order to strive for super-ordinate goals, which encourages organizational commitment¹³.

¹¹ Halverstadt, H.F. (1991). *Managing Church Conflict*, 1st Ed., Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

¹² Palmer, D.C. (1990). *Managing Conflict Creatively: A Guide for Missionaries & Christian Workers*, California: William Carey Library

¹³ Robbins, S.P., Waters-Marsh, T., Cacioppe, R. and Millett, B. (1994). *Organizational Behaviour: Concepts Controversies and Applications Australia and New Zealand*. Australia: Prentice Hall

Cultural Conflict

Halverstadt states that church conflicts are often generated by acting on faith agendas for cultural or social change¹⁴. He further says that while Christian religiosity often operates to preserve the status quo, Christian faithfulness operates to challenge and change the status quo. Yperen identifies syncretism (the uncritical combination of two or more different, often opposing, beliefs and practices into one).¹⁵ He discusses the conflict between the western cultures for example and the Christian culture. Where our cultures promote individualism and self-promotion, Christianity promotes selflessness and service to others¹⁶. An attempt to harmonize these very distinctively different values can trigger and fuel conflict.

Donald Palmer looking from the perspective of missionary and Christian workers describes four underlying causes of conflict. The first cause is when territory is threatened or disputed. This is when two parties want to occupy the same space, at the same time or when two parties propose different goals or solutions that cannot all be put in action at the same time. The second cause is when expectations are not fulfilled. Expectations are sometimes not realistic or not clarified and the other party does not act according to the expectation of the other party. The third cause is faulty leadership and administration. This happens when there is an unclear relationship within the organizational structure, poorly defined job responsibilities, poor planning, breakdown of communication, leadership that is too autocratic or too weak, or overly political. The last is caused by attitudes and personalities clash. There are prejudices and biases which are

¹⁴ Halverstadt, H.F. (1991). *Managing Church Conflict*, 1st Ed., Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.

¹⁵ Yperen, J.V. (2002). *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, Chicago: Moody Publishers

¹⁶ Yperen, J.V. (2002). *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, Chicago: Moody Publishers

reflected consciously and unconsciously, and there are differences in temperaments, personalities and styles.¹⁷

Palmer¹⁸ identifies substantive issues as the most serious and difficult to deal with. This is because they deal with people's values, beliefs and traditions, which people are often not willing to compromise or change. Issues such as doctrines of the church, role of women in the church, the church's position on divorce and "style" of worship are but a few of the customs or traditions that people have held for long periods of time and feel that they should remain unchanged. He also suggests that people's own prejudices and biases, both conscious and subconscious, are capable of creating very strong feelings and divisions amongst people. Differences may be on the basis of race, education, background. Individual differences in how people think and communicate with each other, leading to interpersonal conflict, seems to be the most common cause of church conflict. Jim Murphy elaborates that behaviours cause conflict. According to Murphy, the four different behaviors that cause conflict are: intellectual, emotional, interpersonal, and managerial¹⁹

In the book *Effective Human Relations in Organizations*, Reece & Brandt list the following causes of conflict as ineffective communication, value clashes, culture clashes, work policies and practices, adversarial management, noncompliance, and difficult people.²⁰ While all factors may become a cause of conflict in the church, the last cause, difficult people, may be the number one cause, due to the nature of the church. Gangel

¹⁷ Palmer, D.C. (1990) *Managing Conflict Creatively: A Guide for Missionaries & Christian Workers*. Pasadena: William Carey Library. pp7-11.

¹⁸ Ibid. p8

¹⁹ Murphy, J. (1994). *Managing Conflict at Work*, West Des Moines: American Media Publishing. pp30-31

²⁰ Reece, B. L. and Brandt, R. (1999). *Effective Human Relations in Organizations*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. p333

and Canine added additional perspectives. They identified confrontation, dogmatism, and efficiency breakdown as causes of conflict.²¹ On the other hand, McSwain and Treadwell, emphasizes on stress as the root of conflict. They describe stress as an intrapersonal conflict which “forces individuals to choose from among a multitude of options in life how they shall live.”²² The church sometimes creates stress because of “unmet expectation and unfulfilled hopes, unrealistic demands, failure in management, and contradictions in the church with secular experiences.”²³

Speed Leas complements the previous arguments when he adds fear, needs, and sin as three shortcomings in people that cause church conflict.²⁴ He continues in another article that there are ten most predictable times of conflict, that is, during Easter, stewardship campaigns/budget time, addition of new staff, change in leadership style, the pastor’s vacation, changes in the pastor’s family, the completion of a new building, loss of church membership, and increase in church membership.²⁵ A church leader should be aware of these activities and be on guard

Dudley Weeks in his book *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution* re-emphasizes needs as one of the ingredients of conflict. Diversity and differences, perceptions, power, values and principles, feelings and emotions, are the remaining ingredients for conflict. It is obvious that Weeks presents a much broader variety of causes of conflict compared to other authors.

²¹ Gangel, K.O. and Canine, S.L. (1992). *Communication and Conflict Management: In Churches and Christian Organizations*. Nashville: Broadman Press. pp 180-184

²² McSwain, L. L. and Treadwell, W. C. Jr. (1981). *Conflict Ministry in the Church*, Nashville: Broadman Press. p59.

²³ Ibid., p.12

²⁴ Leas, S. ed. Shelley, M. (1997) “Rooting Out Causes of Conflict” in *Leading Your Church Through Conflict and Reconciliation*, Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers. pp104-106.

²⁵ Leas, S. *The Ten Most Predictable Times of Conflict*” in *Leading Your Church Through Conflict*, pp 45-53.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two theories of conflict, namely; the Peace Researcher and the Conflict Researcher conflict theories.

Conflict Research Theory

This theory is based on the idealist view whose argument is that in the international system, there are more actors than just states. Due to the existence of these other actors, the idealist argues that individuals or the state cannot be the only units of analysis and looks at the interactions of these various actors and their transactions as they interact with each other. These activities and interactions of the major actors cause tensions steaming the system towards being conflictual.

The conflict research argues that the cause of conflict is not an instinct to dominate rather it is a response to the environment and is triggered by circumstances. This theory does not accept that the cause of conflict is an instinct in man; a drive to dominate; but rather that conflictual behaviour is a response to an actor's perception of the environment. This approach looks at conflict as a learned behaviour triggered by circumstances that can be manipulated. The conflict researcher sees conflict as rational, in that it is intended to serve a useful purpose, endemic and is therefore subjective. This is because the parties can change their goals and values subject to reassessment.

The conflict research focuses on understanding conflict and relationships amongst parties to a conflict and proposes that the way to attaining peace is by involving all actors in order to find a mutual solution to their problem(s). The Conflict Researcher treats all parties to a conflict as undifferentiated participants; therefore, once recognised as a party, an actor's position must be accommodated on acceptable terms for the dispute to be

resolved. He is viewed as an activist on behalf of all parties; the challenge however lies in deciding which actors are parties to a dispute and to what extent.

The conflict research goal is to resolve conflicts through legitimized and self-sustaining conflict resolution processes without the intervention of third parties and the imposition of behavioural patterns. Peace according to the Conflict Researcher is achieved by bringing all individuals on board or involving all the actors so as to find a mutual solution of their problems. The Conflict Researcher seeks to provide a supportive framework for the parties to work towards dispute resolution. He has no particular outcome in mind except to one which the parties give their free assent to. This approach has been widely applied at systems level such as industrial relations and in social work. This approach has been challenged by the Peace Researcher approach.

1.6 Hypothesis

- The study will reveal and create awareness of the magnitude of conflict that the present day Kenyan Catholic church is facing and the effect of these conflicts on the society.
- The study will bring to actualization the need for the church to change its attitude in order to finding positive ways of managing conflict within its midst.
- The study will offer ways of promoting intra-religious dialogue in the church in a bid to promote peaceful coexistence in the community through the church.
- The church clergy, administrators and even church members will benefit from this study.

1.7 Methodology

The focus of this chapter is the nature of the research, a description of the methods used in carrying out the study, the research design as well as their suitability for the topic. This section presents the population used, as well as the sampling technique that will be engaged, data collection procedures, analysis and the instruments used in the study. The purpose for conducting this research is to establish factors that contribute to the conflict experienced within the church and its effect on society.

Research design

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey method that was both qualitative and quantitative so as to utilize statistical information gathered from the proposed research instruments as well as making a variety of subjective assessments of similar research data. Descriptive research was selected because it tends to describe the state of affairs as it exists²⁶. It is used to obtain status of issues as they are and to draw valid general conclusion from the facts discussed²⁷ which is applicable to this study. Kerlinger points out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact finding but also result in formulation of knowledge and solution to significant problems²⁸

The aim of the descriptive survey method was collection of information from respondents on their attitudes and opinions in relation to conflict in the church. The quantitative design methodology involved the production of an appropriate questionnaire designed to elicit questions regarding known and latent conflicts witnessed in the church

²⁶ Kisilu, D.K. and Tromp D.L.A. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

²⁷ Best, J.W. and Kahn, J.V. (1993). *Research in Education*. New York: Prentice Hall Inc.

²⁸ Kerlinger, F.N. (1973). *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston..

so as to generate data on the contemporary Catholic viewpoint of conflict within the church. The qualitative approach to research involved a series of semi-structured focused interviews targeted at several different groups within the church community. In order to determine whether any noticeable or measureable trends exist regarding Catholics' values pertaining to internal church conflict, the qualitative portion of the research study was most appropriate. Qualitative research was used as part of the study involved in selecting a sample population that would represent a defined population.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population included all the participants that were of theoretical interest to the study. The subject of this study comprised of Catholic priests, and the laity of from various regions in Nairobi. From this target population, accessible population was sampled.

Results from the quantitative research were largely descriptive and entailed the reporting of the sample population. Purposive, quota and accidental non-probability sampling methods were used. Purposive sampling involves a deliberate selection of particular units in the population, believed to be reliable for the study, to constitute the sample.²⁹ Since there was a known characteristic as focus of the study, I selected units, (Catholic priests and Catholic faithfuls), as representative of the population. Participant criterion was that the person selected had to have in depth knowledge of the Catholic faith, its beliefs, practices. They were also required to have been Catholics for a period of not less than 10 years. The priests were selected based on their availability and willingness to be interviewed.

²⁹ Singleton, R.A. Jr., Straits, B.C and Straits, M.M. (1993). *Approaches to Social Research. 2nd Ed.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Quota sampling is a form of sampling that utilizes a selected quota (subgroup or homogenous group). The researcher began by dividing the population into relevant quotas such gender, age and position in the church for this particular study. The sample was allocated within the quota in direct proportion to the actual population. Once the researcher identified the relevant persons to be studied, accidental method of sampling was used based on availability of units within the quota. In this case, 02 people belonging to a community church group, St. Bakhita Community group, comprising of approximately 22 church members, was selected to represent a population of almost 400 church members of Christ the King Catholic Church, Embakasi parish.

Data Collection

Data was collected through interviews and questionnaires. In order to conduct the research in a qualitative manner it was essential to develop questionnaires that met the needs of the research questions. As identified in Appendix A , interview questions matched the research questions and was used to identify the results.

Data Collection Techniques

The research adopted both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data collection methods included the survey method where interviews were utilized as the primary modes. The survey method encompassed any measurement procedure that involves asking questions of respondents. Questions asked relied on the respondents' basic knowledge of known conflicts and challenges within the Catholic Church.

Interviews entailed face-to-face interviews with bishops, parish priests and the laity. In total 30 key informants were interviewed; 03 priests and 27 laypersons from various parishes in Nairobi. The interviews were conducted in church grounds and/or offices and

also in home in the year 2012 between 24th September and 8th October.

