

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

THE RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT
OF INTRA-CHURCH CONFLICTS AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH AND STATE:
A CASE STUDY OF THE EVANGEL CHURCH
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CONFLICT

JOHN KOFI AVORGAH

2010

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**THE RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT OF INTRA-CHURCH
CONFLICTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCH AND STATE:
A CASE STUDY OF THE EVANGEL CHURCH ASSEMBLIES OF
GOD CONFLICT**

BY

JOHN KOFI AVORGAH

**Thesis submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values of the
Faculty of the Arts, University of Cape Coast in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Religious
Studies**

SEPTEMBER, 2010

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name: John Kofi Avorgah

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete Nyampong

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name: Rev. Dr. Evans Laryea

ABSTRACT

This study is premised on the assumption that the body of Christ is today plagued by numerous internal conflicts resulting in breakaways or divisions because the appropriate conflict resolution and management mechanisms are not used to manage and resolve them when they do occur.

Using a methodology based on a combination of the purposive and stratified random sampling techniques coupled with both qualitative and quantitative analysis of data collected, a case study was done on the 2002 Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict. The major findings of the research indicate that Assemblies of God, Ghana does not have a functional conflict resolution and management mechanism. It was also confirmed that the major causes of conflicts in the church include poor communication skills, poor administrative structures, the absence of well written and generally accepted church constitution and the reliance on obsolete and unbiblical church traditions and doctrines.

By way of its implications for church and state, we are sitting on a time bomb because many churches, especially the Pentecostal-charismatic churches, Para-church and religious organizations in general (who control a greater percentage of the population in Ghana), have similar situations as it pertains in Assemblies of God, Ghana, given some recent events in some of them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge Rev. Dr. Ayete-Nyampong, my principal supervisor and mentor, who, apart from teaching me the subjects “Pastoral Care and Counselling” and “Conflict Resolution and Management” such that I discovered my strengths in those two areas of ministry, also encouraged and counselled me to do my best to complete this work when the going became very tough. As a staff at the National Reconciliation Commission he found time out of his busy schedules to read through my scripts. He also stood by me when the original final work I had submitted got missing mysteriously.

I am also very grateful to Rev. Dr. Evans Laryea, my co-supervisor who also taught me “Hermeneutics” and “Ecclesiology in an Ecumenical Context” for his patience with me when at a point in time progress on the work virtually stalled due to a myriad of challenges including the one mentioned above.

Rev. Ralph Mac-Attih, my good friend and co-worker in youth ministry and English scholar cannot go without mentioning. He, at a very short notice, accepted to and did for me the grammatical proof-reading and editing.

I am particularly very thankful to Mrs. Faustina Tay, Mrs. Beatrice Frimpong, and Mrs. Elizabeth Baaba Asmah-Aidoo, who voluntarily and dutifully assisted me with the difficult task of typesetting this work. All said and done, I would be cited for ungratefulness if I do not make mention of my wife, Theresa and children, Dinah and Daniel for their moral and spiritual support.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to those who because of their quest for administrative and financial propriety in the church, are in conflict with their leaders or subordinates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Pages
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTER	
ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the study	4
Statement of the problem	6
Purpose of the study	7
Basic assumption	8
Significance of the study	8
Definitions of Key Words	9
Limitation and Delimitation of the study	11
TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
The Sources, Causes and Ingredients of Conflict	18
The Impact of Conflict on Disputants and Victims	27
Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	31
Effective Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	43

THREE: METHODOLOGY	64
Background data of population sample	66
Population sample's perception of intra-church conflict	69
FOUR: THE CASE STUDY OF ECAG CONFLICT	77
The History of Assemblies of God, Ghana	77
The Administrative Structure of A/G, Ghana	81
Notable Conflicts in the History of A/G, Ghana	93
The History of Evangel Church A/G	102
The ECAG Conflict as told by insiders	104
The accounts of Pee Gyata, and Pastors Timi	
Wuso and Tula Sibor	105
The account of Pastor Tuka Lelame	112
The account of Rev. William W. Dontoh	116
The account of Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore	118
The account of Rev. James Obeng	127
The account of Mr. Ignatius Asare	131
The Population Sample's Perception of the ECAG	
Conflict	138
Analyses of Observations and Findings	144
The genesis of the Pentecostal Movement & related Conflicts	147
The genesis of the A/G denomination & related Conflicts	151
The earliest incidents of conflict in A/G	154
Reviewing the resolution and management of	
Conflicts in the early days the A/G denomination	155

FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND	
RECOMMENDATIONS	157
Summary	158
Conclusions	173
Recommendations	180
REFERENCES	183
APPENDICES	187
Appendix A: Main Research Questionnaire	187
Appendix B: Interview Synopses	203
Synopsis B1: Interview with Rev. Dr. S. B Asore	203
Synopsis B2: Interview with Rev. William W. Dontoh	206
Synopsis B3: Interview with Rev. James Obeng	208
Synopsis B4: Interview with Rev. Gaylord Aidoo-Dadzie	211
Appendix C: Letters Requesting Interview	213
Letter C1	213
Letter C2	214

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. The Impact of Intra-church Conflict on Its Immediate and Distant Environments	75

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Ken Sande's Slippery Slope of Conflict	31
2. The Assertiveness-Responsiveness Chart	50
3. The Chart of Commonly Used Conflict Resolution and Management mechanisms	74
4. Respondents' Ratings of Rev. Dr. Asore and Rev. James Obeng's Conflict Resolution and Management Skills.	138
5. The Leadership Styles of Rev. Dr. Asore and Rev. James Obeng Compared and Contrasted	139

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC:	Accommodation
ARB:	Arbitration
A/G:	Assemblies of God
A&P:	Arbitration and Prayer
AVD:	Avoidance
COLL:	Collaboration
COM:	Compromise
CUC:	Central University College
DOM:	Domination
ECAG:	Evangel Church Assemblies of God
ECOWAS:	Economic Community of West African States
EGO:	Egoistic
GIMPA:	Ghana Institute Management
I.O:	Intimidation of Opponents
NC:	No Conflict
N.I:	No Idea
SED:	Socio-Economic Development
SEP:	Separation
SWOT:	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is one phenomenon that has been with man since creation. In fact, before man came into existence, conflict has been and so is its resolution and management. However, before we can proceed we need to understand the word “Conflict.”

To have a better understanding, four English Dictionaries, namely, the Desk Standard Dictionary, (Fernald, 1946), the Webster’s New Encyclopaedic Dictionary (Harkavy, 1996), the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (Procter, 1995), the D. K. Illustrated Oxford Dictionary of English (Webster, 1998) were consulted. They all used similes like collision, opposition, clash, contend, strife, and antagonism, fight, battle, disagreement, controversy, dispute, argument, debate, and quarrel to convey the concept of conflict.

The first ever conflict is however believed to have occurred between God and one of His archangels by name Lucifer. Out of his ambitious desire to occupy the throne of the Ancient of Days (God), Lucifer deceived a third of the angelic beings and led them in a rebellion against God (Wilmington, 1981). The ensuing conflict was a battle between God’s faithful angels led by the archangel Michael and the unfaithful and defected angels under the leadership of archangel Lucifer (Wilmington). That conflict was the

manifestation of the origin of evil hence Lucifer became Satan and the devil (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28).

The next conflict recorded in biblical history is the conflict between God and man in which man disobeyed and rebelled against God when he, (man) gave in or yielded to the temptation of fallen Lucifer, now known as Satan. The outcome of that conflict left man and his descendants stripped of the glory of God. This made him to become a sinner, a transgressor and totally depraved (iniquity) (Cairns, 1981).

Another conflict in biblical history was between Cain and Abel, which resulted in Cain murdering his brother in cold blood (Genesis 4:1-7). That conflict was the first ever inter-personal conflict in biblical history. It brought man into another conflict with God, when God confronted Cain over the death of his brother (Genesis 4:8-16).

Again, during the days of Noah, man became utterly evil and very wicked to the extent that he was perpetually in conflict with his fellow man and with God. That conflict ended with the deluge, which destroyed all mankind and animals with the exception of eight people and a collection of animals and birds (Genesis 6 – 8).

Last but not the least of the early conflicts in biblical history was when some of the descendants of Noah's children decided to build a tower reaching up to the heavens to make a name for them-selves. (Genesis 11:1-9). In recent times, archaeologists have discovered that that tower, like many others, was actually used in the worship of the planetary systems in total violation of the will of God. The result of the ensuing conflict between God and the people of

Babel was the confusing of the common (single) language of man into the multiplicity of languages and dialects we have today (Wilmington, 1981).

Apart from these biblical records of conflict, there are also records of conflicts between men and other divinities as found in the *Cosmologies and Mythologies* (Heidel, 1949).

Similarly, the history of the church has several records of incidences of conflicts and attempts at their resolution and management. The onset of the New Testament Church itself was characterized by many conflicts such as the conflict between Jesus Christ and the leaders of the Jewish religion (Judaism), leading to His arrest and crucifixion. The persecution of the early church itself is another example of conflict. However, the most significant development as far as conflict is concerned is that which began to occur within the early church itself.

The first incidence of intra-church conflict in the early church is recorded in Acts 6. That conflict was brought about by what appeared to be partiality in the rationing of food and discrimination against the widows of the Grecian Jews. The leaders of the Church at that time took prompt decisions to diffuse a potentially explosive and a divisive dispute.

However, one of the severest incidents of inter-personal conflict in the early church, which tested the conflict resolution mechanisms of the new organization was the dispute between Paul and Barnabas over the re-admission of John Mark onto the missionary team he had earlier on deserted (Acts 15:36-41). The New International Version (NIV) of the Bible termed that dispute “a sharp disagreement.”

Since then, the body of Christ has been characterised by such conflicts, some of which were well managed and resolved. Others could never be well managed nor resolved leading to splits and break-ups. The result is, in part, the multiplicity of denominations. For example, in the "Middle Ages", the Church experienced a lot of conflicts. The causes of such conflicts were disagreements over administrative and ministerial practices, sacraments and doctrines, resulting in the great reformation spear-headed by Martin Luther (Cairns, 1981).

Due to the type of conflict resolution and management mechanisms the then Roman Catholic Church adopted, the Protestant Movement evolved, which was a major break away or split in the body of Christ at that time. There were further splits in the Protestant Movement thereafter, because leaders could not resolve or manage their differences amicably (Cairns, 1981).

It is in the light of such occurrences in the body of Christ, both in the past and present that this researcher chose to investigate the topic "The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State - A Case of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict."

Background of the Study

In early 2000, a dispute started between the Assemblies of God, Ghana leadership (Headquarters) and the senior pastor of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God, a local congregation of that denomination. Attempts at resolving the conflict failed, leading to a disciplinary action preferred against the senior pastor of the above named local congregation. He defied the

authority of the General Superintendent and the Executive Presbytery of the church for which he was subsequently dismissed from the church. Peeved by the action of the Executive Presbytery, a section of the congregation declared independence and cessation of relationship with the mother church.

This faction took over the properties of the local church and changed the name from “Evangel Church Assemblies of God” to “Evangel Church, Ghana.” They proceeded to invite Rev. James Obeng to be their pastor. This led to a mob attack on the church on two occasions by thugs made up of pastors and young people from sister Assemblies of God congregations and neighbourhood street boys, resulting in the closing down of the church by the police.

The case went before the law courts but the new General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, who was the Greater Accra Regional Superintendent of the church, when the conflict began, initiated new moves at resolving the conflict by withdrawing the case from the law courts. He then put it before an arbitration committee of ministers, set up to find a lasting solution to the conflict.

In spite of all the efforts at bringing the breakaway group back into the fold of Assemblies of God, Ghana, it has formally constituted itself into a full-fledge and duly registered new denomination under the laws of Ghana.

The way this conflict was managed made it beneficial to this study because it helped to identify:

1. the primary and secondary causes of the conflict
2. the conflict resolution and management mechanisms that were employed at the beginning of the conflict; their effectiveness and

efficiency, i.e. their strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
(SWOT) analysis

3. the impact of the conflict on
 - a. the local congregation
 - b. the entire membership of Assemblies of God, Ghana
 - c. administrative policies of Assemblies of God, Ghana
 - d. the church (the body of Christ) in Ghana and
 - e. Ghana as a nation.

Statement of Problem

In view of the above and as the title of this work suggests there are a couple of questions that needed to be answered. They include the following:

1. What are the root-causes of intra-church conflicts in general and in Assemblies of God, Ghana (with specific reference to the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict)?
2. What approaches were adopted in resolving such conflicts in the past and how are they being resolved today?
3. What conflict resolution and management mechanisms are there in the church for addressing such conflicts?

Simply put, it is difficult to understand why the church, the body of Christ, is still besieged with conflicts that tend to defy all attempts at resolution and management, developing into major intra-church and inter-denominational conflicts. Such conflicts are carried over into public and social life, which eventually fuel political, social and religious unrests.

For example, the religious conflict in Northern Ireland has lasted for centuries and has caused thousands of people their lives and maiming several tens of thousands in addition. In Ghana, the conflict between the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and its breakaway group, the Global Evangelical Church (originally Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana) resulted in the loss of lives and the destruction of properties running into several hundreds of thousands of Ghana Cedis. Consequently, families, clans, and tribes have been torn apart along religious and denominational lines.

The carnage that occurred during the short-lived Rwandan civil war resulting in the killing of about one million people had religious undercurrents, hence the arrest and prosecution of religious figures by the UN war crimes tribunal. It is for the prevention of such crisis that this study has sought to find and suggest ways by which intra-church conflicts can be resolved and managed appropriately.

Purpose of the Study

In view of the problem statement above, the ultimate purpose of this study includes the following:

1. To find out the root-causes of intra-church conflicts - both historical and current, with specific reference to the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict.
2. To find out the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used successfully or unsuccessfully in the history of the church.
3. To critique the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used in the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict, in the light of

biblical examples and current trends in conflict resolution and management.

4. To identify the deficiencies in the church's conflict resolution and management mechanisms and recommend to her, especially the church in Ghana, the most result-oriented mechanisms for the resolution and management of intra-church conflicts.

By so doing, it is hoped that the church will once again assume her cutting edge position in conflict resolution, management and reconciliation.

Basic Assumption

The basic assumption of this study is that "Major conflicts continue to rock and divide the church (the body of Christ) because proper (effective and efficient) conflict resolution and management mechanisms are not being adopted in addressing them." Intra-church conflicts that often begin as small inter-personal disputes are not properly and adequately resolved making them simmer and eventually explode beyond control. It is so because many local congregations do not have the requisite administrative structures to prevent and manage internal conflicts effectively and efficiently. The ripple effects of intra-conflicts weigh on the nation heavily.

Significance of the Study

What makes this significant is the fact that intra-church conflicts are still with us. Though they cannot be eradicated completely or prevented because the church is a human institution, the application of the appropriate mechanisms will result in the effective and efficient resolution and

management of conflicts in the church and the nation as a whole. Hence, it is the expectation of this researcher that this would significantly help the church in Ghana to:

1. Review her mechanisms for the effective and efficient resolution and management of internal conflicts
2. Play her God-given role of peacemaking and
3. Identify and assist members like the researcher to develop ministries and mechanisms for the resolution and management of intra-church and inter-personal conflicts.

Definition of Key Words

The key words used in this work include:

1. Conflict: It is a dispute between two opposing factions; it is a disagreement between two individuals or groups of people. It could be brief or protracted over a long period of time. It could be peaceful or violent and even fatal. It could be political, inter-tribal, intra-tribal, and religious.
2. Resolution: It is the amicable conclusion to a difficulty, crisis, confusion, dispute or conflict
3. Management: It is the controlled and organized application of available resources, situations and conditions to achieve a predetermined goal.
4. Strategies: It is a set of coordinated plans; ideas and activities designed to elicit a particular result or to achieve a specific goal.
5. Mechanisms: It is a device (physical or non-physical) designed to facilitate a particular process positively or negatively.

6. Religious Conflicts: It is a conflict between two or more religious groups or entities or within one particular religious organization.
7. Reconciliation: The process of resolving a dispute or conflict between two opposing factions and uniting them, resulting in peace and tranquillity between them.
8. Assertiveness: It is the attitude of standing up for personal rights through the expression of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in an open, direct, honest and appropriate ways that do not violate or infringe upon the rights of others.
9. Responsiveness: It is the opposite of assertiveness; an attitude of active and emphatic listening that asks for more information or feelings about the other person's needs, beliefs and viewpoints and showing the willingness to understand.
10. Dominating (Competing): It is the style of being high on assertiveness and low on responsiveness, exerting or using force to press home one's viewpoint at the expense of one's competitor.
11. Accommodating (Smoothing): It is the style of being low on assertiveness but high on responsiveness. It is the opposite of dominating.
12. Avoiding (Withdrawing): It is the style that is low on both assertiveness and responsiveness, withdrawing from and avoiding conflict situations.
13. Compromising: It is the attitude that is mid-way between assertiveness and responsiveness.