Secondary method of data collection included information from books, e-books, journals, newspapers reports and a variety of reports from Britannica. There was however very limited literature available in the libraries and the research depended heavily on online books. This method of data collection yielded the most results as compared to primary method.

Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to make it easy for evaluation. In this regard simple data analysis tools were used. The data was analyzed using means and percentages. In the qualitative method, data was analyzed thematically. Here, themes were identified and data collected was coded to categorize particular responses from the questionnaires. The codes helped in organizing, quantifying and analyzing data. In coding closed-ended questions, numerical symbols were assigned to the various answer categories and analysis followed.

For the open-ended questions, coding involved combining the detailed information contained in a response into a limited number of categories that enabled simple description of the data, which allowed for statistical analysis. Verbatim quotes will be used to present the data. The collected data was analyzed and compared to the secondary data from the literature in order to assess the magnitude of conflict within the church. The analyzed data was then used to draw up conclusions and recommendations arrived at. Responses from both the clergy sample and the laity sample were compiled and analyzed in order to fulfill the study's research objectives on clergy viewpoint, laity viewpoint, and the overall nature of conflict within the church.

1.8 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 discusses the conflict management processes

Chapter 3 discusses the causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.

Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the data collected on conflict management in the Catholic Church.

Chapter 5 presents conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Chapter Two

The Conflict Management Process

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conflict management process. It will look through the definition and general notion of conflict management and discuss the various elements, approaches and styles of managing conflict which can be used by the clergy, church leaders and lay persons in resolving conflicts in the church.

2.1 Understanding the Concept of Conflict

Conflict is considered an endemic feature of society which implies that the phenomenon of conflict in one form or another is an inevitable and ever present feature of society and social interaction. Conflict is a normal and necessary part of human relationships³⁰, it is part and parcel of our everyday life, a part of human society.³¹ As long as there is human interaction, there will be conflict, therefore, conflict can never be completely eradicated hence the need to manage it properly.

Since the relationship conflict is inevitable, we need to change the way we understand the word conflict and learning to deal with it in a healthy way is crucial. Conflict can be negative (destructive/violent) which leads to unhealthy relationship or positive (constructive/non-violent) which leads to healthy relationship. Constructive conflict improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation through which problems can be aired and tensions released. This kind of conflict is referred to as positive conflict because it is a conflict that helps the people involved improve their relationship for good. Destructive conflict leads to retarded communication, reduction in

³⁰ Mwangi, M., *Peace & Conflict Management In Kenya*, (Nairobi: Centre for Conflict Research, 2003) p9

³¹ Mwangi, M. et al., *Understanding Conflicts and its Management: Some Kenyan Perspectives*, (Nairobi: CCR-WLEA Publications, 1998) p.4

group cohesiveness and a subordination of goals to primacy of in-fighting among members. This kind of conflict produces bitterness, envy, anger and unforgiveness and is usually protracted with no immediate and permanent solution at sight.

Conflict can be viewed as an opportunity to change³² and is beneficial if properly managed and can provide a chance to re-examine relationships and try to make them better and stronger/solid. Conflict can serve the useful function of warning when things are going wrong with relationships in society and could provide remedial action before things go completely bad. When conflict is mismanaged, it can harm the relationship, but when handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bond between two or more people/communities. The proper management of conflict should remove its negative and dysfunctional effects that are dangerous. The Catholic Church is mainly plagued by the structural non-violent category of conflict, which does not manifest itself as physical violence but exists because something is wrong with the structure of relationships between people.³³

2.2 Types of Conflict

Conflict occurs among different classes of people and produces different kinds of results.

Intrapersonal Conflict: occur within a person as he/she takes a decision on the use of time, choice of partner, moral issues, goals and aspirations etc. and is capable of producing anxiety and tension within the person going through this kind of conflict.

³² Osita, A., 'West Africa Trouble Spots and the Imperative for Peace Building', (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006) p2

³³ Mwagiru, M., 'Peace & Conflict Management In Kenya', op.cit, p.9

Interpersonal Conflict: This is a conflict that occurs between two or more individuals. It may result from differences in opinion, motives and actions. This kind of conflict is what is seen when two people are having disagreement among themselves.

Intragroup Conflict: This may occur between individuals within a group. This is similar to interpersonal conflicts except that it occurs within a particular group. This kind of conflict can be seen when for example two members of the church choir are having disagreement about something which has to do with the choir.

Intergroup Conflict: This is a conflict that occurs between groups of people such as solidarity groups, activity groups and church denominations. This kind of conflict occurs when for example members of the choir are in disagreement with members of the ushering team or one country at war with another country.

2.3 Sources of Conflict

Conflict arises from differences which if not properly handled will produce sharp disagreement and sometimes violent clashes. It occurs whenever people disagree over their values, motivations, perceptions, ideas, or desires. Sometimes these differences look trivial, but when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal and relational need is at the core of the problem—a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy. Conflict also occurs when you have disagreement, dispute or controversy in ideas or viewpoints mostly held by two or more individuals/groups.

Mitchell affirms that “a conflict arises when two or more parties have incompatible goals about something”.³⁴ The parties could be individuals, social groups or

³⁴ Mitchell, C. R., *The Structure of International Conflict*, (London: Macmillan, 1998) p.15-25

organizations. Mitchell further says that many conflict situations involve conditions of scarcity and values which place a premium on the possession of the same resource or positions. Others result from value incompatibilities regarding use or distribution of resources, about social and political structures, or about beliefs and behaviour of others.

2.4 Actors, Issues, Interests and Positions

In order to manage conflicts effectively, it is vital to examine the complex relationship that exists between the conflict, parties and issues. The interaction between actors, between actors and the conflict and amongst them and the management process is complex.

Actors in Conflict

These are the people involved in the conflict itself. They are also referred to as all those engaged in or being affected by the conflict. They are the states, groups or individuals and institutions that may be contributing to conflict in a negative or positive manner.³⁵ According to Bercovitch, conflict among individuals, groups and states are pervasive and are part of every process of interdependence that brings various actors together. As a result, conflict relationships are part and parcel of human existence.³⁶ Actors differ as to their goals and interests, their positions, capacities to realize interests and relationships with other actors. When we engage in conflict, we direct our attention to the actors to see how they can negotiate with each other and reduce their incompatible points of view.³⁷

³⁵ United Nations Development Programme, Conflict Prevention NHDR Thematic Guide Note, '*Bureau of Conflict Prevention and Recovery*', Final Draft 2004, (August 2004) p.4

³⁶ Bercovitch, J., '*Social Conflict and Third Parties Strategies of Conflict Resolution*', (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1984) p.142

³⁷ Mwangi, M., '*Peace and Conflict Management in Kenya*', op. cit. p.11

Actors are divided into two groups, namely, visible and invisible actors. Visible actors are those who actively participate in the conflict itself and are therefore easily identified. In an intra-community conflict for example, the visible actors are the members of the communities, their leaders and administrators in the communities. Invisible actors are not easily identifiable since they are not active parties and are more often ignored in conflict management. They are however extremely important as they are at the core of the conflict and managing conflict without taking them into account would be impossible.³⁸ Invisible actors include those persons who in various ways support the visible actors and others who have interests in the outcome of the conflict.

Invisible actors are in three categories; the audience to the conflict, the constituents of the conflict and the patrons/allies. The audience has an interest, which is more professional, to the conflict as well as the outcome because it affects them, e.g. international organizations have commitments/mandates to maintain order, media interests, interests of countries sharing borders such as trade, etc. Their role is mainly to influence outcome by changing perceptions of those involved in the conflict. Constituents are invisible actors to whom those who are participating in the conflict are answerable to and profess to represent the interests of those involved in the conflict. Constituents include citizens, institutions, political party members etc. They are important of any conflict since they bring forth the terms under which the conflict is settled. If the constituents do not agree to the terms arrived at, the conflict remains intractable.

Patrons/allies are those who have an interest in the conflict as well as the outcome and usually support one side of the conflict for various reasons, e.g. ideological, cultural, legal reasons, political, economical etc. They provide support by providing material and

³⁸ Mwangi, M., '*Peace & Conflict Management In Kenya*', op.cit, p.11-12

make conflict complex because they enable one side sustain the conflict.³⁹ It is therefore paramount that the initial and most crucial role of the conflict manager is to identify the different actors of a conflict because it aids in identifying the underlying core issues of the conflict and encourages involvement of all the actors in the conflict management process.⁴⁰ The involvement of different actors in a conflict makes its structure complex. The more the actors in a conflict, the more the interests and consequently the more complex the conflict becomes.⁴¹ The parties in a conflict have different relationships among themselves which can become dysfunctional. This gives rise to the need for conflict management.

Issues

Issues are the reasons behind each party entering into a conflict, they “are what the conflict is actually about”.⁴² Mitchell asserts that issues refer to “what the conflict is about and these are salient goals that are incompatible”.⁴³ All conflicts no matter how simple, involve more than one issue. The multiple issues involved underline the difference between simple and complex conflicts. The more parties that enter into a conflict, the more complex the issues become. This is because each party brings along its own interests and concerns which give rise to complexities within the conflict management process. The most basic issues are those which originally led to the conflict.

In attempting to resolve conflicts, the conflict manager needs to understand origins, patterns and possible outcomes of the conflict. The conflict manager therefore must identify the issues in the conflict by asking the actors involved why they are

³⁹ Mwangi, M., *Conflict in Africa: Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management* (Nairobi: Centre for Conflict Research, 2000) pp 49-50

⁴⁰ Mwangi, M., *Peace & Conflict Management In Kenya*, op.cit, p.12

⁴¹ Ibid. p.12

⁴² Ibid. p.12

⁴³ Mitchell, C.R., *The Structure of International Conflict* op. cit. p.41

engaged in the conflict. This will enable the conflict manager find the best solutions. Since no conflict is ever about a single issue, the conflict manager should employ practical means of conflict management e.g. the process called 'fractionating the issues'.⁴⁴ In this process, the conflict manager classifies the different issues into two groups, simple or complex, and therefore gives form and structure to the process. Fisher notes that the likelihood of reaching a satisfactory solution to a conflict can often be increased by separating or 'fractionating' the large issues involved into smaller workable ones.⁴⁵ Mwangi concurs that "fractionating the issues is an important tool for practical conflict management".⁴⁶ When engaged in a process such as negotiation for example, it helps to encourage the parties to deal with the more straightforward (simple) issues before moving to the more complex ones.

Interests

Interests are the desires or the expression of needs of the parties in a conflict. They are intangible motivations that cause parties to a conflict to take various positions. The interests of the actors help to define the issues and positions in a conflict. Interests flow from the most basic human needs, both material (food, shelter) and non-material (identity, family, faith). They are broader than positions and reflect needs, hopes and concerns, and often reflect strategic factors and deeply rooted beliefs.

⁴⁴ Mwangi, M., 'Peace & Conflict Management in Kenya', op. cit. p.12

⁴⁵ Fisher, R., 'Fractionating Conflict' in Fisher, R., (ed.), 'International Conflict and Behavioural Science', (New York: Basic Books, 1964) pp 91-109

⁴⁶ Mwangi, M., 'Peace & Conflict Management in Kenya', op. cit. p13

All actors in a conflict have varying degrees of interests which they desire to realize. Actors in a conflict have common interests in some issues but differ on others hence resulting in a very dynamic and constantly changing relationship between actors and their interests.⁴⁷

One of the classical ideas in conflict resolution is to distinguish between the positions held by the parties and their underlying interests and needs. Many times, people argue on positions rather than on interests yet more often than not, interests can be met while positions cannot. Many conflicts then fail to be resolved because the parties do not recognize these differences. However, with the identification of interests of all the parties, a conflict may have a quick resolution. This is because interests are flexible and fluid while positions are stiff and rigid. Interests are easier to reconcile than positions.⁴⁸

Exposing the interests can do a lot to resolve conflicts. It can help turn a conflict that may seem near impossible to resolve into a working problem where all parties' interests are understood. It also allows the limited positions to become options and not ultimatums that will break down the ability to come to a strong resolution. The work of a conflict manager, therefore, is to move the conflicting parties away from their positions and identify their interests which will facilitate the conflict resolution process.

Positions

Positions are viewpoints taken by a party or decisions made about the interests of the party. Once a party defines a conflict in terms of position, it means the result is a win-lose position because one party would ensure that its position predominates. Positions are hardline and parties almost never negotiate on their position. This is why the role of the conflict manager is to move parties from positions to issues which are negotiable.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.13

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.12

With the complex relationship between actors, interests, issues and positions, it is evident that the first task of the conflict manager must be to “design a conflict analysis methodology that identifies all these” elements. This way, an effective strategy for conflict management can be formulated.⁴⁹

There is a complex relationship between actors, interests and issues in a conflict. In order to manage conflicts effectively, it is important to understand this complex relationship. A framework for analyzing conflict facilitates the conflict manager to understand this complex relationship. The framework enables identification of different types and causes of conflict and at the same time shows any commonalities in these conflicts. The framework compares the conflict management methodologies that have been used in different parts of the country to manage similar conflicts. This is useful because it assists to ascertain why some conflict management methods in some cases have worked while others have not. In doing this, it becomes easier for conflict managers to design appropriate responses that can create long lasting outcomes to the different conflicts. Therefore, a framework for analyzing conflict simplifies the analysis of conflicts.

2.5 Third Parties of Conflict; Their Role, Entry & Motives

The term third party refers to a person or team of people who become involved in a conflict to help the disputing parties manage or resolve it. Third party intervention is a typical response to destructive and persistent social conflict and comes in a number of different forms attended by a variety of issues. Third parties can be outsiders with no stake in the outcome, or partisan but viewed as legitimate and essential by all involved. They are

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.13

involved in peaceful management of conflict and might act as consultants, helping one side or both sides analyze the conflict and plan an effective response. Alternatively, they might act as facilitators, arranging meetings, setting agendas, and guiding productive discussions.

According to the Thibaut and Walker Procedural Framework⁵⁰, third party roles can be distinguished on the basis of third-party function in control over conflict process and decision. The role of the third party in non violent conflict management is directed toward helping the actors in a conflict realize their own interests when various issues threaten to disrupt or downgrade their bargaining relationship.⁵¹

A third party entry into a conflict changes the structure of the conflict by allowing different communication means. A powerful third party can alter not only the communication structure but also the power balance through the judicious use of the 'carrot and stick' where there's positive and negative inducement and may support one outcome rather than another. It is important to distinguish between mediators considered powerful who bring material resources to the process and those that are not but whose role is confined to communication and facilitation.⁵²

A third party is not always an impartial party; most third parties entering a conflict have their own interests/motives other than straightforward peacemaking which can consequently make a conflict complex.⁵³ Their presence further makes a conflict

⁵⁰ Sheppard, B.H. (1984). *Third Party Conflict Intervention: A Procedural Framework, Research Organizational Behavior*, pp. 141-190

⁵¹ Young, O. (1997). *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.

⁵² Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse T. (2011). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*, 3rd Edition, Cambridge Polity Press, p.21

⁵³ Mwagiru, M., 'Conflict in Africa; Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management', op. cit. p.51

complex as each party brings into a conflict its own interests or issues.⁵⁴ By involving themselves in a conflict, third parties seek to gain in one way or another. Their motives define their roles and subsequently these roles and expected rewards define the strategies to be adopted in the conflict management process.⁵⁵ However, engaging third parties in the conflict management process enhances the process because they bring into the conflict different values and points of view.⁵⁶ The identity, behaviour, influence and input of the third party can act as a catalyst in changing the interaction between the disputants and is therefore important to take into account during the conflict management process.⁵⁷

2.6 Methods of Conflict Management

Methods/modes of conflict management include arbitration, judicial settlements, negotiation and mediation. Arbitration and judicial settlements are processes of conflict settlement while negotiation and mediation are processes of conflict resolution.⁵⁸

Mediation

This is a form of third party settlement whereby the party acting in the agreement of disputing parties actively participates in the negotiation process by offering substantive suggestions concerning settlement terms. Mediation is used when attempts to negotiate between parties to a conflict have failed. The parties then agree on a third party, mediator, to help them negotiate the conflict. A mediator restructures conflict from a dyadic to a triadic one.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp.51-52

⁵⁵ Ibid. p.56

⁵⁶ Ibid. p.52

⁵⁷ Bercovitch, J., (2011). *Theory & Practice of International Mediation: Selected Essays*, Oxon: Routledge, p.112

⁵⁸ Mwagiru, M., 'Conflict in Africa; Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management', op. cit. p.109

⁵⁹ Ibid. p.115-116

A mediator is a more active and powerful third party whose role is to ensure that dialogue continues and to reconcile the warring parties and appeases the feelings of resentment between the parties to the conflict. Mediators not only facilitate discussions, but they usually impose a structure and process on the discussions that is designed to move the parties toward mutual understanding and win-win agreements.

Despite being the most preferred method of conflict management, mediation raises the question of impartiality of the mediator and the opportune time that a mediator should enter a conflict.

Negotiation

Negotiation is a process to achieve one's goals through communication with at least one other party, with the presumed outcome an agreement. It is the process whereby parties discuss matters of concern amongst themselves without involving a third party. It is a non coercive, voluntary method unlike judiciary settlements and arbitration. Its advantage is that it eliminates the moderating effects of a third party and the parties themselves map out their future relationships.⁶⁰ It is however a disadvantage if one of the parties is more powerful as they might "arm twist" the weaker party into accepting its terms.

Judicial Settlement

This is a coercive, zero sum (gains of one party translate to the losses of the other party hence resulting in one party being happy and the other unhappy with the outcome) process of conflict settlement by which parties in a conflict go to court, municipal or international, for the settlement of their dispute, also called litigation. One party takes the dispute to court and the other party is summoned to appear and defend itself before the court. Neither party has any control of the formal composition of the court. The court

⁶⁰ Ibid. p.113

listens to the disputing parties and delivers a legally binding judgment. Failure to abide by this judgment is translated as contempt of court. Final decisions are made by the highest court hence appeals are impossible. It's however an expensive and time consuming mode and conflicts end up merely being settled rather than resolved.⁶¹

Arbitration

This is a method of legally binding settlement of disputes by judges of the parties' choice and according to rules set by them. Parties to the conflict have freedom to select their own judges of their choice, arbitrators, and determine the procedure/rules to be used. The arbitrator(s) listen to both parties and give an award that is binding on the parties and has similar status to court judgments. An award given by the arbitrators is final unless otherwise agreed by the disputants and its validity can be challenged by either of the parties. Failure to abide by the award can lead to sanctions.⁶² This mode leads to conflict settlement because more often than not, one party to the dispute is often aggrieved by the 'verdict'. Though considered a peaceful method, its coercive element reduces its usefulness.⁶³

2.7 Approaches to Managing Conflict and their Outcomes

Conflict management, as a concept, has been conventionally associated with conflict containment.⁶⁴ Conflict management refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts involving institutionalized provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts whenever they occur. It describes the way we respond to and deal with conflicts before, during and after it has occurred. It is the label for the variety of

⁶¹ Mwangi, M., 'Conflict in Africa; Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management', op. cit. p.111

⁶² Ibid. p.112

⁶³ Ibid. p.113

⁶⁴ Hamad, A. Z., (2005). The Reconceptualization of Conflict Management', 'Peace, Conflict & Development: An Interdisciplinary Journal', vol. 7, pp. 4-5.

ways by which people handle grievances—standing up for what they consider to be right and against what they consider to be wrong. Briefly stated, conflict management is about using managerial tactics to contain a conflict and control the environment.

The problem with the notion of "management," however, is that it suggests that people can be directed or controlled as if they were physical objects. In addition, "management" suggests that the goal is the reduction or control of volatility, rather than dealing with the real source of the problem.⁶⁵ Good conflict management enables parties to co-exist amicably and deal with their disputes without necessarily resolving the underlying conflict.

Conflict management strategies are needed in a situation where two people have parallel opinions on an issue, that is, their opinions cannot be reconciled, and none of the parties involved is willing to give up his opinion for there to be progress. An effective conflict management process must involve the resolution of a long-term or deep-rooted conflict. This is the approach taken when complete resolution seems to be impossible, yet something needs to be done. In cases of resolution-resistant or even intractable conflict, it is possible to manage the situation in ways that make it more constructive and less destructive. The goal of conflict management is to intervene in ways that make the ongoing conflict more beneficial and less damaging to all sides. For example, sending peacekeeping forces into a region enmeshed in strife may help calm the situation and limit casualties; the peacekeeping missions will however not resolve the conflict. Conflict management is most feasible when it includes not only the phenomena of settlement of disputes and the solving of problems, but also when it encompasses a broader reference

⁶⁵ Lederach, J.P. (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 78

to processes such as containment, escalation, settlement, resolution, transformation, prevention, creation of conflicts, prevention of solutions, etc.⁶⁶

Settlement of Conflict

This is the process of coming to an agreement between conflicting parties that brings to an end the violent stage of conflict. It however gives a false sense of security and re-ignition of conflict is highly likely since underlying structural issues may not have been addressed.⁶⁷ Conflict settlement may involve changing the behavior of parties in conflict without resolution of their differences and its outcome is the zero sum gain.

Resolution of Conflict

Conflict resolution involves assisting in the termination of conflicts by finding solutions to them. Conflict resolution deals with the conflict in a way that brings the conflict to a closure, an end, a resolution that will please either parties or one of the parties in conflict. Conflict resolution is more comprehensive as it implies that the deep rooted sources of conflict are addressed and most of all resolved. This implies that there is no more violence or hostility and the structure of the conflict has been changed.⁶⁸ This method "*aims at reaching a mutually self sustaining solution*" by identifying and addressing the causes of the conflicts on ground, the needs of parties to the conflict⁶⁹ and finding new ways of reconciling the groups involved and building a new social relationship. Incompatible interests are not the only thing that is a problem in more severe conflicts. Conflicts last longer and are more deeply rooted than disputes. They tend to

⁶⁶ Hamad, A. Z., (2005). The Reconceptualization of Conflict Management', '*Peace, Conflict & Development: An Interdisciplinary Journal*', vol. 7, pp.27-28

⁶⁷ Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse T. (2006) '*Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*' op. cit. p21

⁶⁸ Ibid. p.21

⁶⁹ Mwagiru, M., '*Conflict in Africa; Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management*, 'op. cit. p.42

arise over non-negotiable issues such as fundamental human needs, intolerable moral differences, or high-stakes distributional issues regarding essential resources, such as money, water, or land.

There are many reasons why underlying causes of conflict may not be addressed. Often, the underlying causes of conflict are embedded in the institutional structure of society. Achieving complete resolution of a conflict can require making significant socioeconomic or political changes that restructure society in a more just or inclusive way. Changing societal structures, such as the distribution of wealth in society, is a difficult thing to do and can take decades to accomplish. Thus, fully resolving conflict can be a long laborious process. As a result there are other conceptions of ways to deal with, but not necessarily "resolve" conflicts. This method though resulting in win-win situation is not common. The gains of one party do not translate to losses of any party and all parties are happy/ content that they've both gained and lost something from the mutual solution sought. With this method, once a conflict is resolved, it does not recur.