14. Collaboration (Confronting): It is the style that employs high assertiveness and high responsiveness to confront conflicting issues. It permits the conflicting parties to confront each other in the light of the conflicting issue in order to reach a mutually satisfying resolution.

Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study covered:

1. A historical investigation of intra-church conflicts beginning from the early church age through the Middle Ages as well as the beginnings of Assemblies of God in the USA and Ghana.
2. The Collection of data on the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict from a population sample of fifty pastors and members drawn largely from Assemblies of God, Ghana churches in the Greater Accra Region (specifically Accra and Tema) and the newly formed Evangel Church, Ghana. This is because the key disputants in the conflict, the head office and senior ministers of Assemblies of God, Ghana, Evangel Church Assemblies of God, as well as the newly formed Evangel Church, Ghana are all located in Accra and Tema.

The study was however limited by the following:

- a. The un-availability of the appropriate textbooks and resource literature; especially on intra-church conflict.
- b. The inability to interview one particular person because he has consistently been unavailable; a key figure in the conflict – Evangelist Emeka Nwakpa, who is also believed to be the mentor of Rev. James Obeng.

- c. In-adequate financial resources which contributed largely to the initial delay in the completion of the work.
- d. The inter-personal and administrative conflicts at the top hierarchy of Central University College and the School of Theology and Missions, between 2002 and 2004, leading to changes in leadership, which seriously affected the scheduled submission and evaluation of proposals, commencement of the study as well as the scheduling of the viva voce.
- e. The disappearance of the final copies of this work from the custody of the School of Theology and Missions of the CUC after they had been duly submitted in March, 2007, necessitating a second viva voce on August 17, 2010.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intra-Church conflict has been with the church since its inception till this day. This might be due, primarily, to the fact that the church, apart from it being the body of Christ and for that matter a spiritual institution, is also a human institution with all the manifestations of any human organization. The members of the church, though saints, are not angels, even though angels are not perfect beings either. Consequently, the church, wherever it has been instituted, has manifested the symptoms of every human society or gathering; including conflict.

D'Souza (1994) has written, "Conflict is a fact of life in any ongoing relationship, whether at home, work or social living; when people come together regularly, especially when it involves issues of personal significance, differences do emerge." He has again said that, "Conflict is more a sign of a group's health rather than a symptom of disease. Indifference threatens the growth of a relationship more than conflict does" (p. 356). He is also quoted as saying, "The presence of conflict in an organization is an indication that members are involved in something of sufficient importance such that they face the tensions conflict inevitably brings" (pp. 356-357). Hence, the Church being an organization of human beings, who are in constant relationship and engaged in the important task of evangelism, is prone to conflicts of all kinds.

Rothman (1997), on the other hand, identified two types of conflicts:

1. Identity or Need-based Conflicts which he defines as “those intangible conflicts that have to do with the serenity, dignity, tradition and culture, history, psychology, values, beliefs and gender of a person or people” (pp. 10-11).
2. Resource or Interest-based Conflicts: These, he writes, are tangible conflicts over material and territorial interest.

Weeks (1992), looks at conflict from a positive perspective instead of the usual negative connotation it has. This he believes provides tremendous opportunities for the mutual growth of the disputants. He enumerated the negative perspective of conflict as follows:

1. A disruption of the order or a negative experience or error in relationship.
2. A battle between incompatible self-interests or desires
3. An isolated event that is allowed to define an entire relationship
4. A struggle only between right and wrong, good and evil.

Rothman (1997) however sees conflict not merely as a problem waiting to be solved but also as opportunities for growth and cooperation, and development waiting to be fulfilled. These conflicts, he believes fall into two categories: “Identity-based Conflicts” and “Resource or Interest-based Conflicts”, which he identified as the remote causes of every conflict.

For the positive view of conflict, Weeks (1992) says they are:

1. “An out-growth of diversity that might hold possibilities for mutual growth and development

2. “That part of a relationship that involves needs, values, perceptions, powers, goals, feelings and not just interests
3. “That punctuates long term relationship and do help to clarify it.
4. “Confrontations between differences in certain aspects of a relationship but not excluding other aspects to be built on” (p. 8).

Halverstadt (1991), in his book “Managing Church Conflict”, thinks that conflicts or disputes are power struggles over differences of information, beliefs, interest, desires, values and abilities for the purpose of securing needed resources. He continued, “The emotional and substantive circumstances can be brought about by the presence of differences between parties who, for whatever reasons are in forced contact with one another” (pp. 1-4). Halverstadt summed up his concept of conflict by equating the role of power (in a social system of conflict) with that of oxygen (in a biological process), to show that the exercise or manifestation of power is central to the concept of conflict.

The thematic guidance notes of the United Nations Development Programme, National Human Development Report on Conflict Prevention have stated that:

Conflict exists where two or more actors are mobilized to obtain incompatible goals and where the other party is perceived to stand in the way of these goals. Therefore, the UNDP’s concept of conflict is the situation where the relationship between two or more actors is characterized by behavioural and attitudinal change which may result in either positive or negative outcomes” (Frache, 2004).

The report further asserts that conflicts occur in many different spheres, like political, social, religious and economic as well as between individuals, groups or states. It reckons that conflict occurs at different levels; from the personal to the global. In spite of all the above, the report says that conflict is not always negative, especially, when expressed through peaceful means. It concludes that conflict is constructive and a very powerful medium of change which promotes human development as it is found in competitive markets, democratic elections and in sports.

From the background of church history, Cairns (1981), wrote in his book - "Christianity through the Centuries" using similes like, "Controversy, Heresies, Schisms and Errors" to refer to some of the conflicts that occurred in the history of the church. He listed four categories of conflicts namely: "Legalistic Heresies, Philosophical Heresies, Theological Errors and Ecclesiastical Schisms." Whereas the legalistic heresies were doctrinal errors emanating from Jewish believers resulting in conflicts between them and church leaders, the Philosophical Heresies originated from the Greek or gentile believers who wanted to adulterate the Christian teaching with philosophy presented in Gnosticism, Manicheanism, Neo-Platonism and Montanism. The Theological Errors too were views and misinterpretation of the scripture by people in the church. The Ecclesiastical Schisms, however, were strong disagreements or controversies over doctrines, discipline and ritual matters.

D'Souza (1994) on the other hand suggests that while conflict is inevitable in relationships, it can have either constructive or destructive results; constructive

and healthy when leaders recognize or anticipate it, understand its potential and give adequate attention to ways of dealing with it and then use it to understand, clarify expectations and roles and to strengthen relationships. He however points out that when conflict becomes destructive, it can slow down decision making processes, cause disputants to suffer psychosomatic disorders and divert a lot of time, energy and resources from reaching important goals.

Lee (1993), in his book “Add to Your Faith, Excellence”, writes that “Conflicts are not necessarily harmful” (p. 116), a fact that has already been opined by D’Souza. He asserts that while most management/labour conflicts have been over working conditions, conflicts among managers have been over how work is to be done due to differences in goals, perceptions of technology and scarcity of resources.

Murphy (2000), in the book “An International Minister’s Manual”, wrote that “The call to discipleship does not exempt Christians from conflicts” (p. 263). They intimated that conflicts occur with-in and with Christians; with fellow believers and non-believers alike. They made references to the various conflicts the disciples had and proposed that if only believers can grasp and apply the lessons learnt in those conflicts; Christians will make their discipleship journeys less difficult.

Voelkel (1974), in his book “Student Evangelism in a World of Revolution”, portrayed conflict as a clash of cultures and values resulting in unceremonious change experienced mostly by young people in changing socio-

political systems. These conflicts, mostly internal are caused not only by external pressures but also by contradictory internal tensions within their hearts.

The Sources, Causes, and Ingredients of Conflict

Considering the sources, causes and ingredients of conflict, Weeks (1992) identified and defined them as follows:

1. Diversity and differences: These, he says are very useful elements for the enrichment of relationships
2. Needs: He sees needs as very essential elements which when ignored and confused and their satisfaction obstructed, escalate or deepen conflicts.
3. Perceptions: He pointed out that they are elements that have to do with one's view or interpretation of reality, given that those perceptions might not be true. Differences in perceptions of self, of the other party, of situations and of threat, give rise to conflicts.
4. Power: He identified power as another very important element in relationship and the misuse of it gives rise to conflict.
5. Values and Principles: He defined them as elements that have to do with people's belief systems and part and parcel of their very existence, hence the willingness of the people to die to defend them. Therefore the violation of the values and principles of partners in a relation gives rise to conflicts.
6. Feelings and Emotions: These, he said, are elements in a relationship that must not be misapplied or ignored because either way they give rise to conflicts.

7. Internal conflicts: These are elements that should appropriately be known as intra-personal conflicts and they are recipes for inter-personal conflicts when not understood or properly managed.

Developing his concept further, Rothman (1997), defines identity-based conflicts as, “Those conflicts which are identity driven, rooted in the articulation of and the threats or frustrations to a people’s collective need for dignity, recognition, safety, control, purpose and efficacy” (pp. 6, 10-11). He indicates that they are very often destructive, relatively intangible and deeply rooted in abstract and obscure elements of history, psychology, culture, values, beliefs and the identity of peoples’ groups. An example is the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

On the other hand, Resource or Interest-based conflicts are the everyday conflicts in which the parties compete or struggle over values, services, remuneration, single or common economic markets. The bones of contention in this type of conflict are obvious, observable and tangible, concrete and well defined. Consequently, the interest of each party is influenced by a bone of contention which may include resource like land, wages and benefits, military or economic power, position of authority, etc.

According to Sande (2004), people perceive conflict in three different ways:

1. Conflict, to some, is a hazard that threatens to sweep them off their feet and leave them bruised and hurting.
2. To others, conflict is an obstacle that they should conquer quickly and firmly, regardless of the consequences.

3. To a third group, conflict is an opportunity to solve common problems in a way that honours God and offers benefits to those involved.

However, in his book –“The Peacemaker”, Ken Sande defines conflict as “a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone’s goals or desires” (p. 29). He went on to identify some primary sources of conflict as follows:

1. Misunderstandings resulting from poor communication for which he cited the conflict that occurred between two different groups of Israelites in respect of an altar raised by one of the groups as an example (Joshua 22:10-34).
2. Differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests or opinion. The conflict between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark rejoining the team and Paul’s discourse on how the different parts of the body operates were the examples he cited to illustrate this point (Acts 15:39; 1Cor12:12-31).
3. Competition over limited resources like time and money is his example of the frequent sources of conflict in Churches, families and businesses. He illustrated this point with the conflict that occurred between Abraham and Lot causing them to separate (Gen.13:12).
4. Sinful attitudes and habits that lead to sinful words and actions. For this he quoted James4:1-2 as proof.

On that last point, Ken Sande differs from all the authors or literature quoted so far. He is the only one to have identified sinful attitudes, sinful habits, words and actions as sources of conflicts.

He postulates that “conflict is not necessarily bad, neither are all conflicts neutral or beneficial” (p. 30). He pointed out that because God has created us as unique individuals, we have different opinions, convictions, desires, perspectives and priorities, which are not necessarily right or wrong. They are however the result of our God-given diversities and personal preferences (1Cor12:21-31). He therefore observed that when our diversities are managed properly, our disagreements can stimulate productive dialogue, encourage creativity, promote helpful change and generally, make life very interesting.

Further to his theory on Identity-based conflicts, Rothman (1997) gave two examples to illustrate it:

1. Conflicts between management and labour over working conditions
2. Conflicts between communities and tribes over traditions and change

These conflicts, he said, are derived from existential or survival issues that underline psycho-cultural concerns that are perceived or believed to be threatened. He said such concerns are rooted in complex, multi-dimensional, psychological, historical and cultural factors that are intangible and very hard to define clearly. Consequently, identity-based conflicts are difficult to define clearly; hence they are simplified and presented as conflicts over scarce resources. Examples are the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the Northern Ireland conflict, the Liberian, Sierra Leonean, La Cote d’Ivoire and the Rwandan conflicts.

Consequently, Rothman postulates that, such conflicts are deeply seated and emanate from the depths of the hearts of the disputants. He further intimates that all identity-based conflicts have elements of interest or resource-based

conflicts, but not all interest or resource-based conflicts have elements of identity-based conflicts. He also pointed out that it has also been realized that conflicts that start as interest-based conflicts, when not managed or resolved properly and early, could transform into identity-based conflicts because the longer a conflict continues, the more disputants connect their dignity and prestige to it. Similarly, when identity-based conflicts are resolved like interest or resource-based conflicts, they grow from bad to worse. Consequently, the difficulty with identity-based conflicts is their misidentification as resource-based conflicts and for that matter, approached inappropriately.

Halverstadt (1991), in his view listed the following causes of intra-church conflict which are also applicable to other situations either than the church alone:

1. Tail-bearing and hearsay, which tend to fog-up good reason and common sense among members of a congregation.
2. “Bold-faced” character assassination by the spreading of poisonous lies about a colleague pastor or member.
3. “Condemnation of one another’s spirituality or character due to differences over beliefs or commitment.
4. When members of a congregation or organization stand or sit unconcerned (playing dead), when their colleagues are feuding or one person is seen virtually destroying the other.
5. When the governing structures of a church or a religions organization permit the unaccountable use of power, money, property or members.

6. Vague job descriptions for staff and un-stated role expectations for members of the church or organization, a situation that usually leads to conflict over one another's roles. The result, usually, is stagnation in the organization.
7. Imbalance of economic dependence between church employees and volunteers, leading to the manipulative exercise of power by one group against the other
8. When people in the church feel used, misrepresented or betrayed by their leaders who had been touted to be faithful, truthful, reliable, etc.
9. Threats to one's self esteem; when one feels his reputation or pride or name is at stake, he fights to defend it, to keep the status quo.
10. Pressures for and against personal and social change and the vulnerability it creates in voluntary systems. Naturally, every human being loves to maintain the status quo and as such does not love change. Consequently, change, if it must happen, exerts some pressure, making the person who must change vulnerable.

Like Rothman, Goldthorpe (1986), in his book – “An Introduction to Sociology”, prescribes the scarcity of resources (including leadership, power and prestige) as one of the causes of intra-church or intra-group conflict.

Confirming the positions of most of the authors considered already, Larom (1989), in his book – “A Practical Guide for Church Leaders”, identified four causes of conflict:

1. When people feel their position or authority is threatened

2. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit leading to the awakening or revival in the normative form of worship, first in Jerusalem and later on, on several occasions in the history of the church, has always held the potential for schisms and divisions.
3. Pastors or leaders who fail to consult their peers, colleagues or elders in the wake of new phenomenal experiences, but assume they are alone in such situations and so proceed to act inconsistently or passionately, create conflict situations.
4. When God raised revivalists to quicken the church from its slumber of “Spiritual-death” and corruption, such revivalists were received with hostility and rejection.

As if he was writing a sequel to Larom’s work, Cairns (1981), in “Christianity through the Centuries” cited the likes of Samuel and Elijah in the Old Testament; Jesus Christ, the Apostles and Stephen in the New Testament; Martin Luther, John Calvin, the Montanists, the old Believers, Savonarola, John Knox, the Anabaptists and the Reformed Church, of the Middle Ages; as examples of revivalists and movements that were opposed and rejected; resulting in conflict situations.

Halverstadt (1991), points out further that when individuals in the church, depending on their personal conscience or visions, embark on ministries without going through institutional channels to seek authorization or coordination, they create conflict.

Cairns (1981), on his part, virtually walks the student of Church History through all the conflicts in the history of the church beginning from 100 AD through 1648 and beyond. The causes he identified and listed include:

1. Conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities, caused by differences in faith.
2. Conflict with political authorities, caused by non-appreciation of the political authority
3. Conflicts within the church, caused by
 - a. Legalistic heresies
 - b. Philosophical heresies
 - c. Theological errors
 - d. Ecclesiastical schisms
 - e. Results of the earlier conflicts
 - f. Creedal developments
 - g. Revivals and attendant schism
 - i. The Reformation
 - ii. The Counter Reformation

Adding his opinion, D'Souza (1994) identified six common causes of conflicts. They include:

1. Perceptual differences: The way different people perceive or see the same object, event or situation. These different perceptions of reality are not realities in themselves; they are assumed and imagined. It is assumed everyone is seeing or feeling the same. However, emotional feelings distort perceptions.