Transformation of Conflict

Conflict transformation is development of conflict resolution that goes beyond seeking the termination of a specific conflict in order to resolve the underlying issues in a deep-rooted conflict. Its aim is to transform unjust social relationships and is used in the understanding of peace processes whereby transformation denotes a sequence of necessary transitional steps. The implied result is that parties and their relationships are deeply transformed.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse T. (2006). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* ' op. cit p.21

A number of conflict theorists and practitioners, including John Paul Lederach⁷¹, advocate the pursuit of “conflict transformation”, as opposed to “conflict resolution” or “conflict management”. Lederach asserts that conflict transformation is different from the other two because it reflects a better understanding of the nature of conflict itself. Conflict transformation, as described by Lederach, does not suggest that we simply eliminate or control conflict, but rather that we recognize and work with its ‘dialectic nature’.

First, Lederach argues that social conflict is a natural occurrence between humans who are involved in relationships. Once conflict occurs, it changes or transforms those events, people, and relationships that created the initial conflict. Thus, the cause-and-effect relationship goes both ways....from the people and the relationships to the conflict and back to the people and relationships. In this sense, conflict transformation is a term that describes the natural process of conflict. Conflicts change relationships in predictable ways, altering communication patterns and patterns of social organization, altering images of the self and of the other.

Conflict transformation is also a prescriptive concept. It suggests that the destructive consequences of a conflict can be modified or transformed so that self images, relationships, and social structures improve as a result of conflict instead of being harmed by it. Usually, this involves transforming perceptions of issues, actions, and other people or groups. Conflict usually transforms perceptions by accentuating the differences between people and positions. The Bible says “As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is”⁷²,

⁷¹ Lederach, J.P., (2007). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, op. cit. p. 78

⁷² New King James Bible, Proverbs 23:7

therefore, if you think that somebody is your enemy, you will begin to act towards him as your enemy.

Lederach believes that effective conflict transformation can utilize this highlighting of differences in a constructive way and can improve mutual understanding. From the perspective of conflict transformation, intervention has been successful if each group gains a relatively accurate understanding of the other. In the end, improving understanding is the objective of conflict transformation, in spite of parties differing or even irreconcilable interests, values and needs. This approach readily suits the process of discipleship and Christ-likeness better.

2.8 Understanding Church Conflict

Acts 6:1-7 reminds us that churches are never free from conflict when they are true to their mission. Conflict in our churches is a reality; a church without conflict is probably a dead church. Although we tend to be shaken by conflict, in itself conflict is not the real issue. Rather, the issue is whether and how the church responds to conflict in a way that honours God.

The majority of the conflict experienced in churches is the product of changing times rather than creative leadership. Remarkable changes have occurred in the pressures that priests bear compared to pressures they experienced when their word was seldom questioned and their authority prevailed. Priests need not be surprised when they find their authority and plans challenged, and they are caught up in a whole storm of protest. It's happening in every institution in our society, including the church.

How the Church Deals with Conflict in its Midst

Many Christians regard being in conflict as being in sin. It is not seen as a normal part of the Christian life. Priests and church leaders resist discussing church conflict. Their resistance often stems from the belief that all conflict is negative and needs to be avoided, if not ignored, at all costs. What churches need to realize though is that conflict is neither good nor evil, it is inevitable. The Bible even seems to agree; Jesus made it clear that we would experience conflict even as Christians.⁷³ Scripture lays out the proper way to handle conflict, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to deal with conflict competently, yet the church often remains unwilling to learn how to manage its conflicts in a way that will be beneficial to the kingdom of God.

Conflict should be viewed as an opportunity to help people grow in faith. Rather than dwelling on the negative aspects of conflict in the church; divisiveness, power plays, and control issues; the church should begin to recognize conflict as the ability and opportunity to create action from inaction. Hugh Halverstadt⁷⁴ points out particular challenges in engaging with conflict in a church setting. First, people's identities are at stake in church conflicts, "*Spiritual commitments and faith understandings are highly inflammable because they are central to one's psychological identity.*" Second, the Christian gospel itself is intrinsically volatile, and involved in the business of effecting social and personal change. Third, churches are voluntary institutions "whose structures and processes permit and even entice unaccountable uses of power. This is especially a potential problem in a community, such as the church, where the broken and needy are

⁷³ New King James Bible, Luke 17:1

⁷⁴ Halverstadt, H. (1991). *Managing Church Conflict*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, pp. 2-4

welcomed in, and where they may have little opportunity to exercise power and influence elsewhere in their lives.

Another challenge for our churches today is not only how to sort out a conflict once it has escalated to a high level, but how to also deal with our everyday conflicts so that they do not end up escalating to such a point. A central problem in dealing with conflict within most of our churches is the prevailing culture of conflict avoidance and 'niceness'. It is common for people in churches to live by the unwritten rule that: "Thou shalt be nice. Always be nice."⁷⁵ This needs to be not just recognized but directly addressed, challenged, exposed and discarded as the norm of 'niceness' that rejects conflict as non-Christian".⁷⁶

Conflict avoidance misses out on more creative options for dealing with the tensions and differences within the Church congregation. Other than the pervasive culture of conflict avoidance when tensions are addressed, there are often unhelpful patterns in the ways that people respond in churches. Leas highlights some of these patterns, such as, "dropping out" by not attending services or stopping financial giving, blaming other individuals or groups who have a differing or opposing view to our own, attacking others by questioning their character and motivation, or by starting a campaign or petition or even generalizing issues by moving away from specific matters to sweeping assessments and evaluations of others.⁷⁷

Ron Kraybill identifies a wider range of patterns including leaders discouraging expression of disagreement and urging harmony; viewing conflict as wrong, disloyal and

⁷⁵ Lederach, J.P., (2007). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, op. cit. p. 101

⁷⁶ Boyd-Macmillan, E. & Savage, S. 'Transforming Conflict: Conflict Transformation Amongst Senior Church Leaders With Different Theological Stances', (York: Foundation for Church Leadership, 2008) p.76

⁷⁷ Leas, S. (2001). The Basics of Conflict Management in Congregations in Lott, D. B. (ed.), *Conflict Management in Congregations*, Herndon pp.25-30

something to be avoided at all costs; spiritualizing conflict and confusing personal views with God's will; blurring issues and people, indirect communication, for example with friends, and refusing to address issues directly with others; focusing on positions and solutions, rather than clarifying process and exploring underlying concerns; and not tolerating uncertainty.⁷⁸

Other unhelpful patterns in churches that contribute to unhelpful ways of handling conflict include people acquiescing to the dominant voice of key "gate keepers," or of historically dominant families; older people (who can be in a majority in some of the older established churches) resisting change or at least having difficulty accepting change; people wanting the church to be a refuge from conflict, because they have to deal with so much conflict elsewhere in their lives; painful baggage from the past over-shadowing present interactions; having structures which do not encourage tensions and concerns to surface until a decision is needed, and having a lack of suitable informal processes to explore potentially conflictual issues prior to them being raised on formal meeting agendas; and a general defensiveness in people's approach, rooted in concerns about the church's survival, due to declining numbers.

Other factors which contribute to complex emotional dynamics and a potentially high level of intensity in engaging with conflict in the church include; Christian communities function like an extended family with close personal relationships and struggles over relating to the parental figures in the church; the community life of the church has the potential to take on greater significance for those involved in that community, because of the breakdown of other social structures in our society, including

⁷⁸ Kraybill, R. (2000). Habits in Conflict: Divided by Versus Bound Together by Conflict', in Schrock-Shenk, C. (ed.) *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*, Akron: Mennonite Conciliation Service,

the family; church members often hold unrealistic and idealized expectations of those in ordained ministry; a lack of maturity and personal self-awareness among some of those serving in ordained ministry, which affects their leadership and how they handle conflict; a lack of clarity and good process in church decision-making; and a prevailing tendency of Christians to avoid or spiritualize conflict. Conflict is here to stay so the church must learn to manage it in a "Christian way" and while accomplishing this, the church must ensure that it does not use religious teaching to deny people their right for justice.

Chapter Three

Causes of Conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church

3.0 Introduction

Chapter expands possible processes/approaches to conflict management and their possible outcomes. This chapter, I will examine some of the sources/causes of church conflict while distinguishing the possible types of conflict that affect the Catholic Church.

The Roman Catholic Church has been phenomenally successful and holds the world's record for longevity for any organization. But like most organized religious groups, it sometimes has difficulty handling change both in ancient and modern times. This is very apparent today, as Catholicism struggles to be a universal church spanning widely disparate cultures which have opposing and rapidly evolving beliefs concerning democracy, human sexuality, and other topics.

Many recent authors have been written about change in the Church. Some cover an increased role for the laity, greater democracy, and freedom of thought and speech within the organization. The Church today is a very honorable institution. But there are a few moments in its history as well as presently that the church has failed to live up to its own high moral standards. Today, the Catholic Church still continues to face various challenges and conflicts has been forced to deal with controversial matters.

There are many areas of a church where conflict can develop. However, most of them tend to fall under one of three categories: conflict due to blatant sin among believers, conflict with leadership, conflict between believers. Admittedly, many issues can cross over and actually involve two or more of these categories.

3.1 The Birth of the Catholic Church

The word 'Catholic' means universal. The birth of the church can be traced back to the time after the resurrection of Jesus Christ when Christ commanded his followers to go out into the world and spread the word. The words of Jesus were immediately transmitted to the understanding of all societies: they were given universal expression.⁷⁹ Jesus created one universal church for all of mankind. As Jesus apostles spread the gospel, they provided the beginning structure for the early Christian Church.

For the first thousand years of Christianity there was no "Roman Catholicism" as we know it today, simply because there were no other denominations like Orthodoxy or Protestantism to distinguish it. There was only the "one, holy, Catholic Church" affirmed by the early creeds, which was the body of Christian believers all over the world, united by common traditions, beliefs, church structure and worship. Thus, throughout the middle ages, if you were a Christian, you belonged to the Catholic Church and any Christianity other than the Catholic Church was a heresy, not a denomination.

Today, however, Roman Catholicism is not the only accepted Christian church. Thus to be a Roman Catholic means to be a certain kind of Christian: one with unique beliefs, practices and traditions that are distinct from those of other Christians. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church continues to maintain that it alone has carried on the true tradition of the apostolic church and has traditionally regarded dissenting groups as heresies, not alternatives.

It is impossible to separate the initial stages of the Roman Catholic Church from that of the early Christian church. Although it did not begin at a specific point in history

⁷⁹ Norman, E.R. (2007). *The Roman Catholic Church: An Illustrated History*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp 11-13

like the Protestant denominations, in its long history, Roman Catholicism has evolved into a distinctive branch of Christianity with beliefs, practices and organization that differ from both Protestantism and Orthodoxy. Roman Catholicism is by far the largest Christian group with more than one billion adherents; Catholics constitute about half of the world's Christians.

The idea of the "pope" did not exist from the beginning of the church.⁸⁰ It was not until several centuries after Christ that the church began to develop into the "Roman Catholic Church" as we know it today, with its particular doctrines, practices, and hierarchical system of authority. Roman Catholicism traces its history to the apostles, especially the apostle Peter. Peter is considered the first pope, and every pope since him is regarded as his spiritual successor. This gives the leader of the church spiritual authority and provides a means for resolving disputes that could divide the church. Through trials like persecution, heresy, and the Reformation, the notion that the church leadership represents the continuation of an unbroken line from the apostles and their teachings ("apostolic succession") has contributed to the survival of Roman Catholicism.

From the Catholic perspective, the early church is faithfully continued in the developments of later centuries, while non-Catholics tend to regard the church as having corrupted the original message of Christianity. In the years of persecution prior to the Emperor's conversion, the church was focused primarily on survival. There were prominent church leaders whose authority was recognized - primarily those who had known the apostles - but no central authority. But with the "controversial" conversion of Emperor Constantine in 312 AD, the church began to adopt a governmental structure mirroring that of the Empire, in which geographical provinces were ruled by bishops

⁸⁰ Norman, E.R: *The Roman Catholic Church: An Illustrated History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2007)

based in the major city of the area. Soon, the bishops of major cities in the empire emerged as preeminent, including the bishops of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople. It was natural that Rome would eventually become the most important of these. It was not only the capital of the empire, but the city in which the apostles Peter and Paul were believed to have been martyred. The Roman bishop Leo I (440-461 AD) was considered the first pope by historians. He was the first to claim ultimate authority over all of Christendom. He wrote on papal authority, most notably that which asserts Christ had designated Peter and his successors the "rock" on which the church would be built.

Growth of the Kenyan Catholic Church

There are an estimated 7.5 million baptized Catholics in Kenya, which is approximately one third of the population.⁸¹ The Catholic Church made its debut in Kenya in 1498, when Vasco da Gama erected a cross on the sea shore of Malindi. This was followed by a visit of St. Francis Xavier on his way to Goa in 1542 and, a community of 600 Kenyans at Mombasa in 1599 under the Augustinian priests. With the arrival of the Holy Ghost Fathers 1860, the Consolata Fathers 1902 and the Mill Hill Fathers 1903, the Catholic Church reached the inland of Kenya. The first Kenyan Bishop, Rt. Rev. Maurice Otunga, became the first Kenyan Cardinal in 1973 1961. The Catholic Church in Kenya has been subjected to various cases of conflict.

3.2 Conflict in the Midst of the Clergy

Jim Van Yperen identifies two facts about church conflict in the following words:

"First, church conflict is always theological, never merely interpersonal. There are many

⁸¹ Roman Catholicism in Kenya. Available at http://wn.com/roman_catholicism_in_kenya. Retrieved on 22 April 2012.

causes and reasons for church conflict, including cultural, spiritual, and structural factors. Second, all church conflict is always about leadership, character, and community.”⁸² The various conflicts that the Church has experienced over the years confirms this. The dispute over property has not spared the church. The St Mary’s Hospital and school in Lang’ata have been at the centre of a land ownership tussle that has sucked in even the top leadership of the Catholic Church in the country. An American priest, Father (Fr) William Fryda of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Society, has accused Sister Marie Therese Gacambi of the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi and Cardinal John Njue of interfering with the running of St Mary’s Mission hospitals in Nairobi and Nakuru and the St.Mary’s high school in Nairobi.

Fr Fryda is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of the institutions has accused the two of trying to kick him out with an aim of taking over the property Fr Fryda has been in a three year tussle with Sister Gacambi over ownership of the school, hospitals and associated land. Fr Fryda has filed a civil case to in an attempt to have the matter solved amicably in court; a clear indication’ of the failures of the Church in their management of conflict. The Cardinal himself has been accused of having “interests” in the matter hence raising doubts on the Church leadership’s general ability to remain impartial in managing this dispute.

Another astonishing case was of Fr John Wambua Makewa, a Kenyan Catholic priest who was sentenced to seven (07) years in prison for attempting to kill a fellow priest Fr Fidelis Nzuki The reason behind the shooting remain unclear but the incident raises much concern. Another case is of Fr Siundu who was suspended and later

⁸² Yperen, J. V., ‘*Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*’, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002) p. 24-25.

excommunicated by Bishop Maurice Crowley, from the Kitale diocese in 2002 following a misunderstanding with the church leadership. Fr Shiundu later joined a splinter church called the Kenya Reformed Catholic Church (RCC), which is a US based Catholic breakaway group.

During the run-up to the last polls, senior bishops within the Catholic Church disagreed with Cardinal John Njue on a comment he gave with regard to a devolved government.⁸³ Cardinal Njue spoke against the devolution system of government, which had been proposed by both the ODM and the ODM-Kenya, and the priests viewed this as the reason why some catholic believers are staying away from church. The church dismissed Cardinal Njue's remarks as "his personal views" because there was no pastoral letter; the usual instrument used to state the church's official position on any important matter. However, the Cardinal's position calls for lots of wisdom and many times it is not wise to declare a personal stand on sensitive national issues because he speaks as if he represents Catholic Church in Kenya and anything he says will more often than not be translated as the position of the church and may consequently affect some of your members and divide the faithfuls. It is against this background that some Kenyans concluded that the cardinal was supporting President Kibaki and his party, which was against majimbo system.

3.3 Disputes Between the Clergy and Congregation

Over the last decade, there has been a wave of allegations against Catholic Priests worldwide of various ills towards the community committed by the priesthood. Kenyan

⁸³ Yperen, J. V., '*Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*', (Chicago: Moody Press, 2002) p. 24-25.

Catholic priests are not an exception and cases of gross misconduct have been reported in what seems to be a national 'pandemic'.

In 2010 a young woman alleged that a Catholic priest had undertaken inappropriate sexual activity against her will, but the police and Church authorities had failed to follow up the allegations. Another worrying trend is that of the abuse of children. In June 2010, Fr John Mutua Munyoki of Zombe parish in Kitui Catholic diocese was jailed for 15 years after being found guilty of two counts of defilement of a young girl. Similarly, Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE) brought to notice Kenya's clerical abuse cases, which should have been handled with more transparency. It was alleged that a 56-year-old Catholic priest, Fr Gerry Geraghty, regularly abused young boys in the Ngong parish as recently as six years ago.⁸⁴ In the customary pattern of abuse, denial and cover up, the Mill Hill Missionaries, the order in which Fr Geraghty belonged, did not report the criminal acts of one of its own to the Kenyan police. Fr Geraghty was instead transferred to Canada to undergo therapy. He now lives in Dublin where he can no longer say mass, and the order has recommended that he be defrocked. He is a free man with no criminal record and he continues to deny the allegations even to his superiors.

In the same year, Bishop Cornelius Schilder of Ngong Diocese was reported by one of his victims to the Mill Hill missionaries. As a Bishop, only the Vatican and not the order could remove him from office, but it took the Vatican two years to 'act'. In 2009, he was removed from Kenya and retired due to "health reasons". The Kenyan police were however never informed of the criminal allegations. In another yet unfortunate incident in July 2012, a catholic priest in Ngong town was caught red handed having sex with a town prostitute in a nearby maize plantation. When irate church members confronted

⁸⁴ Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE). *A Mission to Prey*, 12 May 2011.

him, the promiscuous priest blamed his conduct on his celibacy vows. Another illicit relationship between Fr Felix Lekule of Kakamega Catholic Diocese and a local school teacher contributed to the birth of an illegitimate child and subsequent divorce of the school teacher.

In August 2012, controversy rose at Mbiriri social centre parish in Nyeri, after a demand letter by lawyers was issued to a catholic priest in the area claiming that he fathered a boy 13 years ago and his former 'lover' was demanding paternal responsibilities. Fr Josephat Mwanzia was alleged to have had an illicit affair with a catholic faithful Cecilia Mbiki while he was serving as a Father at a catholic church in Kilifi County in 1998. He was later transferred to Nyeri where he has been serving the Church. The matter is destined for the law court where Fr Mwanzia seeks to clear his name.

In 2009, several people came forward with accusations of sexually abusing minors at the orphanage he ran at Dagoretti Corner in Nairobi.⁸⁵ The Church gave assurances of an investigation, but this never took place. Father Renato Sesana, also known as Fr Kizito, was once again accused of sexual molestation, this time the victim being his secretary. The accusation was shocking but not strange, because this was not the first time he had been accused of sexual abuse. The secretary underwent a medical examination which confirmed he had been sexually assaulted. Fr. Kizito was also examined by Police but was later released when police said the results were negative. The way this particular case was handled was a reminder that corruption is still rife in this country especially in the police force.

⁸⁵ Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTE). *A Mission to Prey*, 12 May 2011.

Allegations of this kind have put the church on the defensive. The church continues to play down the significance of the charges raised against it as clearly displayed in the comments of Philip Sulumeti, the vice chair of the Kenya Episcopal Conference who said, "Ninety-nine percent of the clergy are okay, are doing their work well. It's only a very small percentage that is creating a problem."⁸⁶ Amidst all these reports, one question lingers....where is Cardinal Njue?

3.4 Conflict between the Church and the Vatican

Differences between the Kenyan church and the mother church has seen an emergence of splinter churches from the mainstream church opposed to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. These independent groups disagree on the ordination of women, homosexuality, abortion, contraception, divorce, and other issues that are controversial or forbidden in the mainstream sections of the Roman Catholic church. Most of these splinter churches allow its clergy to marry and hold regular jobs as opposed to the mainstream Roman Catholic Church. Their style of worship, rituals of worship, dressing and style are identical to those of their mother church and only differ with the mother Church in matters relating to doctrines and beliefs. Some of these breakaway Churches include The Reformed Catholic Church (RCC) of Kenya, also called the Ecumenical Catholic Church of Christ led by Bishop Godfrey Shiundu and the Independent Catholic Charismatic Church of Kenya.

Fr Shiundu is now the priest in charge of St Lawrence Reformed Catholic and Apostolic Church based in Bikeke area of Trans Nzoia District. Currently, the RCC is in 11 countries with Kenya as the only African country. Priests have joined RCC and as of

⁸⁶ Kenya Television Network, June 17th 2009.

2006, RCC had 17 ordained bishops and 80% of them were married. It also has 10 ordained priests and 5 deacons. By August 2011, more than 40 priests had defected to RCC seeking freedom from celibacy. Estimates put the RCC congregation in western Kenya at several thousand in more than 10 parishes.⁸⁷ Shiundu's church is growing stronger and more priests are seeking advice from him on the celibacy issue. Shiundu was quoted as saying that his church was ready to work with the Roman Catholic Church if Pope Benedict agrees to change the constitution to make celibacy optional. Shiundu said many priests are under pressure to marry and have families. Another case was of Bishop Matthew Theuri who after serving for years as a saintly Roman Catholic priest, quit the celibacy club and married and is now a consecrated bishop in the RCC of Christ. He contravened the church's doctrine of celibacy saying that celibacy is not a doctrine but a condition that should be optional. The Most Reverend Benedict Simiyu of Bungoma is yet another priest who has joined the splinter group RCC.

3.5 The Catholic Doctrine as a Source of Conflict

The philosophy of religion seeks to examine the religious beliefs, that is, general ideas and principles, upon which religion is based by testing them for logical coherence and meaning. Philosophy, however, cannot show that a religion is either right or wrong. What it can do is show that its beliefs are either logical or illogical, that its language is best understood literally or metaphorically, and the degree to which its beliefs are compatible with the other beliefs that people might hold to be true.⁸⁸

Roman Catholic beliefs do not differ drastically from those of the other major branches of Christianity - Orthodoxy and Protestantism. All three main branches hold to

⁸⁷ <http://www.thestar.co.ke> Accessed on 27th September 2012

⁸⁸ Thompson M., '*Philosophy of Religion*', (London: Hodder Education, 1997)

the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and so on.

But on more minor doctrinal points, there are clear distinctive Catholic beliefs.

Distinctive Roman Catholic beliefs include the special authority of the pope, the ability of saints to intercede on behalf of believers, the concept of purgatory as a place of afterlife purification before entering Heaven and the doctrine of transubstantiation where the bread used in the Eucharist becomes the true body of Christ when blessed by a priest.