2. Priority or value differences: These are different beliefs deeply held by different people with different values or belief systems. They could be religious, moral, ideological or philosophical. They shape people's positions and relationship to others as well as people's emotion, making them entrenched.
3. Different expectations or role pressures: These are the expectations workplace colleagues have of each other which eventually cause pressures to be brought to bear on those of whom a certain performance is expected.
4. Divergent goals: This is when workers in different departments of one organization have different departmental approaches towards achieving the organization's vision or goal. These differences in methodology normally results in competition and at times serious conflicts over the organization's limited resources.
5. Self esteem or status threats: This is when people, by virtue of their positions in certain organizations like workplaces, churches, homes or marriages, tend to think that they only have the best ideas, plans and solutions to all problems and so become frustrated or angered when the performance of others seem to threaten their dominance or stature in the same organization. The result is usually conflict.
6. Personality clashes: These occur when some people, who cannot co-exist with others despite their abilities, skills and values, always find themselves in conflict with such colleagues wherever their paths cross.

The Impact of Conflicts on Disputants and Victims

In an address delivered to the 28th ordinary session of the Assembly of African Heads of States and Governments, in Dakar, Senegal in July 1992, H.E. Salim Ahmed Salim, the then Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, described the impact of conflicts on all aspects of human life on the continent of Africa as follows:

Conflicts have cast a dark shadow over the prospects for a united, secure and prosperous Africa which we seek to create. Conflicts have cost the continent enormously, in terms of resources expended in prosecuting wars and of the extensive destruction to property and infrastructure. Conflicts have caused immense suffering to our people and in the worst case, death. Men, women and children have been uprooted, dispossessed, deprived of their means of livelihood and thrown into exile as refugees as a result of conflicts.

Conflicts have engendered hatred and division among our people and undermined the prospects of a long term stability of Africa as a whole. Since much energy, time and resources have been devoted to meeting the exigencies of conflicts, our countries have been unable to harness the energies of our people and target them to development.

The social, human and economic cost of conflicts have been tremendous and unless we can put a definite end to conflicts, Africa will continue to be mired in confusion and its people condemned to misery and suffering. Apart from ending conflicts, in order to liberate resources now

locked up in conflict zones and make them available for investment in society, there is the more compelling imperative of putting an end to the pain, hurt and suffering which these conflicts have imposed on our people (Salim, 1992)

Subsequently, the UNDP points out that conceptually, the relation from violent conflict to human development is rather straight forward and although the range of human development options is broad, the point can be illustrated by understanding how conflict affects the four basic components of human development (Franche, 2004):

1. Life: Conflict kills victims (people), more especially civilians, rather than combatants, denying them the possibility of living long healthy lives. Equally vulnerable, are women, children and rural populations and the poor who most often are ill-prepared to face violent conflicts.
2. Reason: Conflict replaces reason by force when armed groups interact with society or civilians. Knowledge and education become valueless and the youth who need them most become the agents of the destruction of knowledge and education by joining armed groups for the prestige of handling guns rather than staying put in school. The educated elite (teachers, writers, artists, journalists, politicians) are either assassinated or chased out of their countries.
3. Accumulated Wealth: Conflict destroys accumulated wealth and denies the survivors of the conflict the option of a decent life. It is difficult to compute the total damage produced by violent conflicts. A great deal of

productivity gets lost due to the fact that many workers get permanently traumatized. The country's natural resources are recklessly exploited and stolen by the armed combatants while invaluable facilities like schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and factories are destroyed. Consequently, investors, both foreign and indigenous are driven away to invest in more peaceful countries.

4. Dialogue: Conflict prohibits dialogue and denies the option to participate in collective matters. The structures of democracy get destroyed and are replaced by tyranny, dictatorship and the rule by the barrel of the gun, resulting in a culture of silence. The society gets fragmented and becomes more vulnerable to more violent conflicts.

Anthony D'Souza (1994), on his part, submits that the impact or consequences of conflict are in two parts (positive and negative). Positively, he thinks conflict

1. brings long standing problems or challenges or difficulties to the fore to be dealt with appropriately.
2. clarifies people's view points or perceptions.
3. causes interest in the causes of the conflict to be heightened and thereby stimulating creative thinking.
4. unearths better ideas and compel people to search for new approaches to doing things.
5. challenges people into testing their abilities.

Negatively however, according to D'Souza, conflict

1. creates a climate of suspicion and mistrust.
2. reduces contact between, hitherto; very close friends, at times leading to complete cessation of communication. In marriage, it results in divorce.
3. makes it impossible for parties that need to cooperate and work together to continue to do that. They rather choose to pursue their own self-interests resulting in resistance.
4. makes some disputants feel defeated, embarrassed and demoralized.
5. makes dissatisfied and frustrated members quit their organizations.

Agreeing with D'Souza, but in a summarized presentation, Halverstadt (1991) identified two main consequences of conflict: the positive consequence that provides opportunities for wholeness and reconciliation and the negative consequence that creates dangerous conditions for division and disintegration. He pointed out further that both consequences develop together with the potential of one becoming dominant, depending on the conflict management mechanisms applied.

Goldthorpe (1986), however, sees the consequences in four different forms:

1. Where one party wins against the other
2. Where both parties are considered winners hence no loser
3. Where both parties are considered losers leaving no one as the winner
4. Where both parties are locked up in a stalemate because no one wants to be seen as the loser nor do they want their opponents declared winners. The result is the escalation of the conflict.

Once again, from the history of the church, Cairns (1981) and Brumhofer (1989) have, in their books, catalogued long chains of divisions, break-ups or splits interspaced with reformations and counter-reformations. The result is a divided church that is weaker than the early church, disoriented and diffused in focus, even though God continues to work through the church.

Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Sande (2004) has identified three basic ways by which people respond to conflicts: the “Escape, Peacemaking and Attack Responses”, which he has illustrated on a pie chart, he calls the “Slippery Slope of Conflict”, as found in figure 1.

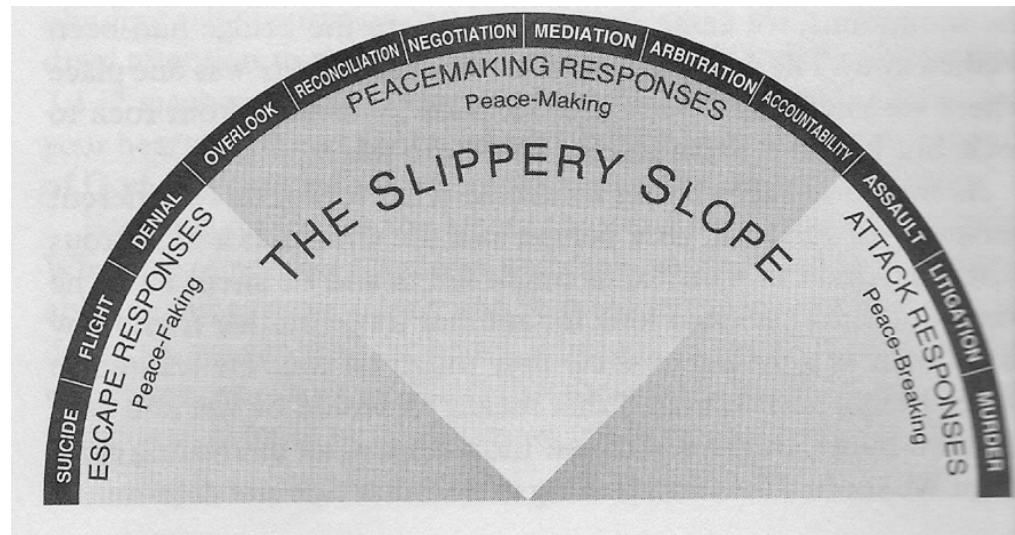


Figure 1. Ken Sande’s Slippery Slope of Conflict. Source: Reprinted with permission from *The Peacemaker – a biblical guide to resolving personal conflicts* by Sande, 2004.

The Peacemaking Responses are sandwiched between the Escape Responses (to their left) and the Attack Responses (to their right) on the slippery slope. Whereas the Peacemaking Responses constitute his concept of an excellent conflict resolution mechanism, he considers the other two responses as inappropriate ways of resolving conflicts. We shall therefore examine those extreme responses now and reserve the peacemaking responses for later consideration under the sub-topic “Effective Conflict Resolution Mechanisms.”

Turning to the extreme responses, Sande (2004) has made the following observations:

1. The Escape Responses: They are the reactions of those who believe they are losing the conflict and they consists of :
 - a. Denial: This is pretending that the problem (the conflict) does not exist or even when it is admitted that there is conflict, virtually nothing is done or no steps are initiated to resolve it, this is usually a temporary relief.
 - b. Flight: This includes leaving the house, ending a friendship, quitting a job, and filing for divorce or changing churches, which only postpones the proper resolution of the conflict.
 - c. Suicide: This is taking one’s own life as a desperate attempt to escape a conflict after all attempts to resolve the conflict have failed.
2. The Attack Responses: They are the reactions of those who think they must win by all means. They include:

- a. Assault: The use of all or various forms of force or intimidation, such as verbal attacks like backbiting and slandering, physical attacks, and attempts to damage one's opponent financially or professionally.
- b. Litigation: Resorting to the use of lawsuits to compel opponents to bend to our will. It does not achieve complete justice and for that matter complete resolution of the conflict but it leaves in its wake a damaged relationship.
- c. Murder: The killing of an opponent, in very extreme cases, in a desperate attempt to win a conflict

Summing up this segment on the extreme responses to conflict, Sande (2004) concludes that people in conflict move into that zone either immediately after the commencement of a conflict or after several unsuccessful attempts to escape from it.

Having reviewed all the traditional or conventional methods of conflict resolution, Weeks (1992), Rothman (1997) and Sande (2004) have proposed their own designed mechanisms for conflict resolution.

For Weeks (1992), the traditional or conventional methods of conflict resolution include what he calls the "Five Popular but Ineffective Approaches to Conflict Resolution" and he has illustrated each with a typical case study. Rothman (1997) on his part though did not enumerate what he calls the "Conventional Negotiation Techniques of Conflict Resolution", has pointed out that they do not work with all types of conflicts.

Sande (2004) on the other hand did identify what he calls the “Alternative Ways to Resolve Disputes” and thoroughly discussed them in the Appendix 'B' of his book, “The Peacemaker.”

Weeks’ “Five Popular but Ineffective Approaches to Conflict Resolution” include:

1. The Conquest Approach: This is when the disputants seek to defeat each other or win at all cost.
2. The Avoidance Approach: Here, one or both disputants pretend the conflict does not exist, hoping that the conflict will die a natural death. Others also admit the existence of the conflict but refuse to confront it. (It is instructive to note that these first two approaches compare favourably with aspects of Ken Sande’s ‘Attack and Escape responses to conflict resolution’).
3. The Bargaining Approach: This is the method used by disputants to trade interests and demands, leading to the making of concessions by both parties. It involves negotiation and compromises. Weeks believe it is the most used approach in the resolution of conflicts in every sphere of life but it has several negative effects.
4. The Quick-Fixer or Band-Aid Approach: This is the type in which disputants settle for the fastest-track resolution affordable without being careful to deal with the intricate issues.
5. The Role Player Approach: This is the method by which disputants approach conflict in their official or social roles and not really as a

disputant on equal footing as his or her opponent. Consequently, they tend to use their official or social positions to bully their opponents into submission and thereby fail to achieve real resolution of the conflict, reconciliation and peace.

Rothman (1997), on his part, points out that the traditional methods of conflict resolution, which he also calls “Conventional Negotiation Techniques”, inclusive of compromising, legislation and ad judicature, are not used only in the Western cultures but also extensively in Africa and the world at large, in the resolution of conflicts. Further to that, Rothman thinks these conventional conflict resolution mechanisms have not been effective in the resolution of identity-based conflicts but rather they exacerbate them. This is because identity-based conflicts require special efforts at accurate analysis and definition over a long period of time before amelioration.

This, however, is not the case with the “Conventional Negotiation Techniques”, which employs bargaining in a cooperative and interrogative process, designed to get all sides to split their differences, to compromise, and to converge on concessions. This method, he says, is effective with interest-based conflicts where the goals are well defined and there are acceptable common grounds.

It is for the above reason; the inherent weaknesses in the conventional negotiation techniques that Rothman (1997) has designed the ARIA (Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, and Action) framework for conflict resolution.

Unlike Weeks (1992) and Rothman (1997), who have pointed out the weaknesses in conventional conflict resolution mechanisms, Sande (2004) does not see them as such. To him, they are alternative ways to resolve conflicts. He defines them as follows:

1. Negotiation: A personal bargaining process in which parties seek to reach mutually agreeable settlement of their substantive differences. He pointed out that positively, negotiation is faster, less expensive and less time consuming and more private and flexible than arbitration or litigation. Negatively however, sometimes, the more knowledgeable or powerful person exploits it to take advantage of the weaker opponents, resulting in injustice. This is one of Sande's major concerns.
2. Mediation: It is similar to negotiation except that it involves the assistance of one or more neutral mediators who work to facilitate communication and understanding between the parties. Compared to arbitration and litigation, mediation is relatively flexible, private, and inexpensive and time efficient. It also facilitates understanding and allows parties to maintain their dignity while dealing with sensitive issues. It does not damage relationship, rather, it enables both parties to be winners and arrive at settlements. Negatively however, mediation does force the disputants to participate in the resolution process and it allows imbalances of power to affect the results, allowing the process to become deadlocked, wasting the time and money invested, since the results are not legally enforceable except incorporated into a legal contract.

3. Arbitration: It is the mechanism that enables the disputing parties to present each side of their dispute before one or more neutral arbitrators and in most cases, is legally bound by the arbitrator's decision on the matter. In arbitration, unlike mediation, judgement is pronounced based on evidence gathered. Again, unlike negotiation and mediation, arbitration produces resolutions to disputes even if one or both parties do not like it. Also, unlike litigation, arbitration is relatively private, informal and inexpensive. In most cases, decisions or rulings arrived at through arbitration are enforceable. Negatively however, arbitration damages relationships and does not necessarily follow procedural rules.
4. Litigation: It utilizes judges, juries and the procedural rules of the civil court system. Its advantage is that the court has the authority to summon all parties to appear before it and also to abide by its rulings. Its disadvantages however include the fact that it is expensive, time-consuming, constrained by formal procedures, offers limited remedies, allows one person to win completely while the other party may lose everything. Litigation increases bitterness between the disputing parties and damages personal relationship.
5. Christian Conciliation: This is a process for reconciling persons and resolving disputes out of court biblically and in a faithful manner, in which reconcilers or professional conciliators, working under the guidance and authority of the disputing parties' churches, serve them on contract. This process, which is conciliatory rather than adversarial, encourages

honest communication and reasonable cooperation rather than unnecessary contention and manipulation. Christian conciliation normally involves three steps:

- a. One or both disputing parties receive individual counselling or conflict coaching on how to resolve the conflict without a third party.
- b. When the above private efforts fail, the parties are therefore required to submit themselves to biblical mediation, involving one or more Christian conciliators, who seek to promote constructive dialogue.
- c. When the second step above, (mediation) also fails, the parties then proceed to biblical arbitration, where one or more arbitrators hear the dispute and make a legally binding rule consistent with scripture

Sande (2004) is convinced that for Christians, Christian conciliation is value oriented, promotes traditional values, preserves relationships, encourages meaningful change, avoids negative publicity, provides a positive Christian witness and is relatively inexpensive. It however has a couple of limitations: conciliators do not have the same authority as civil Judges, limiting their ability to enforce rulings.

Larom (1989) also asserts that religious context conflicts, by their very nature, do not go away by themselves, nor are there easy or clever solutions to them; consequently, he has suggested that in resolving religious context conflicts,

drastic decisions need to be taken at times, knowing well that they may lead to a break- up of the church or organization, a loss of membership, a drop in attendance, a drop in income levels, an increase in emotional pains and bitterness.

He therefore recommends that before a leader(s) or arbitrator(s) reach any decision, the following steps must be followed:

1. Adequate prayer must be made over the issue, (perhaps for weeks) during which the leadership and directorship of God must be sought.
2. The views or stories of the feuding parties must be heard impartially and dispassionately.
3. The conflict must be appraised without the leader or arbitrator's need for his self esteem taking the front stage.
4. Counsel must be sought from other people (perhaps respectable experts on the issue, who might be outside the church or the religious organization)
5. Other options of settlement must be properly considered
6. The final decision must be taken with the ultimate vision of the church or religious organization in mind
7. Once the decision is taken and implemented (announced), the pastor, leader or arbitrator must not waver nor regret. He/she must stick to the decision (provided he did his homework well).

Larom (1989) completed his recommendations for the resolution of religious context conflicts by saying, "Pastors and leaders should be cautious or hesitant, as a precaution against too many disputes or conflicts in the church, in allowing new members of their congregations to become too influential too

quickly, especially when they (the pastors and leaders) do not know very much about their backgrounds” (pp. 110-111).

Goldthorpe (1986), coming from the sociological point of view, has written that human societies possess order through consensus building (i.e. people working together to agree on important questions of value), an ancient and well established tradition that is still relevant today. Quoting from Durkeim (1974), one of the earliest sociologists, he pointed out that men naturally have a common sentiment for living together and for that matter in society. He therefore suggested that, to resolve conflicts, there must be a restoration of those sentiments which are destroyed in times of conflict.

Goldthorpe subsequently recommended three methods of conflict resolution. They include:

1. Aggression (in the form of physical violence): Though this method is not recommended in the Christian context, it was used in the Medieval Age by elements in the church in their attempt to suppress the upsurge of the efforts leading to the reformation. It is an option that is still used in some inter-tribal, racial, political and inter-national conflicts.
2. Coercion: This is a kind of a gentle pressure that is brought to bear on the parties in a dispute for the purposes of achieving peace. It is one of the methods employed by the United Nations and other powerful nations and alliances like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the European Union and NATO to resolve conflicts between smaller nations.

3. **Consensus Building:** This is a very commonly used method in small groups or situations as in parliamentary debates, political party congresses and also in the church and other religious organizations.

In conclusion, Goldthorpe (1986) sees conflict in the religious context, just like in the larger world, as being inevitable but dissipative of the normal functioning of the social system in which they occur. He also thinks they are abnormal and usually transitory because there are supposed to be the built-in structures in every social system to restore equilibrium (to bring the system back to a state of balance and stability). These built-in structures include the courts of law, organs of arbitration, the legislature, etc. He however admits that some sociologists like Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, Hegel, Carl Marx, Ralf Dahrendorf and David Lockwood see conflict as a normal, permanent and even a necessary element of any social system and the fact that scarcity in itself is a definite source of conflict.

In reaction to that position by the philosophers, Goldthorpe (1986) quotes Parsons (1966), from his analytical theory saying that “a social system, viewed as a system of roles exists just in so far as there is agreement about the behaviour expected of each role”, meaning, in every society, once there is conformity to rules and values and expectation of others, conflict or disputes would always be resolved amicably.

From the point of view of the United Nations, as captured in the UNDP’s “National Human Development Report Series - Occasional Paper 3,” conflict

prevention involves a wide range of actions, interventions, programmes, activities, mechanisms and procedures that address structural threats and prevents the escalation of tensions into violent conflicts, in addition to preventing their continuation or re-occurrence. It states further that conflict prevention is not synonymous with building order and stability, regardless of other factors.

In this regard, prevention must be anchored in international law and UN norms and standards. Three levels of conflict prevention, matching the three types of causes of conflict are suggested. They include:

1. The systematic prevention of global conflict factors including global inequity, the negative effects of globalization, arm trafficking and international organized crime.
2. The structural prevention of what has come to be known as “weak, failing or predatory states” from developing, as well as the prevention of group identities, horizontal inequalities, inequity, insecurity and lack of justice.
3. Operational prevention of conflict accelerators and triggers, including among others, scarcity of resources, the influx of small arms, public health emergencies, military decommissioning, sudden migration or population displacement, land redistribution, severe inflation and contentious elections.

In conclusion, the UN believes that, ideally, conflict prevention measures should address symptoms, triggers and root causes of conflict, and should respond to conditions that generate it (Franche, 2004).

Effective Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Looking at the resolution of conflict from the leadership point of view, D'Souza (1994) observes that the normal reactions that occur in the face of conflict but do not resolve it include:

1. Evasion or avoidance - refusing to acknowledge the existence of the conflict.
2. Withdrawal - leaving the scene of the conflict.
3. Premature resolution - hurrying to resolve the conflict without taking into consideration the causes and effects of the conflict.
4. Suppression of all discussions and differences or divergent views on the conflict.

To correct the above anomalies, he intimates that effective leaders are those who view conflict as normal, natural and inevitable and that such an attitude toward conflict enables the leaders to openly confront unpleasant situations resulting in the growth of the leaders as well as the employees or the congregation. He recommends strongly that leaders need to learn the skills involved in managing and resolving conflicts constructively. These include, as presented in figure 2:

1. Assertiveness: The standing up for personal rights; the skill to express one's thoughts, feelings and beliefs in open, direct, honest and appropriate ways that do not violate or infringe upon another's rights. It involves respect for one's self in expressing needs and defending rights as well as

the respect for other people's needs and rights. Assertiveness is very important in conflict resolution and management because:

- a. It increases self-respect and develops a positive self-image; consequently, assertive people take charge of their own lives.
- b. It results in greater feelings of self confidence, reduces insecurity and the need for others' approval.
- c. It frequently results in individuals getting their needs satisfied and preferences respected
- d. It also results in closer and more satisfying relationships with others.

Though some people disapprove of assertive behaviour, assertive people are respected and admired for their courage because when they present their views and make sure they are heard, everyone else stand to gain.

Their assertiveness

- a. gives people new energy and makes them feel stronger
- b. is therapeutic because they blow out the tensions and differences that result in stress
- c. improves relationships because it generates discussion
- d. helps in the accomplishment of many things

For groups and organisations, the assertive behaviour of members normally results in:

- a. the better use of resources and prevents the loudest voices from carrying the day

- b. more initiatives because many more people present different ideas
 - c. improved problem-solving and decisions
2. Responsiveness: This skill “involves active and empathetic listening; communicating a message that asks for information or feeling and it involves a style that demonstrates a willingness to listen to others state their needs, goals, beliefs, or view points while maintaining eye contact; framing questions that encourage elaboration and using approaches that demonstrate interest and understanding” (D’Souza, p. 377).

Quoting from Shaw (1979), a human resources development expert, D’Souza (1994) reveals that about twelve researches on leadership effectiveness has conclusively established that, assertive and responsive behaviour combined in various ways produce better results than aggressive or non-assertive behaviour. Specifically,

- a. leaders who strive to attain organizational purpose and show concern for the needs of others get better results than those who ignore or depreciate others
- b. authoritarian and autocratic leaders are less effective than those who are straight-forward and available to others
- c. methods that reflect genuine concerns for rights, needs, goals and resources of others produce positive results

Quoting further from Shaw (1979), D’Souza (1994) argues that the assertive-responsive behaviour is the most appropriate conflict resolution response because it involves the resources of the parties engaged in the

conflict. In the assertive-responsive mode of conflict resolution, each party has the opportunity to assert its views and at the same time be also responsive to the views of the other party; nobody is denied the opportunity or ability to argue his or her position.

Irrespective of where it is applied; be it in work place conflict, between management and workers, or in marriage, between husband and wife or between children and parents or between peers, or between church leaders and members; for as long as both parties respect each other's right to be assertive and its own responsibility to be responsive, this method of conflict resolution is effective.

D'Souza (1994) also pointed out that the extent of the assertiveness or responsiveness of the parties involved in the conflict depends on a couple of factors:

- a. How important their own needs and goals are to them.
- b. How assertively they chose to act.
- c. How important the relationship with the other party is to them.
- d. How responsively they chose to act.

Depending on the degree of assertiveness and responsiveness exhibited by both parties, five styles of conflict resolution (as illustrated in figure 2) evolve.

They are:

1. The Dominating Style: This is when one party is very high on assertiveness (approaching the 100% mark) but very low on responsiveness (approaching the zero mark). Such a party in a conflict

adopts the attitude of winning at all cost, hence becomes a domineering figure and a bully. When both parties happen to adopt the dominating style, the conflict must therefore be resolved by a higher authority that also must use authority (a domineering posture) to impose a decision which one party might be uncomfortable with but must accept and live with. The outcome is

- a. non-commitment, to the decision or resolution
- b. bitterness and hostility in the losing party

However, the dominating style is appropriate in situations where force have to be used to maintain law and order like:

- c. When a small group of soldiers take up arms to over-throw a government in power.
 - d. When a child is being unruly, rebellious or naughty.
2. The Accommodating or Smoothing Style: This is when one party to the conflict is very high on responsiveness (approaching the 100% mark) but very low on assertiveness (approaching the zero mark). It is about the opposite of the dominating style. In this style, one or both parties decide not to argue its case and want the conflict to end as quickly as possible. When both parties decided to adopt the accommodating style, they invariably sweep the issues at stake, unresolved as they are, under the carpet, pretending they do not exist. The result is that the conflict does not really go away. After sometime, it resurrects and at times more dangerous than before. However, this style also has its uses, especially, when both

parties have a strong aversion to open conflict; peacemakers assist them to emphasize the areas of agreement and disagreement.

3. The Avoiding or Withdrawing Style: This style is low (approaching the zero mark) on both assertiveness and responsiveness. It is adopted by people who are not interested in resolving the conflict or fear the conflict and so play the evasive card by either engaging in pleasantries or avoiding the other party or the bone of contention altogether. Here again, the conflict is left unresolved and may be compounded. However, the avoidance style has some usefulness. Indifference to or detachment from a conflict situation or retreating from potential or actual conflicts helps or allows for
 - a. a cooling off period when tempers come down
 - b. postponement of issues until a better time
 - c. prevention of disputes over unimportant issue
 - d. situations overshadowed by the potential damage of confrontation to be properly addressed.

This style is useful only in the short term and not in achieving long term solutions to serious issues. It allows a bad situation that must be addressed to degenerate and become explosive. It undermines relationships and chills friends into, according to D'Souza (1994), "'ice-olation' (isolation)" (pp. 378-382).

4. The Compromising Style: This is a style that is halfway (about fifty percent) between Assertiveness and Responsiveness; it is partially

assertive and partially responsive. This style of conflict resolution searches for a middle ground solution that partially satisfies both parties in the conflict. Compromise connotes weakness and lack of commitment to a position, hence to compromise implies putting expediency above principle or seeking short term solutions at the expense of long term objectives. D'Souza however thinks that compromise has a potential value in conflict-resolution, especially between workers and management in a work place situation. In such situations, where the conflict has the potential of crippling business, even though a compromise does not result in a decisive winner or a clear loser, it is the only practical way of dealing with the conflict, pending the actual resolution of the conflict later. Its weakness however is that once a compromise is reached, the negotiators go to sleep and the more satisfactory solution never gets found. Consequently, the goal of compromise is to end the conflict irrespective of whether the best solution is found or not.

5. The Collaborating or Confronting Style: This style employs the full import (about 100%) of both assertiveness and responsiveness, enabling the conflicting parties to confront each other and so reach a solution that fully satisfies each party. Collaboration by confrontation provides the first step in constructive resolution of conflicts through
 - a. sharing of relevant facts and feelings
 - b. openly admitting differences

- c. clarifying the issues, the needs of the opposing parties and their current feelings.

Though D’Souza (1994) sounds very convincing, Weeks (1992), Rothman (1997), and Sande (2004) do not agree with him completely, as already stated.

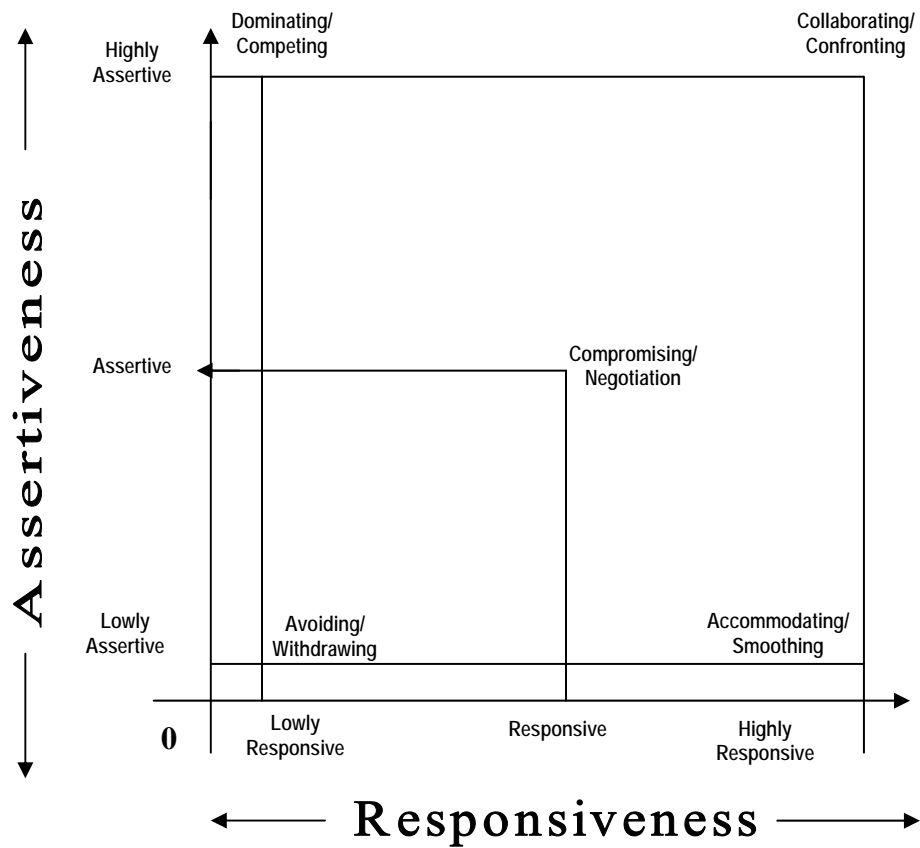


Figure 2. Assertiveness-Responsiveness Diagram

Source: Adapted from: D’Souza, (1994).

Weeks (1992), in chapter four, introduced his own prescription: “The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution”, a partnership process under-pinned by five basic principles. These principles are:

1. “We” not “I” versus “You”: A principle that teaches disputants to see conflict not as an “I” versus “You” affair but a situation of “we working together to improve our relationship” (pp. 63-68).
2. Conflicts must be dealt with in the context of the overall relationship: a principle that requires that conflicts should not be seen as a small aspect of the overall relationship but as that which affects the whole relationship and must be addressed as such.
3. Effective conflict resolution should improve the relationship: This principle emphasises the need for resolving conflicts in such a way that the resolution does not destroy the relationship but rather to improve it, if it should be effective.
4. Effective conflict resolution results in mutual benefits: This principle points out that conflict resolution can only be considered effective when it benefits all the parties in the conflict.
5. Relationship building and conflict resolution are connected: This final principle reiterates the fact that conflict resolution and relationship building are inter-related and interdependent; conflict resolution is needed to maintain and build any relationship, just as a good mutually beneficial relationship is needed to amicably resolve or even avoid conflicts.

With regard to the eight essential steps to conflict resolution, which is adequately addressed in the second part of his book, Weeks (1992) carefully outlined and explained his conflict partnership approach as follows:

1. Step One: This involves the creation of an effective or enabling atmosphere by the disputants for dialogue. This includes personal psychological preparation by the disputants; choosing the appropriate time and place to dialogue, what the initial comments should be like in both general and specific situations.
2. Step Two: Here, he recommends that whatever perceptions might have existed between the disputants must be clarified. They include perceptions of the conflict, of self and of the conflict partner. When this second step is effectively done, it results in the cleaning of the mirrors and lenses of the disputants' minds.
3. Step Three: This step looks at the need to focus on individual and shared needs. It points to the fact that needs (both individual and corporate as well as that of the relationship), when neglected, give rise to conflict. He therefore recommends that the disputants must dispassionately deal with their personal needs first through personal examination. Secondly, the needs of the conflict partner also need to be objectively addressed, after which the needs of the relationship must also be dealt with. After doing all that, he points out that the most critical component of the conflict partnership process (shared needs) must also be addressed. Shared needs are needs that are common to the disputing parties.
4. Step Four: This is on building shared positive power as against individual negative power (the abuse of power for selfish ends). In contrast to the dictionary definition of power "the ability or capacity to exercise control,

authority, might, strength or force capable of being exerted” (Harkavy, 1996), Weeks (1992) defined power as “consisting of attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours that give people and groups the ability to act or perform effectively” (p. 148). After comparing and contrasting positive and negative power, he examined the three powers that operate in every relationship and conflict. They include self power, the partner’s power and shared power. He also examined how shared positive power can be harnessed for conflict resolution and relationship building.

5. Step Five: This step focuses on looking to the future, beginning from the present and learning from the past. The lesson is that, whereas the past should not be the focus of any relationship, it must not be entirely forgotten. The lessons of the past are very essential for progress into the future. Where it becomes necessary, mistakes of the past should be forgiven and the successes applauded.
6. Step Six: This step deals with generating options as against entrenched positions or preconceived answers and decisions. In this regard, knowledge of the conflict partner’s options is a necessity and it gives a wider range of options to choose from.
7. Step Seven: In this step, Weeks encourages the development of “doables” (workables) by the conflict partners to serve as stepping stones to action, not only in the resolution of conflicts but also in building the partnership relationship.