Unlike their counterparts in both Protestant and Orthodox churches, Catholic priests take vows of celibacy. This practice is rooted in the papacy's⁸⁹ early connections with monasticism, but has become controversial in recent years.

The Contraception Debate

The Roman Catholic Church has for a long time taught against the use of artificial family planning methods condemning them as immoral and sinful. The church teaches that any form of birth control, other than natural family planning (the rhythm method) is a sin and associate artificial methods with immoral sexual behaviour, particularly premarital and extramarital sex. The church argues that the conception of a child is the natural purpose of the sexual act and therefore anything that deliberately frustrates that outcome must be 'morally' wrong and that every sexual act should at least be open to the possibility of the contraception of a child.⁹⁰

The Catholic church today finds itself in a curious position: while caring for a quarter of all Aids sufferers in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is accused of being a killer rather than a healer; by rejecting condoms in the battle against Aids, it stands charged with contributing to its spread. The church argues that the only realistic and long-lasting

⁸⁹ The office and jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, the pope, who presides over the central government of the Roman Catholic Church.

⁹⁰ Callahan, D., (1969), *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, London: Arlington Books.

response to Aids is a change in moral behaviour, one that rejects promiscuity and adheres to abstinence and fidelity in sexual relations. Condoms, it says, are not the solution, and it points to good evidence that campaigns promoting them in Africa have actually encouraged promiscuity - and thus fuelled the spread of Aids.

Catholic health and aid agencies in Africa say that Aids can only be dealt with by attacking its roots in war, poverty and the sexual abuse of women.⁹¹ And they point to the cruelty of Africans being deprived of access to anti-retroviral therapy, which, in the west, has meant Aids is no longer seen as a certain killer. Provide such treatment, they say, and you break the cycle of stigma and despair which often lies behind the promiscuity and abusive behaviour that cause Aids to spiral. This is a powerful witness. But it has been undermined by the church's refusal, officially, to concede that in some circumstances the use of a condom may be not just licit but obligatory.

On June 26, 2004, a BBC programme carried an interview with a Catholic woman in Uganda who had chosen to sleep unprotected with her infected husband: "We won't go to heaven if we use condoms," she explained. The Archbishop of Kampala (at the time Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala), was interviewed shortly after this and this is a caption of the interview:

Reporter: "Do you think that this woman made the right choice?"

Cardinal: "If it is wrong to use the condom, then she has made the right choice."

Reporter: "Even if it costs her life?"

Cardinal: "Yes."

Reporter: "That is a harsh teaching."

⁹¹ Reynolds, L.R., (2004), *Coming Out & Covering Up*, USA: Dead End Street.

It is not only harsh but also misguided. Moral theologians agree that what makes a condom good or bad is the use to which it is put; if it is being used to prevent the transmission of death, then it is not contraceptive in intention. The doctrine of double effect holds that some good actions have bad, unintended consequences, but if the primary intention is good, it remains valid.

For this reason, the 1968 *Humanae Vitae*⁹² accepted the legitimacy of taking the birth-control pill for a medical, rather than a contraceptive, purpose - to regulate menstrual cycles rather than to prevent pregnancy. In the case of Aids, it can be argued that there is a positive moral obligation on an infected person to don a contraceptive. No European or American cardinal would dare to follow the line taken by the Archbishop of Kampala. By its refusal to deal with human realities, the church has muffled its own prophetic voice on Aids, and encouraged the conclusion that Christian teaching that can only be upheld at the cost of African lives does not deserve that name.

Celibacy

The Catholic Church has witnessed progressive dismantling of the heterosexual priesthood and the ascendancy of the homosexual priesthood, containing within it a subculture characterized by sexual abuse of young boys⁹³. As a result, the 'homosexualization' of the priesthood and clerical abuse of young boys are events that have become imbedded in the consciousness of both the clergy and laity. Celibate priesthood has been linked to these allegations made against the Church pertaining to homosexuality amongst the clergy, abuse of children by the clergy and abortions amongst

⁹² This is an encyclical, written by Pope Paul VI and issued on 25 July 1968. Subtitled *On the Regulation of Birth*, it re-affirms the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church regarding married love, responsible parenthood, and the continuing proscription of most forms of birth control.

⁹³ Reynolds, L.R., (2004), *Coming Out & Covering Up*, USA: Dead End Street.

the nuns. The church however continues to remain silent on the matter despite numerous reports; dating back to the 80s; on a rising and extremely worrying trend.

Most official Catholic pronouncements about homosexuality are meant to prevent serious discussion of it.⁹⁴ Any real change in the "magisterial" pronouncements would require not just revision of conclusions in moral theology, but renunciation of the methods of authoritative teaching. Catholic denunciations of homosexuals are chiefly intended to produce silence around the topic of the male homosexuality that is within the church, especially in the priesthood and religious orders.

These events have sparked controversies regarding the structure of the church and among the laity as to whether there lies a connection between the rising number of homosexual priests and the molestation of young male children and teens by the clergy.⁹⁵ These events continue to undoubtedly create conflict within the church clergy and laity. As an immediate response, some people have chosen to leave the church due to doubt and mistrust of the clergy. With the credibility of the Church coming into question due to those in authority being accused of the 'cover up', denial and minimization of these allegations, it is clear that the church stands at the brink of destabilization.

Perhaps over the years, society has set standards that are too high for clergymen forgetting that they are mere mortals, imperfect, weak, prone to err and even capable of crime.

⁹⁴ Jordan, M. D. *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*, University of Chicago Press, 2000: pp 66-74 , Print

⁹⁵ Ibid

Africa presents particular problems for the Catholic priestly vow of celibacy (chastity), as there are cultural expectations for a man to have a family.⁹⁶ Early in the 21st century, as celibacy continued to come under question, Africa was cited as a region where the violation of celibacy is particularly rampant. Priests on the continent were accused of taking wives and concubines, as well as raping nuns and laywomen. Isolation of priests working in rural Africa, and the low status of women, add to the temptation. On 20th March 2011, the Catholic Church in Rome made the extraordinary admission that it was aware priests from at least 23 countries had been sexually abusing nuns. Most of the abuse has occurred in Africa, where priests vowed to celibacy, who previously sought out prostitutes, have preyed on nuns to avoid contracting the Aids virus. In extreme instances, the priests had made nuns pregnant and then encouraged them to have abortions.

Transgressions against chastity vows by priests run the gamut from harassment all the way to fathering children; it's not criminal necessarily, but it's certainly against doctrine.⁹⁷ As the Roman Catholic hierarchy continues to grow over its success and vitality in the global south—the growth rate in Africa and Asia has been about 3 percent a year, twice the rate worldwide—the African church may put mandatory clerical celibacy to its harshest test yet.

In one case in which an African sister was forced to have an abortion, she died during the operation and her aggressor led the funeral mass. Another case involved 29 sisters from the same congregation who all became pregnant to priests in the diocese.

⁹⁶ Donadio, R. On Africa Trip, Pope Will Find place Where Church Is Surging Amid Travail, New York Times 16 March 2009,6.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*

Nuns hold a unique place in this sexual landscape. In a continent devastated by Aids, nuns, along with early adolescent girls, are perceived by some as safe sexual targets. Certain unscrupulous clerics have been reported to take advantage of young nuns who are having trouble finding accommodation, writing their essays and funding their theological studies. Unfortunately, the church authorities have done little to tackle the problem.

Much less well documented is a broader problem: priests with unofficial "wives." In Africa, "there's a tremendous problem with the vow of chastity in regard to women. Bishops are sometimes involved with it, but mostly they simply have not faced it. It's kind of a hidden thing. Laypeople want priests, so they put up with the priest having a friend. Priests all over the world fail to maintain their celibacy, more, than anyone wants to admit, but that Kenya presents priests with a unique set of problems. In Kenya, parents have a higher social status than childless adults. To be a man in 'Africa' varies from culture to culture, but it is expected that you will have children and a family. To be a celibate male is therefore not a high value. Also, priests are often very isolated and get lonely.

The Vatican has known about these sins and crimes for some time. When Benedict XVI traveled to Africa in 2005, for example, he addressed the question of celibacy explicitly.⁹⁸ He urged the bishops there to "open themselves fully to serving others as Christ did by embracing the gift of celibacy." One of the most tragic elements that emerge is the fate of the victims. While the offending priests are usually moved or sent away for studies, the women are normally chased out of their religious orders; they are then either too scared to return to their families or are rejected by them. They often finished up as outcasts, or, in a cruel twist of irony, as prostitutes, making a meagre living

⁹⁸ Miller, L. *The trouble with celibacy*, Newsweek, April 7, 2010. Retrieved 23 May 2012.

from an act they had vowed never to do. The Catholic Church's system of celibacy is broken, bleeding from its self-imposed sexual wounds. Forced to acknowledge the problem, the Vatican has tried to play down its gravity.

Female Ordination

The Church has come under heavy criticism regarding female ordination and has been accused of discriminating against women leadership in the Church. On Thursday 15 July 2010, the church reaffirmed its stand by naming the "attempted sacred ordination of a woman" as one of the grave crimes under church law, putting it in the same category as clerical sex abuse of minors and heresy.⁹⁹ In such an act, the cleric and the woman involved are to be automatically excommunicated, and the cleric dismissed from the priesthood. Since the Vatican does not accept that women can become priests, it does not recognize the outcome of any such ceremony.

⁹⁹ Hooper J. *Attempted Ordination of Women A Grave Crime*, The Guardian, Thursday 15 July 2010, Retrieved 23 May 2012.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Conflict Management in the Catholic Church

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical analysis of primary data collected on conflict management in the church. The objectives of this study were to identify the various types of conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church, to investigate causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church, and to explore ways of managing conflict as well as expected challenges conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.

4.1 Structure of the Catholic Church in Kenya.

The Catholic Church in Kenya is part of the worldwide Catholic Church, under the spiritual leadership of the Pope. The he current Pope is Benedict XVI. Second in authority from the Pope is the Cardinal. Cardinals, who are appointed by the Pope, choose the bishops. The present cardinal in Kenya is called John Njue.¹⁰⁰

The bishops are the head of dioceses. The Catholic Church in Kenya has 44 dioceses.¹⁰¹ The diocesan bishop appoints a chancellor, possibly a vice-chancellor, and notaries to the diocesan chancery. These officials maintain the records and archives of the diocese. They also serve as the secretaries of the diocesan curia. The diocesan bishops have the responsibility to elect the diocesan administrator in the event of the vacancy of the see. The bishop appoints a finance officer and a finance council to oversee the budget, temporal goods, income, and expenses of the diocese.

¹⁰⁰ Roman Catholicism in Kenya. Available at http://wn.com/roman_catholicism_in_kenya. Retrieved on 22 Augusts 2012.

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

Bishops are assisted by priests and deacons. The priests are normally in the charge of Parishes.¹⁰² The parish priest exercises the pastoral care of the community entrusted to him under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. For lack of available priests, administration of a parish may be entrusted for a period of time, to another priest or a permanent deacon, a religious, or even to a lay person. This is primarily for administrative purposes, though priests or deacons may administer those sacraments for which they have been granted faculties. Priests are assisted by Parochial Vicars who are also called Associate Pastors or Assistant Priests.

Deacons are ordained ministers of the Church who are co-workers with the bishop, but are intended to focus on the ministries of direct service and outreach rather than pastoral leadership. They are usually related to a parish, where they have a liturgical function as the ordinary minister of the Gospel and the Prayers of the Faithful. They may preach homilies, may preside at non-Eucharistic liturgies such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals.