8. Step Eight: In this final step, the conclusion of the “Conflict Partnership Process” is reached with the making of a mutually-beneficial agreement instead of demands. In this agreement, each person becomes the conflict partner’s keeper or caretaker. Weeks (1992) completed his work with an appendix on how to handle frequent problem areas like anger, the feeling of “No conflict” by one party when indeed there is conflict, how to confront your conflict partner courageously and successfully and many more.

Rothman (1997) on the other hand has already stated that there are basically two types of conflicts; the “Resource or Interest-based Conflicts” and the “Identity-based Conflicts.” He agrees that the interest-based conflicts can be resolved using what he has referred to as conventional methods of conflict-resolution. For the identity-based conflicts, which he says are only exacerbated by the conventional methods of conflict resolution, Rothman has proposed his own mechanism for resolving them. This mechanism is known as the ARIA, the abbreviation of Antagonism, Resonance, Invention and Action - the four major steps in the mechanism.

The basic fact in identity-based conflict resolution is that identity-based conflicts would only result in growth when they are effectively managed. Creative engagement begins when all disputants have the opportunity to air their views and concerns and at the same time listen to and identify with the concerns of their opponents, during which survival recognition and identity must be addressed.

The ARIA framework enables an interactive dialogue to precede problem solving or negotiation and leads to the accomplishment of several important goals like the disputing parties learning to appreciate the gains of reaching an agreement; that they begin to look at their conflict in common terms, articulate shared concerns and aspirations; that they came to appreciate the advantage of reaching an agreement that the others find fair and acceptable; and that they must feel comfortable with the climate for negotiations that will result in mutual gains.

The ARIA frame work is meant to facilitate adequate and accurate information exchange between disputants in an atmosphere of openness, joint inquiry and learning, where the groundwork is laid by enabling disputants to voice their deepest concerns and motivations and to recognise those of their adversaries.

Rothman (1997) uses the remaining four chapters to thoroughly analyze the four components of the ARIA framework for conflict resolution:

1. Antagonism: It is defined as surfacing differences and analyzing animosity. It is the effective way of getting disputants to articulate their implicit positions on the conflict by giving it an explicit frame that can be scrutinized, evaluated and reframed.
2. Resonance: It is defined as articulating common needs and motivations. It is the result from adversarial framing to the reflexive reframing, where disputants articulate their own values and concerns interactively until the disputants achieve common ground where they say “we” instead of “they.”

3. Invention: It is defined as generating cooperative solutions; the transformation of a conflict into a source of creative solutions. By it, the disputants learn strategies for problem solving in which they all benefit.
4. Action: It is defined as setting joint agenda for the implementation of strategies agreed upon. It is at this stage that the questions “What is to be done?”, “Why is it to be done?” and “How is it to be done?” are asked. It therefore includes joint project planning, institution building, negotiation or problem solving and action planning.

Rothman (1997) used the second part of the book to illustrate how he has used his conflict resolution mechanism in situations like peace building in Jerusalem; transforming conflicts within and between groups and organizations and the lessons learnt from the implementation of the ARIA tools in community conflicts.

At this point, it is becoming clear that all the literature reviewed so far including D’Souza (1994), Weeks (1992), Rothman (1997), Goldthorpe (1986), Halverstadt (1991), Larom (1989), and Sande (2004), are saying almost the same thing but in different ways and from different perspectives. To conclude this review however, Sande, from the biblical point of view, has some very interesting and important recommendations for conflict resolution and management.

From his slippery slope of conflict, from which we have already discussed some traditional responses to conflict (the escape and attack responses), Sande (2004) brings to our notice what he calls the “Peacemaking Responses” to

conflict. He asserts that they are “commanded by God, empowered by the gospel and directed towards finding just and mutually agreeable solutions to conflict.

Numbering six in all, Sande (2004) refers to the first three responses, comprising “Overlooking an offence, “Reconciliation and “Negotiation” as “Personal Peacemaking Responses” and the remaining three - “Mediation, “Arbitration and “Accountability” as “Assisted Peacemaking” (pp. 22, 25-26) The entire work of Sande is dedicated to the discussion of these six peacemaking responses as well as the escape and attack responses to conflict. Having looked at the escape and attack responses already, we now look at the peacemaking responses more closely:

1. Overlooking an offence: Sande (2004) quotes extensively from scripture (Prov.19:11; 12:16; 17:14; Col.3:13; 1Pet.4:8) to prove that many disputes or conflicts are better resolved simply by overlooking them because they are too insignificant to warrant attention. For him also, to overlook an offence is a form of forgiveness and it involves making a deliberate decision not to talk about it, dwell on it or let it grow into a pent-up bitterness or anger.
2. Reconciliation: He proposes that if an offence is too serious to overlook or ignore and for that matter has damaged the relationship, there comes the need to resolve the personal or relational issues through confession, loving correction, and forgiveness. The scriptural bases he quotes for this response are Matt 5:23-24; Prov28:13; Gal 6:1; Matt18:15.

3. Negotiation: Regarding this response, Sande (2004) contends that even if relational issues are resolved successfully through reconciliation, there is still the need to work through material issues related to money, property and other rights. This process of working through such issues like cooperative bargaining with the aim of reaching a settlement, that will satisfy the legitimate needs of both parties in the conflict is called negotiation. This is in obedience to the biblical injunction to look not only for one's personal interest but also for the interest of others (Philp.2:4).
4. Mediation: He proposes that when the parties involved in conflict are unable to reach any agreement on their own they need to seek the assistance of a third party to assist them communicate more effectively and to explore possible solutions as recommended in Matt.18:16. The third party is the mediator and the assistance he offers is mediation.
5. Arbitration: This, according to Sande (2004), is employed when the parties in conflict are unable to reach agreement voluntarily on material issues, warranting the need to appoint arbitrators, who, unlike mediators, do not have to make decisions or judgements for the conflicting parties but have the authority to make rulings that are binding on the parties in the conflict. The biblical support he quotes in this regard is 1Cor. 6:1-8
6. Accountability: This is the last peacemaking response recommended by Sande (2004) and it is based on the biblical injunction given by Jesus Christ in Matt.18:17. It is only applicable when a party in a conflict, who professes to be a Christian, refuses to be reconciled and to do what is right.

Such a person is to be made accountable to scripture by the church to promote repentance, justice and forgiveness. He however recommends that to achieve the best result, the accountability response should be applied lovingly, redemptively and restoratively.

In a more biblical language, Sande (2004) discussed the above responses (principles) under four sub-headings: “Glorify God, “Get the log out of your eyes, “Gently restore and “Go and be reconciled” in the four parts of the book, “The Peacemaker.”

In the first part of the book, Sande (2004) focused on the first principle – “Glorify God”, in which he argued that just as Christians are required to glorify God in everything they do, conflict situations should be seen as opportunities to glorify God.

In the first three chapters that make-up the first part of the book, Sande (2004) draws out three lessons:

1. Conflict situations are opportunities to glorify God.
2. It is important to live at peace with all manner of people.
3. It is impossible to live at peace with our neighbours until we have learnt to trust God to do ‘good.’

In part two of the Peacemaker, which comprises the next set of three chapters, he focused on the second biblical principle of “Getting the log out of one’s own eyes.” In those three chapters, he argues that:

1. There is the need for disputants to reflect on their own actions instead of pointing accusing fingers at their opponents all the time.

2. Disputants need to ask themselves if the bones of contention they are fighting or quarrelling over are really worth fighting over.
3. Conflict really starts in the heart and as such there is the need for disputants to accept responsibility and confess the sins of their roles or their failings that have resulted in the conflict and to ask for forgiveness even when a disputant is not the primary cause or agent of the conflict. He believes that such moves have softening effects on the hearts of disputants. Further to that, Sande (2004) has stated that there are two types of logs

that need to be removed (confessed):

1. The log of critical, negative and over sensitive attitude that fans the flames of conflict.
2. The log of hurtful words and actions synonymous with grumbling, complaining, unloving criticism, slandering, lies, exaggeration of the truth, laziness, irresponsibility, failing to keep commitments, resisting godly counsel and unforgiveness.

To make the removal (confession) of the logs successful, Sande (2004) has recommended the following which he calls 'The Seven "A's" of Confession' (pp. 126-134):

1. Address everyone you have offended.
2. Avoid "if, "but and "may be" in an attempt to excuse your wrong or failure.
3. Admit specifically all attitudes and actions that are provocative.

4. Acknowledge the hurt you have caused others or the other party by expressing sorrow.
5. Accept the consequences and make attempts at righting the wrongs you have done.
6. Alter your behaviour by changing your attitude and actions.
7. Ask for forgiveness.

He however admits that this process of confession is a very involving one and that it can only be carried out by a truly repentant disputant who wants to see an end to a debilitating conflict.

In part three of the Peacemaker, also comprising three chapters, Sande (2004) wrote on what, in his opinion, is the third principle in conflict resolution from the biblical perspective; “Gently Restore.” He recommended a process of restoring an offending brother or friend in three steps, based on the biblical injunctions in Gal. 6:1 and Matt.18:15:

1. The first step is expected to be a meeting between the disputants alone and should be initiated by the offended that must go to the offender to point out his fault to him and not the other way round.
2. In step two, he recommended that the truth must be spoken in love by the disputants, one to the other.
3. In step three, which becomes necessary only when the offender refuses to cooperate, he recommended, in consonance with biblical instruction that a third party, should be invited to help with the process. In doing this, he counselled that:

- a. The initiator of the process (the offended) need to recognise that God can use him/her to help the offending brother or sister to resolve the conflict more effectively than he would be able to on his own.
- b. The offender should be approached in a loving and gracious manner and should be helped to evaluate his or her role in the conflict, because working together with the offending party produces more effective results.

When the above has been done correctly then, the next is:

4. Step four: - To gently and lovingly correct the offending party.

This brings us to the final segment of the Peacemaker; also comprising three chapters on the principle “Go and be reconciled.” Still coming from the biblical perspective, (2004) outlined three important steps that must be taken to achieve reconciliation:

1. Step one is a recommendation to forgive the offender because God forgave us our sins absolutely without holding back; forgiving us to the extent of paying the ultimate price for our offences against him.
2. In step two, he recommends that the offended should look to the interest of others especially that of the offender or the fellow disputant. He stressed that, for as much as we seek our personal interest in anything and everything, including disputes or conflicts; it is very important or conciliatory to remember that others too have interests to satisfy.

3. The final step proposed by Sande is to make the effort to overcome evil with good. He explained that to be at peace with all manner of people at all times, there is the need to learn to overcome evil (not one's fellow brother or sister) with good. He pointed out that most of the time; we react against our fellows leading to conflicts. The reality however is that the cause of the fellow's action that might have offended us is evil and not the fellow who only served (consciously or unconsciously), as a channel. The right antidote therefore is to overcome evil with good.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The following steps were followed to complete this work:

1. A case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict. This was carried out through a survey administered on a population sample of about fifty people comprising pastors, deacons and members of Assemblies of God, Ghana, Evangel Church, Ghana and a member of a Baptist Church. Also, personal interviews were conducted on the key players in the conflict, their supporter and observers. All the above were achieved using a set of well designed research instruments.
2. The preparation of the research instruments (two types):
 - a. The main research questionnaire; designed for the purpose of gathering additional data on the resolution and management of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict. A population sample of fifty people was selected using the combination of the simple randomisation, purposeful and the quota sampling techniques. Each respondent was served with a copy of the research instrument, which was in two parts and designed to:
 - i. Find out the population sample's perception of intra-church conflicts, their causes and effect on the church and the state as well as their knowledge of conflict resolution and management mechanisms.

- ii. Find out what the population sample knew about the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict and its resolution and management as well as their knowledge of the key disputants in the conflict (Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, the General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana when the conflict occurred and Rev. James Obeng, then the senior pastor of Evangel Church Assemblies of God) and their leadership styles.
 - b. The supplementary research questionnaires; a set of interview synopses, designed for the purpose of collecting additional data from the principal disputants in the conflict (Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and Rev. James Obeng) and their associates (numbering about ten), to make up for the margin of errors (plus or minus) and the perceived deficiencies in the data to be collected.
3. The research instruments were initially tested on the Tema Christian Centre Assemblies of God congregation after which they were fine-tuned for the real exercise.
4. The collection of the completed questionnaires from the respondents took over four months instead of the initially estimated period of one month. After that the data was collated and analysed, using predominantly, the descriptive method as well as the qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. This resulted in the use of charts, and diagrams to illustrate a couple of important facts.
5. The interpretation of the data in the light of the basic assumption (the hypothesis) followed.

6. The work was completed with the determination of the thesis in the summary of the data analysed, the drawing of the conclusion and the recommendations.

Background Data of the Population Sample

To begin, it was imperative to examine first the data collected on the background of the population sample that was chosen by a combination of the simple randomisation, purposeful and the quota sampling techniques. The combination of the three sampling techniques was necessary to choose a population sample that will reflect the spectrum of the church (Assemblies of God, Ghana) that was involved in or affected by the conflict.

The initial population sample was 50, representing only the Assemblies of God churches in Accra and Tema, which form the largest proportion of Assemblies of God congregations in the Greater Accra Region. Out of the 50, 46 completed and returned the research instruments (questionnaires) giving a 92% response rate. Therefore the 46 returned questionnaires formed the source of the additional data collected. The data on the background of the population sample is found in the answers to the first 14 questions of the second part of the questionnaire.

The 46 respondents comprised 10 senior pastors, eight junior pastors, 16 deacons, six members, and five members of the breakaway Evangel Church, Ghana, one non-member – a member of Tema First Baptist Church, whose close friends are members of Assemblies of God, Ghana.

The age of the respondents ranged from 28 to 69 years with an average of 46.5 years, a median of 45 years and modal ages of 42 and 43 years. A

further breakdown gave the ages of the senior pastors as ranging from 45-65, junior pastors, 34-54, members, 28-64, deacons, 39-69, and non-members (including members of Evangel Church, Ghana), 29-59. The Christian age (number of years since becoming born again or converting to the Christian faith) of the population sample ranged from 11 to 37 years with a modal age of 23 years, median and mean ages of 24 years and 24.3 years respectively.

Relating to gender, however, 82.6% of the respondents were males representing 39 out of the 46 respondents (even though one person apparently male, did not indicate his sex). The remaining 15.2% of the population sample represents seven females. This is about a true reflection of the leadership spectrum in Assemblies of God, Ghana, which until recently did not train female pastors. With the exception of one member of the population sample who is non-Pentecostal, all the respondents are Pentecostals being members of Assemblies of God.

With the exception of one respondent who did not answer question 5, all the others knew of Evangel Church Assemblies of God. However, on the issue of membership of Assemblies of God, Ghana, the percentage dropped to 86.7 because the five members of Evangel Church, Ghana and the Baptist Church member formed 13.3% of the population sample.

With regard to holding leadership positions in Assemblies of God Ghana, 91% of the respondents ticked “yes.” It is significant to note that even 66.7% of Assemblies of God members among the population sample were once or are still leaders in the church. So also 66.7% of the non-members had once held leadership positions in Assemblies of God, Ghana.

66.7% of the population sample is resident in Tema and its suburbs as against the remaining 33.3% who live in Accra and its suburbs. This is so because

1. Due to the political and geographical demarcations of the Greater Accra Region some suburbs of Tema, like Adenta, Madina and Sakumono Estates are closer to Accra than Tema
2. Some of the pastors live in Tema but have churches or offices in Accra
3. The researcher is resident in Tema, as such, knew and had easy access to potential population sample members in Tema than in Accra
4. Most Assemblies of God church members in Accra, especially those who are close to the disputants declined participation in the research exercise.

66.7% of the respondents had ever worshipped at Evangel Church Assemblies of God, but only 20% of the members of the population sample were ever members of Evangel Church Assemblies of God. This is good for the research because it reduced the biased elements in the data to about just 20%, assuming that the remaining 80% who have never been members of Evangel Church were objective in their responses. Again, only 8.9% of the respondents have ever held leadership positions in Evangel Church Assemblies of God. Among the non-Assemblies of God, Ghana respondents, (including the breakaway Evangel Church members); only 50% of them had ever held leadership positions in the church. Similarly, only 6.3% of the 16 deacons in the population sample had been deacons or even held other leadership positions in Evangel Church Assemblies of God.

Even though all, except two deacons, representing 95.5% of respondents knew of the ECAG conflict yet only 9.4% of them got the year and month of the conflict right whilst 34.4% of them had only the year right. However, 23.3% of the respondents did not have any idea of when the conflict occurred.

Having analysed the background of the population sample, it was equally imperative to measure their perception of intra-church conflict to enable the researcher make informed and critical analysis of their responses.

Population Sample's Perception of Intra-Church Conflict

Whereas 33.3% of the respondents believe that the primary cause of intra-church conflicts is poor church administrative structures, 26.6% of them think it is due to lack of effective communication. 8.8% think it is due to doctrinal differences whilst 11.1% think it is caused by spiritual or demonic attacks. Furthermore, another 11.1% of the respondents think disagreements over policies and procedures is the cause as against 2.2% who blame it on human nature, lack of truth, transparency and varying circumstances, depending on the challenges of the local church. It is also instructive to know that 30% of senior pastors think a combination of the lack of effective communication and poor church administrative structures is the primary cause. This view is supported by 37.5% of junior pastors. However, 33.3% of members think it is rather the combination of doctrinal differences and poor church administration that is the cause of intra-church conflicts. 25% of deacons blame it on lack of effective communication and disagreements over

policies and procedures, but 43.8% of the same deacons blame it on poor church administration.

Regarding the secondary cause of intra-church conflicts, the trend of responses is not different from what we have already seen regarding the primary cause. Whereas 28.8% of the respondents think it is due to lack of effective communication, 4.4% of them think it is doctrinal differences, whilst 6.6% of them believe it is due to spiritual and demonic attacks. 17.7% blame it on poor church administration and another 17.7% think it is due to needs and expectations of both leaders and members not met. 11.1% of the respondents think the secondary cause of intra-church conflicts is disagreements over policies and procedures. Finally, 8.8% of the respondents think financial ineptitude of leaders is the secondary cause.

On the fact that intra-church conflicts are normal challenges every church is bound to face, 97.7% of respondents think it is true, however, only 50% of them think it is true that intra-church conflicts are good but 45% of them think it is false. As to when intra-church conflicts are good, 43.4% think it is when they bring hidden problems in the church to the fore, but 32.6% think it is when they result in the growth of the church. Another 21.7% of the respondents believe it is when they are resolved amicably. Only 2.2% think it is when they end up in the split or division of the church.

Looking at the opposite side of the previous question, when it can be said that intra-church conflicts are bad, 41.3% of the respondents think it is when they end up in the split or division of the church, but another 41.3% think it is when they result in the gradual death of the church. 17.4% of the respondents believe it is when they drag on for many years.

The next question was on when a small and harmless conflict in a local church could become very destructive. Whereas 13% of the respondents think it is when there are no laid down procedures for resolving conflicts in the church, 10.9% think it is when the disputing parties take entrenched stands. 76.1% of them believe it is when the combination of the two conditions above plus a third one (when leaders take sides), exists. 73.9% of the respondents agreed with the statement that a church without a well-written and generally accepted constitution does experience numerous conflicts. 26% of them however rejected it saying it is false.

To a suggestion, that for a church to harness conflicts for the benefit of its membership she must develop conflict resolution and management experts who would always be called upon whenever and wherever there is a conflict, 65.9% of the respondents think it is true whilst 34% of them think it is false. However 91.3% of them believe that the statement – “In most churches today the leaders have little or no knowledge in conflict resolution and management mechanisms” – is true, but 6.52% of them think the statement is false.

Regarding the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used in most churches today 2.3% of the respondents said it is “prayer alone” but 17.4% of them said it is prayer and fasting. 9.3% think it is compromise, whilst 10.5% believe it is collaboration and confrontation. The highest percentage score however was 26.7% of respondents who believe that arbitration and prayer are the conflict resolution and management mechanism used in most churches today. However 7.0% of the respondent indicated that separation (i.e. avoiding or withdrawing) is the mechanism used in most churches today and another 14% also thinks it is rather public courts. Though

majority of the respondents (26.7%) have said it is arbitration and prayer, 12.8% of them think it is a combination of all the mechanisms mentioned above.

On the critical question of what the best conflict resolution and management mechanism for the church is, 53.5% of respondents believe it should be compromise or negotiation (where disputants make concessions and back down half way on both their assertiveness and responsiveness), but 24.5% believe it is collaboration (confrontation), 11.6% think it is accommodation whilst 14% think it is resorting to prayer and fasting for divine intervention.

To a suggestion, that “churches in which pastors are not transferred do experience more conflicts between pastors and congregants than churches that practice the transfer of pastors”, 65.1% of the respondents believe it is true meaning 34.9% think otherwise. It is instructive to know that 66.7% of the members, 81.3% of the deacons and 55.6% of all pastors (both senior and junior pastors) said it is true. However, whereas 75% of junior pastors believe it is true, only 40% of the senior pastors think likewise. This means 60% of senior pastors think it is a false statement. This result is a true reflection of how the senior pastors of Assemblies of God, Ghana feel and react to the issue of the transfer of pastors.

When the observation was modified to read, “Churches that practise the transfer of pastors after three to four years stay at one station have fewer conflicts between pastors and congregants”, 64.3% of the respondents think it is true whilst 35.7% believe it is false. On the fact that the transfer of pastors is

a conflict resolution and management mechanism, 60.9% of the respondents accepted that it is true whilst the remaining 39.1% think it is false.

Determining the reasons why a good number of intra-church conflicts end up in splits and divisions, 48.3% of the respondents believe the reason is the total sum of all the first four given reasons, which include the following:

1. That many young pastors are self seeking
2. Many young churches do not have well written out constitutions
3. Many of those who end up breaking away have ulterior motives
4. Many of those who break away feel they are not given the opportunity to practise their calling satisfactorily.

That last point attracted 23.3% of the respondents.

Finding out when that part of Jesus' prayer in John 17:11, 20 – 23, which reads, "that they all may be one" would be fulfilled, 39.1% of the respondent believe that it would be fulfilled one day, 37% of them believe that it would only be fulfilled when Christ comes again. However, 10.9% of them think it has been fulfilled already whilst 2.2% of them believe it would never be fulfilled.

Regarding which on the list of ten commonly used conflict resolution and management mechanisms is the most effective on the scale of 1 to 10, respondents chose Arbitration and Prayer (A&P) with an average score of 8.02 as the most effective mechanism. It is followed closely by Prayer and Fasting (P&F) with an average score of 7.32 as the second most effective mechanism. The third most effective mechanism in the opinion of the respondents is Compromise (COM) with an average score of 6.54. This is followed closely by Collaboration (COLL) and Accommodation (ACC) with average points of

5.61 and 5.43 respectively. The five remaining mechanisms fell below the 50% mark. They include (in a descending order) Separation (SEP), Avoidance (AVD), Domination (DOM), Public Law Courts (PLC) and Intimidation of Opponents (I.O.) at the bottom with the least average score of 2.33. Putting this particular analysis on a clustered column chart gives us the bar chart in figure 3:

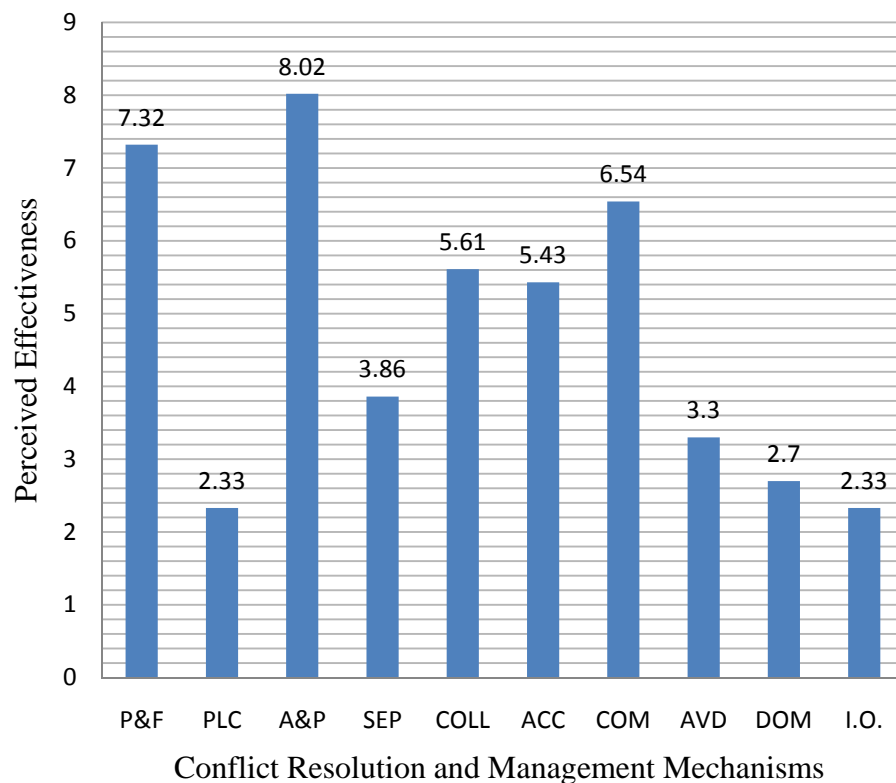


Figure 3. Commonly Used Conflict Resolution and Management Mechanisms in the Church Today

To the assertion that unresolved conflicts can escalate into a national religious conflict, 76.1% of the respondents said it is true while the remaining 23.9% say it is false. 95.6% of the respondents also believe that any conflict resolution mechanism without the blessings of God and the infusion of Godly principles is bound to fail.

Examining the impact of intra-church conflict on the local church, its denomination (parent church), the body of Christ as a whole and the Socio-Economic Development (SED) of the nation in which the conflict occurs; Table 1 is the resultant perception of the respondents on the scale of zero (0) to ten (10) in ascending intensity of impact.

Table 1: The Impact of Intra-Church Conflicts on its Immediate and Distant Environs

Outcomes of Intra-Church Conflict	Their Impact on the Local Church	Their Impact on the related Denomination	Their Impact on the Body of Christ	Their Impact on the Nation's SED
Indiscipline	8.0	7.0	6.0	6.0
Un-forgiveness	8.0	6.0	5.0	5.0
Division	8.0	7.0	6.0	5.0
Rebellion	8.0	6.0	5.0	4.0
Immorality (social vices)	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Mushrooming of Churches	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.0
False Doctrine	6.0	6.0	6.0	5.0
Church Growth	6.0	5.0	5.0	4.0
Unity	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Religious Conflict	6.0	7.0	6.0	7.0
Mistrust	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.0
Respect for Authority	6.0	5.0	4.0	5.0

On the question of which conflict resolution and management mechanisms should be employed to reduce or totally eliminate intra-church conflict, 59% of the respondents suggested “transparent church

administration” as against 87% who suggested ”effective communication – education and information dissemination between leaders and members. Another 43.5% of the respondents ticked “Effective prayer and fasting programmes” whilst 30.4% of them ticked “Effective and productive Christian Education programmes.” Further still, 26.1% of the respondent believe small group discipleship or cell- based or house churches should be encouraged’ but 32.4% believe that “church leaders should be properly remunerated.” 28.3% of them think young leaders should be identified and mentored, and when matured enough, new churches (branches) should be opened for them. Finally, 45.7% of the respondents believe that church doctrines and traditions must be reviewed from time to time to accommodate new ideas and views.

Armed with this background information and perception of the population sample, the researcher proceeded to collate and critically analyse the responses of the population sample on the ECAG Conflict and the findings are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CASE STUDY OF THE EVANGEL CHURCH ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CONFLICT

To do a very good case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict, the researcher had to do a very thorough background study of the environment in which the conflict occurred. In this chapter therefore, the searchlight is on the history of Assemblies of God, Ghana, her administrative structures, notable conflicts, the history of Evangel Church Assemblies of God, and the genesis of the conflict as told by insiders and the data collected from about fifty respondents who constituted the population sample. The data was collected using the designed research instruments mentioned in chapter three. However to further understand the inherent tendency for conflict in Assemblies of God, Ghana additional efforts were made to review the history of the origin of the parent church – Assemblies of God (USA), which is also captured in this chapter.

The History of Assemblies of God, Ghana

The history of Assemblies of God, Ghana could not be accessed from a very reliable source like an officially published work because there was none available at the time of this study. The popular observation that Assemblies of God, Ghana has no officially published documentation of the history of its ministry in Ghana was confirmed by Rev. Gaylord O. Aidoo-Dadzie, a senior minister of the church and the National Director of Home Missions, who is

also the senior pastor of the Holy Ghost Revival Centre Assemblies of God, located at South Odorkor in Accra (Aidoo-Dadzie, 2004).

In view of the above the researcher had to rely on his earlier work in 1988 on the history of Assemblies of God, Ghana, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the course H3403-Church History (Avorgah, 1988). Rev. Joseph Osei-Amoah, then the General Treasurer of the church, gave the researcher a copy of the fiftieth anniversary magazine of the church from which he strung together a couple of pictorial presentations and pieces of information to enable him compile a historical account of the church.

Assemblies of God, Ghana, was born out of the missionary zeal that characterised the 312 Azusa Street Mission. This is manifest in the fact that before 1930, sixteen (16) years after the formation of the denomination, Assemblies of God missionaries were already in Africa. In 1930, Rev. Lloyd Shirer and his wife Margaret, then missionaries in Mossiland, now Burkina Faso, entered the then Gold Coast through the northern border and conducted a quick survey of the land and returned to the United States of America where they recruited two young missionaries, Rev. Guy Hickok and Miss Beulah Buchwalter for the work on the new mission field. In September 1931, Rev. Lloyd Shirer and his wife, with the younger missionaries, returned to the Gold Coast as pioneers of the Assemblies of God mission in Ghana (Avorgah, 1988).

This first team of four missionaries was initially stationed at Yendi in the Northern Province of the Gold Coast, where the Yaa-Naa, King of Dagbon, warmly received them. The first activity undertaken by the missionaries was the study of the local language. The two ladies undertook

this exercise whilst the men got busy with mobilizing the indigenous men for a building project.

The first evangelistic service was held on the same day during the Nine-O'-Clock breakfast recess. Rev. Lloyd Shirer ministered the word of God in Moore to a congregation made up of workmen and on-lookers. A couple of people responded to the altar call and gave their lives to Jesus Christ. The new converts were thereafter carefully mentored to become the first members of the Assemblies of God denomination in the then Gold Coast. They later became the first local leaders of the church. Similarly, Ba Mahama, the first Mamprusi Christian, was a convert of these early missionaries. He also grew and became a very dedicated and active member of the Mamprusi congregation.

With a small car, a motorbike, a bicycle and a horse as their means of transportation, these early missionaries opened new stations at Tamale and Walewale apart from Yendi where they built bungalows for themselves and for future missionaries.

In 1932 and 1934, Rev. and Mrs. Henry B. Garlocks and their two children (John and Ruth) together with Rev. and Mrs. Eric Johnson arrived in the country to reinforce the work of the first four missionaries. Rev. and Mrs. Henry B. Garlocks had served a term in Liberia, whilst Rev. and Mrs. Eric Johnson had served a full term in the Congo. With their arrival, the ministry of Assemblies of God in the Gold Coast increased, shaping the future of the church. Meanwhile, Miss Beulah Buchwalter, who went back to the United States on a long furlough where she sought medical attention and further education, had returned. She came with another missionary by name, Miss

Florence Blossom (later Miss. Ed Beck) who assisted her to start the Kumbungu church. Mrs. Ed Beck's ministry led to the conversion of Baba Tinga Ouedrago who was her cook. Baba Tinga Ouedrago later became a pastor and rose through the ranks to become a Superintendent of the Northern Ghana District Council of the church.

In 1939, Rev and Mrs. Homer and Thelma Goodwin arrived in the Gold Coast and were stationed at Bawku where they planted a church. From there they worked and helped to plant churches in Kumasi and Accra. The work in Accra was boosted by the arrival in Accra on December 13, 1943 of an Assemblies of God aeroplane called the "Ambassador" with four additional missionaries on board. They were Rev. and Mrs. Wheeler Anderson, Miss. Ruby Johnson and Miss Ozella Reid. The wheeler Andersons began their ministry in Accra but later moved to Tamale. In their company was brother Mullings, a native of Accra (Avorgah, 1988).

The growth rate of the church in the then Gold Coast is manifest in the following:

1. The opening of the Yendi and Tamale churches in 1932.
2. The Walewale church followed in 1935
3. The Bawku church was planted in 1937
4. In 1944 the Accra and Kumasi churches were opened
5. The Takoradi church followed in 1945
6. By 1981 when the church was celebrating its 50th Anniversary there was a total of 204 congregations (Avorgah, 1988).

7. As at August 2004, the church had a total of 2,057 Congregations, but has no accurate record of total membership (Assemblies of God, Ghana - Head Office, 2004).