Dioceses are divided into individual communities called parishes, each staffed by one or more priests. All clergy, including deacons, priests, and bishops, may preach, teach, baptize, witness marriages and conduct funeral liturgies. Only priests and bishops are allowed to administer the sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation (Penance), Confirmation (priests may administer this sacraments with prior ecclesiastic approval), and Anointing of the Sick. Only bishops can administer the sacrament of Holy Orders, which ordains someone into the clergy.

¹⁰² ¹⁰² Roman Catholicism in Kenya. Available at http://wn.com/roman_catholicism_in_kenya. Retrieved on 22 Augusts 2012

4.2 Types of conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church

The study sought to establish the types of conflict in Kenyan Catholic Church. In this regard the respondents were asked whether conflict exist within the church today. Besides the respondents were requested to describe some of the conflicts/disputes they have experienced or heard of that have affected their local Church or any other Catholic Church. The study found out that conflicts exist within the church today. All the respondents indicated that Kenyan Catholic Church experiences various types of conflicts. The types of conflicts identified in the study are categorized into substantive conflicts, interpersonal conflicts and information Conflicts.

Substantive conflicts

The study established that substantive conflict occurs within Kenyan Catholic Church. Respondents cited situations in which church leaders express different opinions about church doctrines. For instance, the study established that there are two priests from Kenyan Catholic Church who went against church doctrines on mandatory celibacy and married.¹⁰³ The leadership of Kenyan Catholic Church denounced the action and said that the entire Catholic Church does not support marriage among the priests. The position of the church was that priests were supposed to maintain their priestly calling while Christians were supposed to be faithful in their Christian calling.

The priest who married defended their action by stating that mandatory celibacy is not genuine as per the Bible teachings.¹⁰⁴ They alleged that a high proportion of the catholic priests are living a lie because they are in secret love relationships. The priests vowed to continue preaching and maintaining their new families and passionately

¹⁰³ Francis M. Personal Interview (Our Lady of Guadalupe, Adams Arcade) 24 September 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Evelyn N. Personal Interview (St. Joseph Mkasa, Kahawa West) 26 September 2012.

appealed to any priest who will be ex-communicated due to marriage to join the married colleagues where all their problems will be addressed.

The respondents further stated that conflicts have been witnessed in the removal or change of church leaders from one location to another location. Every year Catholic Dioceses in Kenya face the challenging time of priest transfers from one parish to another and also for priests who are in institutional ministries.¹⁰⁵ It is not easy for the priest or his faithful parishioners to accept this very challenging time of transfers. As he serves his people in the parish with love and dedication they become bonded as a family. Even though in the back of his mind and also in the minds of parishioners they know there will be day to say goodbye, it is still hard when that day arrives.¹⁰⁶ There are many emotional feelings, sadness and tears knowing their priest will leave them to serve elsewhere.

Substantive conflicts Kenyan Catholic Church arises in the position take by church regarding reproductive health. Catholic Church faithful are still in conflict with the shifts in church stands regarding the use of condoms as a mean to stop spread of HIV. After many years of opposition to use of condoms, Pope Benedict relaxed the position of the Church on the issue after growing calls from cardinals for the Vatican to adopt a more humane approach to stopping the spread of HIV. There are believers who hold the view that the church should ban the use of condoms while others support the new position taken by the church.

Kenyan Catholic Church members have had contradicting views on the position of the church regarding the clauses on abortion in the Kenyan constitution. The Kenyan Constitution has liberalized abortion in certain cases. There is still a lot of misinformation

¹⁰⁵ Martin, M. Personal Interview (Holy Trinity, Kariobangi) 12 October 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Paul A. D. Coordinator Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), Personal Interview (Consolata Shrine, Westlands), 12 September, 2012

on what exactly the Constitution changed or did not change. Some church members think the Constitution legalized abortion on demand. Others think it changed nothing and abortion remains virtually illegal. Abortion opponents say that those loopholes are tantamount to making abortion available on demand. The church members who advocates for the provisions of the constitution say it does not allow abortion on demand at all and that these reasonable exemptions will save the lives of thousands of Kenyan girls and women who would otherwise be exposed to dangerous, back street abortions.

The study established that the allegations of sexual abuse by Catholic priests have been a source of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church. The issue has been receiving unprecedented attention in the national news media. Catholics' perceptions have been formed by public reports of abuse and the media coverage of the issue. There are members who feel that the church has systematically considered its own interests first by protecting the reputation of offending priests.¹⁰⁷ However, others feel that the overall church should not be blamed and the individual priests should be held accountable for their actions.

Interpersonal conflicts

The respondents stated that interpersonal conflicts have been witnessed between members of the Kenyan Catholic Church. The interpersonal conflicts sometime lead to resentment, hostility and perhaps the ending of the relationship. The conflict arise from power issues in which some members of the church are not happy with the local church leaders appointed to hold various positions. The power struggles sometime emanate from jealousy, possessiveness by elected leaders and excessive demands from church members.

¹⁰⁷ Monical A. Church member, St. John's, Korogocho. Personal Interview at Korogocho, 13October 2012

Interpersonal conflicts also occur due to disagreements on who is going to sing in the choir or lead a cell group when there is one spot and more than one person desiring it. The interpersonal conflict may then escalate into a negative confrontation that will require intervention. Gossips were also cited as source of interpersonal conflict in the church. Interpersonal conflicts are also witnessed when there is lack of forgiveness and making things right with an individual or group in the church.

Information Conflicts

The study established that conflict occurs in the church as a result of contradicting information. The respondents said that communication breakdown occurs, especially in local churches, when some church members are not informed of church events.¹⁰⁸ In many cases, the church members accuse leaders of failing to deliver the information to them in good time when the actual cause of communication breakdown is the absenteeism of the church members. When the church members fail to attend church function on the basis of communication breakdown, conflict arises among them and other leaders or church members.

4.3 Causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church,

One of the objectives of the study was to explore the causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church. The respondents were asked what they thought were the causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church. The study established that conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church are caused by several factors such as Use or misuse of power in the church by priests, staff, deacons, or members, change, diverse membership, poor communication, unmet needs, fear, differences in values, goals, priorities, expectations.

¹⁰⁸ Maxwell, A. K. Laity, Holy Mary Mother of God, Githurai, Personal Interview at Githurai, 16 September 2012

perceptions, or opinions among church members, limited resources and the sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful words and actions.

Use or misuse of power in the church by priests, staff, deacons, or members causes conflict in the church. When power is used as a manipulative device, a way to dominate people or a situation, and to control a group for selfish purposes, conflict arises. The respondents said that sometimes the local church officials allow the power to reside in the hands of one group or one person who are not democratically elected by the church members. At other times power is simply assumed without formal or informal permission by anyone. Sometimes a staff member in competition with another staff member hence conflict arises.

Change is another area of conflict. Conflict is always a possibility when change occurs in the organizational structure of the church.¹⁰⁹ The respondents cited an example of transfer of priests or bishops as a source of conflict. Some members may oppose the transfers while others may be in support of transfer of priest from one parish or diocese to another. Change that involves the physical facilities of the church produces the possibility for conflict. Conflict sometimes arises over projects undertaken by the church such as fundraising for new church furniture and buildings. Conflicts in the church also emanate from the conservative nature of some members who opposes changes such as dressing codes in the church.

The study established that diverse membership in the church is another cause of conflict. Kenyan Catholic Church members have gift differences, age differences, and length of membership differences. The diversity of members may cause conflict when individuals have contradicting perspectives on the way church issues should be handled.

¹⁰⁹ John O. Bishop, Diocese of Ngong. Personal Interviews at Ngong 24 October 2012

Kenyan Catholic Church faces conflict that result from poor communication. The respondents said that conflict arises when church members do not learn to communicate with each other and understand what each is saying and meaning.¹¹⁰ The breakdown in communication mainly results from emotional factors such as stereotypes and personal insecurities which hinder accurate hearing. There are church members who do not enjoy or even use the advice others give them.

Unmet needs are another reason for conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.¹¹¹ The respondents said that there are people who become upset to the point of not coming back to church because they felt, whether rightly or wrongly, that their needs were not being met. This happens when, for example, no one visited them during an illness, not enough attention was given during a crisis experience, or someone failed to minister to a family member who was a shut-in.

Conflict in Kenyan Catholic Church also results from fear.¹¹² The respondents said that fear leads to all kinds of results both internally and outwardly that produces the potential for conflict in the lives of church members. When the stress levels are heightened, they can lead to a state of distress unless it is brought under control very quickly. Fear also leads to a state of irrational thinking hence intrapersonal or interpersonal conflict arise.

The respondents said that conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church are caused by differences in values, goals, priorities, expectations, perceptions, or opinions among church members, limited resources and the sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful words and actions. The culture, practices and beliefs of the church are a major contributor

¹¹⁰ Peter, N. laity, Holy Cross, Dandora, Personal Interviews at Dandora 21 September 2012

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Jennifer K. Programm Coordinator Radio Waumini. Personal Interview 18 September 2012

to conflicts in Kenyan Catholic Church. The respondents cited the examples such as the positions taken by church regarding reproductive health practices such use of contraceptives and abortion, celibacy and marriage and the role of women in the church.¹¹³ The study established that church members have different opinions on the breakaway Catholic churches that have been emerging. Some member believes their reasons are valid while others say that they should not be associated with the Catholic Church. Therefore, culture, practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church has been a source of conflict in a section of its members.

4.4 Management of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church

The study established that the leadership of Kenyan Catholic Church has the proper skill to manage conflict.¹¹⁴ The respondents said that the attitude of the church towards conflict is positive. However, conflict management remains a challenging issues inn the church due to dynamism in the socio-cultural settings in the world. Due to diverse nature of conflicts in the church, measures put in place to address the underlying issues may fail to get to the most critical aspects of the conflict.

The study findings identified communication as a major tool that should be prioritized in conflict management within Kenyan Catholic Church. The established that communication play an integrative role in conflict and conflict management because the nature of communication lead to different conceptualizations of conflict.¹¹⁵ Conceptualization of conflict is a major factor when people make decisions about the proper ways to approach conflicts.

¹¹³ Apiyo O, Church member, St. John the Baptist, Riruta, Personal Interview 15 September 2012

¹¹⁴ John O. Bishop, Diocese of Ngong. Personal Interviews at Ngong 24 October 2012

¹¹⁵ Ndungu E. Director. Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), Personal Interview 18 September 2012

The study established that communication is a practical function that helps identify opportunities, challenges, strengths, and weaknesses. Christians must be committed to active communication by constantly sharing information with others.¹¹⁶ Conversation helps Christians to understand each other. Church members usually give each other the benefit of the doubt. They accept what's presented at face value. Conversation helps Christians to feel comfortable in asking questions and pointing out other perspectives.¹¹⁷ They can ask about feelings and express their emotions. In conversation, Christians often arrive at agreement and come to an understanding of the other's perspective and determine how that will affect their relationship.

The respondents said that change management forms an integral part of conflict management at Kenyan Catholic Church. Changes in a religious system occur within certain limits under which long-term changes in particular are impossible to predict. In Kenyan Catholic Church, for example, norms, routines, conventions and values have been believed to constitute a means with which to regulate the overall stability of church structures. Nevertheless, religious settings are never totally predictable, meaning that a small change in the initial conditions may generate disproportionate organizational change.

The established that actions that are supposed to be taken during conflict management include developing the proper heart attitude, evaluating ones part in the conflict, going to the offended individual to voice the concern, and attacking the problem rather than the person. This gives the person a better opportunity to clarify the situation or to seek forgiveness for the offense. If the first attempt does not accomplish the needed

¹¹⁶ Ndungu E. Director, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC), Personal Interview 18 September 2012

¹¹⁷ *ibid*

results, there is need for one to continue with another person or persons that can help with mediation. The goal is not to win an argument; it is to win fellow believers to reconciliation.