The Administrative Structures of Assemblies of God, Ghana

Assemblies of God, Ghana, like any other human organisation or institution, has an administrative structure that has evolved from a simple one to a complex one over a period of seventy years. Coming from an American background, the church was said to have a congregational system of church government. However, a careful study of the church's practical or operative system of government shows that the church's administrative structure is more of a hybrid of the Congregational and Presbyterian systems of church Government (Avorgah, 1988). This observation is confirmed by the history of the parent church, which reveals that its system of government is a hybrid of the Congregational, the Presbyterian, the Methodist and the Baptists systems of church government (Brumback, 1961).

Before 1993, when the church's current administrative structure was adopted, it operated a four tier hierarchical structure. At the top of the structure was the General Council, which was made up of all licensed ministers (the Assemblies of God, Ghana maintains for different grades of ministers; the Probationers, the Exhorters, the Licensed Ministers and the Ordained Ministers) and a representative of "a-set-in- order-church."

Directly below the General Council were the three District Councils, namely the Northern Ghana District Council, the Mid-Ghana District Council and the Coastal Ghana District Council which were headed by District

Superintendents and made up of representatives of the Sections. Before 1988, there were only two District Councils – the Northern Ghana District Council and the Southern Ghana District Council. Next to the District Council were the Sections, which were also made up of representatives of the boards of the local congregations (Avorgah, 1988).

The current administrative structure of the church adopted in 1993 still has the General Council at the top of what is now known as a corporate structure. The head of the church is the General Superintendent. He also chairs the General Council, which is the highest decision or policy making body of the church. It consists of: -

1. All ordained ministers who are in good standing with the church by virtue of valid certificates of fellowship
2. All accredited missionaries from foreign sister churches
3. All accredited personnel of affiliate Para-church organizations
4. All national departmental directors
5. A voting delegate from each local church or group of associate churches.

Below the General Council are the ten regional councils each of which is headed and chaired by the Regional Superintendent and consist of: -

1. All ordained ministers in the region as well as licentiates and exhorters in good standing with Assemblies of God, Ghana
2. All expatriate missionaries working in the region and who are recognized by Assemblies of God, Ghana
3. A voting delegate from each local church or group of recognized associate churches in the region

4. All regional departmental directors

Below each regional council are district councils. Whereas the regional councils correspond to the Political Regions of Ghana, the district councils do not necessarily correspond to the Political Districts. The district councils are composed of:

1. All ordained ministers, licentiates and exhorters who are in good standing with Assemblies of God, Ghana
2. All approved lay pastors
3. Assemblies of God Bible College students
4. All General Council recognized missionaries working in the district
5. All departmental representatives
6. A voting delegate from each local church or a group of recognized associate churches

At the bottom of this corporate structure are the local churches, which consist of a group of adherents to the Assemblies of God, Ghana tenets of faith and who regularly meet for worship under the leadership of an accredited worker of the Regional Council or any approved leader (The Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana).

At each level of the corporate structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana is a group of elected or appointed officers charged with the responsibilities of executing the day-to-day operations of the church. At the local church level this group of executive officers is called the church committee, for a young church that is not set in order. For a set-in-order church, it is called the church board. The church committee normally comprises the pastor and a group of members hand-picked or appointed by the pastor. They take decisions and

make policies for the local congregation until such time that the church has grown and is declared a set-in-order church. The church board, on the other hand, comprises the pastor as chairman and a group of three or more deacons, elected by the membership of the church.

At the district council level, the group of officers is known as the District Committee and it comprises the district pastor, a secretary, a treasurer and the regional superintendent as an ex-officio member. This committee is responsible for the implementation of policies and the maintenance of general oversight of activities in the district as well as the day-to-day administration of the district.

At the regional level, the team of officers known as the Executive Committee of the Regional Council consists of the Regional Superintendent, the Regional Secretary, the Regional Treasurer and all District Pastors in the region with the General Superintendent as an ex-officio member. The Regional Executive Committee serves as the policy implementing body in the region. It is also responsible for the appointment and transfer of pastors in the region, exercising general oversight responsibility of all the finances pertaining to the regional council, examining and issuing of credentials to probationers and the supervision of the activities in its prescribed area of jurisdiction unless otherwise instructed by the Executive Presbytery.

At the national level, the team of officers is known as the Executive Presbytery and it consists of the General Superintendent, the Assistant General Superintendent, the General Secretary, the General Treasurer and all Regional Superintendents. The Executive Presbytery's functions include the following:

1. To implement policies of the church

2. To exercise general oversight responsibility over the church
3. To issue ordination, licentiate, and exhorter certificates to deserving candidates upon the recommendation of the Regional Councils
4. To appoint all missionaries of the church
5. To perform all such functions assigned to it by the General Council in conformity with the church's constitution.

The officers of the Executive Presbytery who see to the day-to-day administration of the church are the General Superintendent, the Assistant General Superintendent, the General Secretary and the General Treasurer.

Other matters of administration covered by the church's thirty-two-article constitution include: Membership and Requirements for membership, Responsibilities and Privileges of members, Church Finances, Departments of the Church, Election of Officers of the church, Ad Hoc Committees, Assumption of office, Tenure of office, Residual Powers, Discipline, Dispute Resolution, Amendments and Interpretation. It also defines the name of the church, its territory, objectives, relationship with other Assemblies of God organizations, Principle of Fellowship and Governance, Statement of fundamental truths or faith, Trustees and Properties (The Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana).

The first schedule of the constitution covers the bye laws of the church relating to meetings, election of officers, vacant offices, Regional Councils, District Councils, Appointment of pastors, Duties and Support of pastors, Discipline of pastors, Associate and Assistant pastors, Qualification, Election and Duties of Deacons.

The duties and responsibilities of all officers at all levels of the church are also covered under the byelaws. So also, standing and ad hoc committees, classification and standards for ministers are set forth in the byelaws. The last part of the sixty-three-section byelaws touch on the departments of the church – Sunday School, Youth Ministry, Women’s Ministries, Men’s Ministries, Missions Department, Education Unit, Estate Unit, Strategic, Planning and Research Unit, Commission on Doctrinal Purity, Quorum, Communications Unit, Discipline and Burial of Ministers, among others (The Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana).

By and large, the current constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana appears to be a very detailed and comprehensive document, but as to whether all the tenets of the constitution are being upheld is another issue for investigation. However, with respect to the subject of this thesis one article of the constitution stands out distinct, Article 29, which is on Dispute (Conflict) Resolution. It states that:

1. There is hereby established a Dispute Resolution Board, to which unresolved disputes, which are likely to cause serious misunderstandings, divisions or disintegrations in the church may be referred by the Executive Presbytery for resolution.
2. The Board shall be composed of
 - a. An ordained minister of at least ten (10) years experience as chairperson.
 - b. A legal practitioner and
 - c. Three (3) other men/women of maturity, experience and good standing in the organization.

3. The board shall be appointed by the Executive Presbytery and shall serve for four (4) years and may be eligible for re-appointment for further term(s).
4. Any dispute arising within the church and which is likely to cause serious misunderstanding, or division, or disintegration in the church shall be amicably resolved by the church board or District Committee, as the case may be, without resort to the courts of law in the first instance.
5. Any such unresolved dispute shall be referred from the District Council to the Regional Council and therefore to the Executive Presbytery (The Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana).

The difficulty, however, with the administrative system of Assemblies of God, Ghana is the fact that the local congregations by virtue of practice are autonomous. What that means is that, even though the church is controlled and directed from the head-office or the office of the General Superintendent (doctrinally and structurally) through the various channels to the local congregation, where the local church pastor represents the General superintendent, financially it is not so. Financially, the local congregation and for that matter the local church, is virtually independent of the head-office and the General Superintendent.

Each local congregation in Assemblies of God, Ghana is required to pay twenty percent (20%) of her gross income to the head office through the district office who retains four percent (4%) of it and passes the rest on to the regional office where another eight percent (8%) is retained and the remainder is sent to the national head office, which shares it with the Bible Schools.

Consequently, the head-office is inadequately resourced financially such that apart from the General Superintendent and the head office staff, all the members of the Executive Presbytery have to be pastors of local congregations to be guaranteed their monthly remunerations.

In the same vein, newly trained pastors bear, virtually, the full responsibility of planting new churches and ensuring that their young congregations are capable of taking care of them. The parent churches of such newly trained pastors, in some cases, bear part of the cost of planting the new churches. Consequently, in recent times, all the newly trained pastors have chosen to plant their congregations in the urban areas that are already congested with churches to the neglect of the rural areas where the new churches are needed most.

Added to the already difficult situation, Assemblies of God, Ghana does not transfer pastors as a policy, unless it is necessitated by circumstances like the death of a pastor, the removal or dismissal of a pastor due to indiscipline or intra-church conflict. This policy of non-transfer of pastors makes pastors stay at one station virtually for life. As a result, whether they plant the churches or grow them, they consciously or unconsciously assume a kind of personal ownership or possessiveness of such churches. They work as though they would never leave that congregation and if it so happens that they have to leave the church because of the assumption of bigger responsibilities, they find it difficult to leave. Even when they do, they still maintain vested interest in such congregations, thereby, creating problems for their successors in their former congregations. Some members of those congregations continue to owe allegiance to their former pastors and so engage themselves in

comparing their new pastors to the former ones and even go to the extent of leaking vital classified information between the two pastors, thereby creating enmity between them.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the administrative structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana has very challenging inherent difficulties that include the following:

1. The dependence of local congregations on the head office for doctrinal practice and policy directions
2. The independence of the local congregations from the head-office financially, to the extent that local congregations are richer than the national, regional and district offices
3. Newly trained pastors get little support when planting new churches, whereas most seniors pastors and their congregations have virtually no financial problems
4. The non-transfer policy has made pastors to become possessive of their local congregations consciously or unconsciously.

In a nutshell, the Assemblies of God, Ghana, in one respect – doctrinally and structurally, runs a centralized system of government, but in another respect – financially, runs a decentralized system of government. By this the head-office appears to be limited in its leadership role, because it lacks the resources needed to play that role. The head office and for that matter the General Superintendent serves only as a figurehead. Some pastors of local congregations who are better resourced financially than the General Superintendent do defy his authority. All the above stems out of the fact that the Assemblies of God, Ghana operates a system of church government that is

not Congregational, Presbyterian, nor Episcopal. Even though it was earlier thought that the church government was congregational, it has turned out not to be so, because unlike the congregational system of church Government, in Assemblies of God, Ghana the congregation does not really own the local church neither does it hire and fire the pastor, rather, it is the pastor who virtually owns the local church and behaves as such.

In the same vein the system of church government is also not Presbyterian, where it is the Presbyters (council of elders) who own and run the church on behalf of the congregation. Whereas in the Presbyterian system, the pastor is seen as a teaching or preaching elder and is accountable to the council of elders, in Assemblies of God, it is the pastor who chairs the church board and the deacons, who constitute the Church Board, are accountable to him. Whereas in the Presbyterian system, the Presbyters are appointed by the congregation, who alone can remove them, in Assemblies of God, Ghana, it is the Pastor, who, in most cases, hand-picks and therefore fires the deacons even though they are supposed to be appointed by the congregation. It is therefore difficult in practice to pinpoint the particular known system of church government Assemblies of God, Ghana is operating. Though Assemblies of God, Ghana calls its system of government “Semi-autonomous”, unfortunately, nothing of the sort is found in the church’s constitution. In fact, the constitution does not mention or indicate the system of church government it operates let alone define it. Articles 5 and 9 (Assemblies of God, Ghana) deal with the Principles of Fellowship, Governance and Corporate Structure but they are silent on the church’s system of government. This is a major inherent system deficiency that is a major recipe for internal conflicts. In fact,

it is a deficiency that is already fighting against the cohesion of the church, and without its correction, the church would continue to have internal conflicts that would continue to impede its growth.

Similarly, the elections of officers of the church from the local to the national level are not free and fair and free from fear. From the author's personal observation and that of other eye-witnesses, election of deacons at the local church level are, in most cases, manipulated to ensure that only those who can be controlled by the Pastor are elected. These manipulations are actively done by the Pastor. At the District, Regional and National levels too, worse things than what happen at the local levels happen to ensure that the result of the election went in a particular direction. An example is the 1998 and especially the 2002 Executive Presbytery Officers election of the church which saw the exit of Rev. Dr S. B. Asore as the General Superintendent of the church. Those two elections were characterised with manipulations and intimidations.

Another source of conflict in Assemblies of God, Ghana, is the quality of theological education and pastoral training it gives to its pastors or members who believe God has called them into full-time ministry. Though it is a fact most Assemblies of God ministers, who went through the church's Bible Schools, have found difficult to admit, every careful observer would confirm the authenticity of this assertion.

The Assemblies of God, Ghana Bible Schools train only "Pastors." It does not educate ministers of the Gospel with different and varied ministerial gifts. Everybody that goes to any of the three Bible Schools comes out as a pastor even if his ministerial gift is not the gift of a pastor. In Romans 12:4-8,

1Corinthians 12:27-31 and Ephesians 4:11-13, the Apostle Paul listed a total of fifteen ministerial gifts that include Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Pastors, Evangelists, Givers (Contributors), Miracle workers, Healers, Helpers, Servers, Counsellors, Leaders (Administrators), Acts of Mercy, among others. However, in Assemblies of God, Ghana, it is only the pastors who matter and as such the training given in the Bible Schools is tailored towards making pastors out of everyone who has been called by God. Consequently, other gifts that must operate in the church for her proper and balanced growth, like the biblical church in Antioch, are lacking.

In the same vein, due to the limited nature of the course content and the low entry requirements of prospective students, graduates of the Bible School are not equipped to pursue advance courses. Moreover, the decentralized financial administration of the church does not make it possible for her to sponsor brilliant students and graduates or pastors and auxiliary workers of the church for further education to the highest level possible. Consequently, the church that has just celebrated her Diamond Jubilee (75th Anniversary) in 2006 is bereft of scholars; in fact, at the time of this study, the church could not boast of at least one doctorate degree holder she has trained. If there is any, such a person trained him or herself.

Even though Assemblies of God, Ghana used to be the leading Pentecostal denomination in Ghana, the lack of scholarship in the church has robbed her of that enviable position, losing it to the Church of Pentecost and the young charismatic churches. Similarly, the lack of scholarship has also affected the spirituality and revivalist character of the church.

The direct outcome of that weakness is seen in some pastors of the church adopting the intimidating posture as a defence mechanism in relating to their junior pastors and members of their congregations who dare question their bizarre policies or decisions.

Notable Conflicts in the History of Assemblies of God, Ghana

Assemblies of God, Ghana like any other denomination or human institution, has suffered its fair share of conflicts, schisms and break-ups since the missionaries set foot on the soil of Ghana from Burkina Faso in 1931. However, there is no documentation of the conflicts except for oral tradition, which was volunteered by the Home Missions Director of the church – Rev. Gaylord Aidoo-Dadzie.

Enumerating the notable conflicts in the history of the church, Aidoo-Dadzie listed the following:

1. Evangel Church Assemblies of God as a hot bed for conflicts. He said that, as far as he could remember (since its beginning in 1945), Evangel Church Assemblies of God has had three major conflicts. Apart from the last one, he could not remember the dates the first two occurred. He however recollected that the first one involved one Pastor Archibald who attempted to introduce the doctrines of William Marion Branham into the church. This resulted into a doctrinal conflict. Pastor Archibald was later identified in the year 2000 Evangel Church Sanctuary dedication brochure as Rev. Archibald Brown, who was the Pastor of the church from 1979-1980. He was the immediate predecessor of Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore at Evangel Church Assemblies of

- God (Dedication of new ECAG sanctuary [Bochure], 2000). On the second conflict however, he could not remember what really happened.
2. Kumasi Central Assemblies of God was the next church he mentioned. It had also suffered about three major conflicts. The first occurred in 1952, when Rev. Chi was the pastor of the church. However, the nature of the conflict could not be remembered. The last major conflict at Kumasi Central Assemblies of God was between the pastor (Rev. Ransford Obeng) and the Executive Presbytery of Assemblies of God, Ghana. Rev. Ransford Obeng, an associate pastor at Kumasi Central Assemblies of God, was commissioned by the church to start a new branch, which he did successfully for several years until he broke away with the entire congregation after the Executive Presbytery had declared some fast-growing congregations as General Council congregations. Rev. Ransford Obeng rejected that policy of the Executive Presbytery because when he was starting the new branch and needed financial assistance, he was told to go and survive if indeed God had called him. Consequently, he could not surrender the congregation he had suffered to build single-handedly to the body that refused to assist him.
 3. The next conflict cited by Aidoo-Dadzie occurred at the Southern Ghana Bible Institute in 1970. The conflict was over an alleged dissatisfaction of the students with the missionaries. The leadership of the church responded by putting together a committee of leaders to resolve the conflict. However, the committee worsened matters leading to the temporal closure of the school. This conflict occurred when Rev.