The respondents stated that conflict is best handled when individuals are prayerfully and humbly focus on loving others, with the intent of restoring relationships.¹¹⁸ Most issues of conflict should be manageable if the above biblical principles are followed. However, there are times when specific outside counsel may help.

In order to successfully manage conflicts in Kenyan Catholic Church, the respondents recommended that mediating church leaders should treat participants in a respectful manner, one in which each person will be heard and no one will be marginalized, seeks to create a just outcome, has reconciliation as its overarching goal, target the true root causes of each conflict, call upon each participant to be open to adjust their opinion of their adversary, and to come to appreciate that he or she is a person like they are with character strengths and flaws, ask each disputant to examine their own contribution to the conflict, encourage offenders to offer a sincere apology and do what they can to make things right, ask those who have been hurt to be ready and willing to forgive, encourage the participants to develop specific solutions in order to be able to work together again in the future.¹¹⁹

The respondents stated that effective conflict resolution in Kenyan Catholic Church can be achieved when church members and leaders seek principled and productive use of conflict to build healthy relationships and make effective decisions.

¹¹⁸ Kago, M, Kanana, K, Anyango, S. Church members, St. Joseph the Worker, Kangemi. Personal Interview 25 September 2012

¹¹⁹ Ibid

The Catholic Church in Kenyan should prepare for conflict by first preventing unnecessary conflict through building strong relationships within and outside of any working group or community, based upon clear and shared understanding of roles, purposes, and meeting processes, so that destructive conflict is less likely to occur.¹²⁰

Secondly, Kenyan Catholic Church should prepare for conflict by anticipating that differences will occur, and devising legitimate ground rules and processes for handling such differences when they come up. The third step is to transforming conflict by developing the capacity through shared knowledge, skills, and commitment.

¹²⁰ John O. Bishop, Diocese of Ngong. Personal Interviews at Ngong 24 October 2012

Chapter Five

Conclusions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusion and recommendations of the study. The conclusion and recommendations of the study are presented in line with the objectives of this study were to identify the various types of conflicts in the Kenyan Catholic Church, to investigate causes of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church, and to explore ways of managing conflict as well as expected challenges conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church.

5.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that those conflicts exist within Kenyan Catholic Church. The conflicts identified in the study are categorized into substantive conflicts, interpersonal conflicts and information Conflicts. The substantive conflicts faced by Kenyan Catholic Church include situations in which church leaders express different opinions about church doctrines, conflict arising from the removal or change of church leaders from one location to another location, conflict due to the position take by church regarding reproductive health, the allegations of sexual abuse by Catholic priests.

The interpersonal conflicts include struggles over power issues, disagreements on the running of local church affairs, and conflicts due to lack of forgiveness and making things right with an individual or group in the church. The study established that conflict also occurs in the church as a result of communication breakdowns.

The study concludes that conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church are caused by factors such as use or misuse of power in the church by priests, staff, deacons, or members, change, diverse membership, poor communication, unmet needs, fear,

differences in values, goals, priorities, expectations, perceptions, or opinions among church members, limited resources and the sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful words and actions.

In regard to management of conflict in the Kenyan Catholic Church, the study concludes that the leadership of Kenyan Catholic Church has the proper skill to manage conflict and the attitude of the church towards conflict is positive. The study concludes that communication as a major tool that should be prioritized in conflict management within Kenyan Catholic Church. Communication plays an integrative role in conflict and conflict management by leading to different conceptualizations of conflict. Change management is also an important part of conflict management at Kenyan Catholic Church. The study concludes that effective conflict management in Kenyan Catholic Church can be achieved if the church has measures prevent conflicts, prepare for conflict and transform conflict.

The study recommends that conflicts faced at Kenyan Catholic Church can be best managed by developing the proper heart attitude, evaluating ones part in the conflict, going to the offended individual to voice the concern, and attacking the problem rather than the person. The study recommends that if the first attempt does not accomplish the needed results in conflict management, there is need for one to continue with another person or persons that can help with mediation. Conflicts in Kenyan Catholic Church can be successfully manage through respect in the mediation process, availing equal opportunities for all parties to be listened, creation of a just outcome, emphasis on reconciliation, targeting the true root causes of each conflict, compromise, appreciation of

individual strengths and flaws, appreciation of individual contribution to the conflict, sincere apologies, and forgiveness.

The study recommends that Kenyan Catholic Church can prevent conflict by developing clear purposes and goals; ensuring appropriate representation and understanding of roles; designing and conducting effective meetings; and building consensus for church decisions. Kenyan Catholic Church can prepare for conflict by establishing the need for a group covenant; educating and inspiring church members; encouraging teamwork among church members, articulating specific behaviors to support church aspirations; promoting full participation of all members in church activities; encouraging accountability; evaluating and revising church progress. The study also recommends that Kenyan Catholic Church can transform conflict by focusing on interests of the wider church society; separate individual church members from the problem; inventing options for mutual gain and develop objective criteria for management of issues raised by church members.

Bibliography

- Allan M. R. and Cecil M. (2002). *Unconditional Excellence: Answering God's Call to Be Your Professional Best*. Avon: Adams Media Corporation, pp 254-255
- Bercovitch, J., (2011). *Theory & Practice of International Mediation: Selected Essays*. Oxon: Routledge, p.112
- Bercovitch, J. (1984). *Social Conflict and Third Parties Strategies of Conflict Resolution*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, p.142
- Best, J.W. and Kahn, J. V. (1993). *Research in Education*. New York: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Boyd-Macmillan, E. & Savage, S. 'Transforming Conflict: Conflict Transformation Amongst Senior Church Leaders With Different Theological Stances', (York: Foundation for Church Leadership, 2008) p.76
- Brahm, E. *Religion and Conflict: Beyond Intractability*, April, 2005: 10. Retrieved 01 May 2012 from: [http:// w.w.w. beyondintractability.org/print/2402](http://w.w.w.beyondintractability.org/print/2402)
- Callahan, D., (1969), *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, London: Arlington Books.
- Donadio, R. (2009). On Africa Trip, Pope Will Find place Where Church Is Surging Amid Travail, New York Times 16 March 2009,6.
- Fisher, R., 'Fractioning Conflict' in Fisher, R.,• (ed.), '*International Conflict and Behavioural Science*', (New York: Basic Books, 1964) pp 91-109
- Gangel, K.O. and Canine, S.L. (1992). *Communication and Conflict Management: In Churches and Christian Organizations*. Nashville: Broadman Press. pp 180-184
- McSwain, L. L. and Treadwell, W. C. Jr. (1981). *Conflict Ministry in the Church*, Nashville: Broadman Press. p59.
- Halverstadt, H. (1991). *Managing Church Conflict*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, pp. 2-4
- Hamad, A. Z., (2005). The Reconceptualization of Conflict Management', '*Peace, Conflict & Development: An Interdisciplinary Journal*', vol. 7, pp. 4-28.
- Hooper J. (2010) *Attempted Ordination of Women A Grave Crime*, The Guardian, Thursday 15 July 2010, Retrieved 23 May 2012.

- Jordan, M. D. (2000). *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*, University of Chicago Press, 2000: pp 66-74 , Print
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1973). *Foundations of Behavioural Research*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston..
- Kisilu, D.K. and Tromp D.L.A. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Kraybill, R. (2000). Habits in Conflict: Divided by Versus Bound Together by Conflict', in Schrock-Shenk, C. (ed.) *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual: Foundations and Skills for Constructive Conflict Transformation*, Akron: Mennonite Conciliation Service,
- Leas, S. (2001). The Basics of Conflict Management in Congregations in Lott, D. B. (ed.), *Conflict Management in Congregations*, Herndon pp.25-53
- Lederach, J.P. (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp 78-101
- Miall, H., Ramsbotham, O. & Woodhouse T. (2006). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts* op. cit. p21
- Miller, L. (2010). *The trouble with celibacy*, Newsweek, April 7, 2010. Retrieved 23 May 2012.
- Mitchell, C. R., (1998). *The Structure of International Conflict*, London: Macmillan, pp15-41
- Mullins, L.J. (1993), *Management and Organizational Behaviour*, 3rd Ed., London: Pitman.
- Murphy, J. (1994). *Managing Conflict at Work*, West Des Moines: American Media Publishing. pp30-31
- Mwagiru, M, 'Peace & Conflict Management In Kenya', (Nairobi: Centre for Conflict Research, 2003) p9
- Mwagiru, M. et al., 'Understanding Conflicts and its Management: Some Kenyan Perspectives', (Nairobi: CCR-WLEA Publications, 1998) p.4
- Mwagiru, M., 'Conflict in Africa; Theories, Processes and Institutions of Management', (Nairobi: Centre for Conflict Research, 2000) pp 49-50

- Mwagiru, M., 'Peace & Conflict Management in Kenya', op. cit. pp 9-13
- Nelson, D. L. and Campbell J.Q. (1997), *Organizational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, and Challenges*, 2nd Ed. New York: West Publishing Company. pp378-379
- Norman, E.R. (2007). *The Roman Catholic Church: An Illustrated History*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp 11-13
- Osita, A. (2006). *West Africa Trouble Spots and the Imperative for Peace Building*, Dakar: CODESRIA, p2
- Palmer, D.C. (1990) *Managing Conflict Creatively: A Guide for Missionaries & Christian Workers*, Pasadena: William Carey Library. pp7-11.
- Pascale, R. (1990), *Managing on the Edge: How the Smartest Companies Use Conflict to Stay Ahead*, New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Reece, B. L. and Brandt, R. (1999). *Effective Human Relations in Organizations*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. p333
- Reynolds, L.R., (2004), *Coming Out & Covering Up*, USA: Dead End Street.
- Robbins, S.P., Waters-Marsh, T., Cacioppe, R. and Millett, B. (1994). *Organizational Behaviour: Concepts Controversies and Applications Australia and New Zealand*. Australia: Prentice Hall
- Sheppard, B.H. (1984). *Third Party Conflict Intervention: A Procedural Framework. Research*
- Sims, R. R. (2002). *Managing Organizational Behaviour*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group Inc. p 246
- Singleton, R.A. Jr., Straits, B.C and Straits, M. M. (1993). *Approaches to Social Research*. 2nd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thompson M. (1997). *Philosophy of Religion* London: Hodder Education,
- Vecchio, Hearn, G. and Southey, G. (1992), *Organizational Behaviour: Life at Work in Australia*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Young, O. (1997). *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crises*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Yperen, J. V., (2002). *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, Chicago: Moody Press, 24-25.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

In your opinion, does conflict exist within the church today?

Please describe some of the conflicts/disputes you have experienced or heard of that have affected your local Church or any other Catholic Church

What are the most significant presenting issues of your church's conflict?

Do you think these are real issues or are there other underlying motives involved in the conflict? If so what are they?

Will addressing these underlying issues get to the most critical aspects of the conflict? If yes, why and if no why not?

What do you think are the causes of these conflicts?

Do you think that the structure/culture/practices/beliefs of the church are a major contributor to these conflicts?

Does the church leadership have the proper skill to manage conflict?

How is conflict/disputes managed in your church?

Would you classify the attitude of the church towards conflict as negative or positive? Why?

What can the church do to manage these conflicts effectively while promoting cohesion in the community?

Would you support changes in doctrines/cultures/practices as a way of minimizing church conflict? If yes, please give examples of changes you would propose.

What is your opinion of the breakaway Catholic churches that have been emerging? Do you believe their reasons are valid? Why

What challenges does the church face as it seeks ways of handling conflict in its midst?

In your opinion, how can the church avoid future conflict in its own midst?