Nicholas Opuni was a student at the Bible School. As to what exactly the causes of the conflict between the students and the missionaries were, what conflict resolution mechanisms were used without success and how it finally succeeded could not be remembered (G. O. Aidoo-Dadzie, personal communication, February 24, 2004).

4. Other conflicts mentioned by Aidoo-Dadzie include the:
 - a. Afrantso and Tanoso conflicts where the entire congregation attempted to secede by erasing “Assemblies of God” from their signboards.
 - b. Ebenezer Assemblies of God at Kotobabi in Accra which is noted for conflicts especially when Mintah and Mensah Kufeh were pastors there.
 - c. Deliverance Assemblies of God, at Pig Farm in Accra which is also noted for conflicts.
 - d. Central Assemblies of God in Cape Coast where a terrible conflict occurred resulting in the forceful ejection of the incumbent resident pastor, the late Rev. Opanoh from the church premises.
 - e. Revival Assemblies of God, Tema, Community Five, which also was plagued with a debilitating conflict between the senior pastor and his associate. The conflict had divided the church and was killing it until a decisive action was taken to remove both pastors from the church and a care-taker pastor appointed to revive and rebuild it. After two years of revival and reconciliatory work, the care-taker pastor was removed and the

“reconciled previously disputing-pastors” were restored to their former positions to the disappointment of the majority of the congregation, some of who had already left the church. At the time of putting finishing touches to this work, the two pastor have disagreed again leading to resignation of the junior pastor from Assemblies of God, Ghana, the abandonment of the church by many members for other sister churches, the demand by over fifty of the remnant members for the removal of the senior pastor and the subsequent dismissal of those members by the Greater Accra Regional Council of Assemblies of God, Ghana. The dismissed members have subsequently sued the Church and its officers at a Civil Court of Law in Tema.

- f. Sunyani Assemblies of God was also mentioned for a conflict that plagued it recently; a conflict between the congregation and her long-serving and pioneering pastor. The cause of the conflict was that the members were dissatisfied with the “one-man show” of their pastor who had been in charge of that church for over thirty years. The conflict could not be resolved until the pastor was removed from that congregation and transferred to another church in Kumasi (G. O. Aidoo-Dadzie, personal communication, February 24, 2004).

Though the causes of some the conflicts are not known or remembered, it is known that most of the conflicts bordered on the following:

1. Congregation members opposing the immoral lifestyle of their pastors

2. Opposition to false doctrines taught by some pastors by sections of their congregation
3. The dissatisfaction of members with the ministry of their pastors.

Aidoo-Dadzie admitted that the church, being a human organisation, cannot avoid conflicts and since conflict involves human beings, it would continue to engulf both pastors and members. He pointed out that the type of church administration Assemblies of God, Ghana runs lends itself to conflicts.

With regard to the impact of such conflicts on the growth of the church, Aidoo-Dadzie thinks that it is a matter of the hammer and anvil situation, where the anvil is Assemblies of God, Ghana and the hammer, the conflicts that come and go but the church (the anvil) remains solid and always intact. Even though that did not sound convincing enough, Aidoo-Dadzie insisted that it is not the numerous conflicts in the church that have slowed down growth, but her leadership. He believes that the church's autonomous structure is good but due to bad and dictatorial leadership styles, its efficacy and efficiency have not been seen.

Aidoo-Dadzie conceded that it is wrong ethically and against ministerial regulations for any pastor to consider any congregation as his personal property because each pastor in Assemblies of God of God, Ghana is made to and has signed a document pledging not to take any property of his church with him when he is leaving the church, even if he bought it for the church with his own money. He also said that to prevent pastors, who in the past brought their independent churches into the fellowship of Assemblies of God, from breaking away, they were made to go to the Assemblies of God Bible School for training and new pastors appointed to their churches. Such

churches are not admitted into the Assemblies of God fellowship en-block but on the basis of each individual member's own conviction (G. O. Aidoo-Dadzie, personal communication, February 24, 2004).

Commenting further on the autonomous and decentralized nature of the Assemblies of God church government, Aidoo-Dadzie said that it is the national church (Assemblies of God, Ghana), which should be autonomous and independent of Assemblies of God USA (the parent church) and not the local church. Hence, the current practice by which local churches are virtually autonomous of the national church (head office) both financially and administratively is wrong. Unfortunately however, the wrong thing has been practised and perpetuated for over sixty years and has been accepted as the norm therefore, the change from the autonomous or independent structure to a more efficient one needs to be done gradually and carefully to prevent chaos. He defined autonomy as “self-governing, self-propagating and self-financing.”

When he was confronted with the issue of remuneration and the future security of pastors being left to the care of local churches, some of which are not adequately resourced to perform such functions, resulting in the phenomenon of pastors becoming possessive of their local congregations, inward looking, reward and appreciation conscious; a phenomenon which has but succeeded in crippling new and young churches and the head office as well, he admitted that it is true. He however blamed the phenomenon on the fact that the earliest Ghanaian leaders of the church accepted everything the Americans brought – hook, line and sinker without considering our African situation; political and cultural systems. He also thinks that the other cause of the difficulty is the fact that administrative principles were not given serious

considerations in the early days of the church; consequently, the administrative weaknesses in the church are inherent.

On the issue of the Church's Bible Colleges training only pastors to the neglect of members called with other ministerial gifts like, apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, counsellors, administrators, etc., Aidoo-Dadzie explained that the missionaries instituted what we see today. He however hinted that henceforth the Bible Colleges would start training other ministers and not just pastors. He also said that upon graduation the ministers who are not pastors would suffer because the administrative structure of the church does not permit the engagement of other ministers apart from pastors.

Another inherent problem in Assemblies of God, Ghana, which has also been responsible for some of the conflicts in the church, is the issue of "Being led by the Spirit." As a result, Assemblies of God did not lay emphasis on the higher education of her pastors, making it difficult to find books written by Assemblies of God ministers even to the extent that, her Bible Schools depend to a large extent on textbooks written by Baptist, Presbyterians, and others. Aidoo-Dadzie thinks that the cause of this deficiency is that while the Baptists and Presbyterians were being educated to higher levels, Assemblies of God spent all the time over-emphasizing the work of the Holy Spirit (G. O. Aidoo-Dadzie, personal communication, February 24, 2004).

The General Superintendent of Assemblies of God Ghana, then, (the Late Rev. William W. Dontoh) on his part, corroborated almost all the points raised by Rev. Gaylord Aidoo-Dadzie. Having been in office for two years, he had identified the lack of strategic planning as the biggest challenge of the church he had become the key leader.

The General Superintendent said he had planned to carry out a lot of changes in the form of constitutional amendments under his leadership. He also said he was considering the transfer of pastors as well as the centralisation of the church's administration to check the possessive and money conscious attitude of the pastors. He however believed that such changes must be introduced gradually to avoid serious conflicts in the church. On the issue of the transfer of pastors as a conflict resolution and management mechanism, he thought it is a very good policy and that it is currently used wherever there is conflict. He said that even though in such circumstances some pastors refuse to go on the transfer it would still be introduced but gradually.

He added that the current administrative structure of the church is a recipe for conflicts because it is an American system that was introduced into Ghana wholesale without any modification to make it suitable for our cultural context. He however hoped that the intended changes would make the system more functional and need-driven thereby eliminating the difficulties that lead to conflict situations (W. W. Dontoh, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

Adding his voice to the debate, Rev. W. W. Wilson-Marfo, who was trained both in an Assemblies of God Bible College and two other Bible Colleges outside Assemblies of God, (Ghana Christian College and Seminary and Central University College), agreed with the General Superintendent that the major challenge of Assemblies of God, Ghana is the absence of strategic planning. He however thinks that even though the centralisation of the church's administration is a good thing it would be difficult to introduce it

now. Instead, he thinks that a financial quota system should be introduced to resource and empower the head-office.

On the quality of training given to Assemblies of God ministers, he holds the same view as Rev. Gaylord Aidoo-Dadzie, that Assemblies of God ministers are not given education but training, a situation, which leaves most of them handicapped after a few years in active ministry. He said that currently, Assemblies of God, Ghana has trained more pastors than necessary, and quite a good number of them cannot find churches to serve in, and as such cannot be taken care of in accordance with the constitution of the church. He thinks that one way for the church to reduce the huge cost of maintaining full-time pastors is for it to train, educate and ordain professional laymen who are known to be spiritually maturing, to do ministry like it is done in other churches.

With regard to the authenticity of the churches constitution, he said the current constitution, which has no date of promulgation, is not what was accepted at the General Council meeting in the year 2000 as a draft. He believes a lot of new clauses had been smuggled into it without the consent of the General Council of the church. He cited for example Article 26 of the constitution, which is on the tenure of office of elected officers as one of those clauses that was altered secretly without the support or even the knowledge of the entire membership of the General Council of the church. These, in his estimation, are some of the causes of the conflicts in the church (W. W. Wilson-Marfo, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

The History of Evangel Church Assemblies of God

Evangel Church Assemblies of God (ECAG), located at Adabraka in Accra, opposite the Avenida Hotel was founded in 1945 by Rev. H. T. Godwin, in a building near the present Adabraka market and next to the Adabraka Standard Chartered Bank. Its original name was Accra Assembly of God Mission. The growth of the church was facilitated by missionaries like Rev. Paul Weidman, Rev. M. C. Harrell, Rev. A. S. Lehman, Rev. Elvis Davis and Rev. W. W. Anderson who assisted their colleague Rev. H. T. Godwin. The first batch of the membership of the church numbering sixteen had Pastor Bamford Akoto as their pastor from 1945 to 1946. Pastor R. S. Quayson succeeded him from 1947 to 1959.

Through evangelistic activities, the membership of the church grew and satellite churches were planted in and outside Accra as far as the Eastern and Volta Regions. In 1954, with the assistance of the Assemblies of God head office in Springfield (Missouri), U.S.A., half of the plot of land on which the church currently stands was acquired. From 1956-1957, the church worshipped under a tent donated by Rev. Paul Button on the acquired new plot of land. While the church was worshipping under the tent, Rev. Davis and Rev. M. C. Harrell assisted her to put up its first place of worship which also served as classrooms. The rapid growth of the church thereafter led to the construction of the old church building, which was dedicated on October 18, 1957.

From 1960 to 1965, Rev. J. Gyanfosu was the pastor of the church. Rev. J. Benyin succeeded him from 1967-1971. Rev. Joseph Tei Afum came next (1974-1979). After him came Rev. Archibald Brown, who attempted to

introduce the doctrines of William Marion Branham into the church (1979-1980). Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore was therefore brought to succeed Rev. Archibald Brown in 1981. Rev. Asore served in that capacity until 1986 when he was elected as the new General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana, to succeed Rev. Nyamiala Panka (Dedication of new ECAG sanctuary [Bochure], 2000).

Rev. James Obeng therefore succeeded Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore as Senior Pastor of Evangel Church. Under Rev. James Obeng, the church grew lips and bounds to the extent that the old chapel was just too small to seat the growing membership. In 1989, Rev. James Obeng, with the support of his deacons organized a sod cutting ceremony to begin a new building project to put up a bigger sanctuary (a church complex), which was completed and dedicated on November 25, 2000.

As at January 2002, Evangel Church Assemblies of God had a twelve member ministerial team under the leadership of Rev. James Obeng. The ministerial team comprised seven associate pastors and four other ministry leaders who were not pastors (Dedication of new ECAG sanctuary [Bochure], 2000). Until June 2002, when events at Evangel Church turned sour, it was considered the flagship congregation of Assemblies of God, Ghana. The Senior Pastor, Rev. James Obeng had risen through the ranks to serve as the secretary of the Greater Accra Regional Council of the church for many years.

As the former church secretary, when Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore was the pastor of Evangel Church Assemblies of God, Rev. James Obeng used to have a fledging relationship with Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and this continued even after

he (Rev. Asore) had assumed the office of the General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana. Due to his skills in communication, he served the General Superintendent in speech writing and public relations in the first couple of years of his four terms of office spanning a period of sixteen years (P. Gyata, personal communication, April 29, 2004).

Rev. James Obeng, a second-degree holder from Evangel College, in the U.S.A. with two majors in Communication and Biblical Studies became outspoken against Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore's leadership style and administration after Rev. Asore's second term of office, a situation that he did not take kindly (J. Obeng, personal communication, May 7, 2004).

The Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict as told by Insiders, Observers, and Key Players

The sub-heading above and for that matter a portion of the title of this thesis gives the presupposition that the conflict, which is the focus of the case study of this study, was between factions within Evangel Church Assemblies of God (ECAG). Unfortunately, the study so far has revealed that that presupposition is not true. That point notwithstanding, it was an intra-church conflict. To get to the facts of the case as close as possible, the effort was made to interview the key players in the conflict as well as insiders and those who were very close to the key players and a few of the very prominent figures of Assemblies of God, Ghana. Due to the classified nature of the information requested some of those who volunteered information did so under a certificate of anonymity whilst others declined the request. For an objective presentation and analysis of the facts of the conflict, the information gathered is here presented as narrated by the interviewees with pseudonyms.

The Account of Pee Gyata and Pastors Timi Wuso and Tula Sibor

The first interviewee is someone who was very close to the leadership of Evangel Church Assemblies of God. Let us call him Pee Gyata. According to his account the conflict was between Rev. James Obeng, the senior pastor of the church and Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, then the General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana.

Before Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore's election for a fourth term of office in 1998, there was a general perception in the church (Assemblies of God, Ghana) that he had outlived his usefulness and was bereft of new ideas and as such he had nothing new up his sleeves to offer. Some ministers including Rev. James Obeng, who were outspoken, felt that Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore was not managing the affairs of the church professionally and therefore felt that the time had come for him to go. Those ministers sponsored Rev. W. W. Dontoh, then the Greater Accra Regional Superintendent to contest Rev. Asore for the General Superintendence in 1998. When Rev. Asore won the election again for a fourth consecutive term, such ministers, including Rev. James Obeng took a decision to ensure that Rev. Asore did not get re-elected the next time round. They accused Rev. Asore of not living up to expectations, getting himself involved in politics, dictatorial tendencies, destroying the church's relationship with the parent church in the U.S.A. and for that matter with the missionaries. He was also accused of mismanagement and "divide-and-rule tactics." These accusations and allegations became common knowledge in the whole of Assemblies of God, Ghana. Rev. Asore's "no-nonsense" leadership style did not endear him to many of the pastors of the church who desired to see his exit. Meanwhile, because Rev. Dr. Asore was the immediate past

senior pastor of ECAG, some members of the church naturally owed allegiance to him even though the relationship between the two former friends was at its lowest ebb.

On the other hand, Rev. James Obeng was said to have done very well in his ministry as senior pastor since he took over the church. It was however observed by very close friends of Rev. James Obeng that his “above par” communication and leadership skills were beginning to make him egoistic and boastful. He was noted for openly speaking against his boss (the General Superintendent) and the leadership of Assemblies of God, Ghana.

His ministry at ECAG saw the institution of a School of Ministry involving a Nigeria Evangelist by name Emeka Nwankpa who was resident in Ghana. As a member of the International Prayer Network, Evangelist Emeka Nwankpa brought to ECAG a new dimension of prayer and intercessory ministry that greatly influenced the ministry of Rev. James Obeng and a good number of his members. This new dimension of ministry saw Rev. James Obeng going around the country teaching other Assemblies of God pastors and their congregations, new concepts in the ministry of prayer. He ministered at Regional Council Meetings and Conferences of the Church. He was also involved in spiritual warfare and intercessions for Ghana as well as the anointing and deliverance of traditional lands in certain parts of the country from evil spirits. In some places, he was said to have raised altars unto God (P. Gyata, personal communication, April 29, 2004).

According to another senior minister who we shall call Pastor Timi Wuso, Rev. James Obeng was noted for his active role in a nationwide campaign in 2001 to unseat Rev. Dr. Simon B. Asore as General

Superintendent at the 2002 General Council Meeting. Definitely, Rev. Dr. Asore would not be expected to smile to Rev. James Obeng, most especially because of the allegations that he and some ministers had levelled against him (Rev. Asore) to support their campaign to unseat him. Consequently, the pastors and churches that hosted Rev. James Obeng's group were blacklisted and marginalized by the General Superintendent (T. Wusu, personal communication, April 28, 2004). As a matter of fact, it was later discovered after he had been voted out of office that Rev. Dr. Asore had a long list of Pastors he had earmarked for dismissal from the church, some of who were friends of Rev. James Obeng (T. Sibor, & T. Wuso, personal communication, April 28, 2004).

On the second Sunday of the year 2002, (January 13 to be precise), Rev. James Obeng was reported to have come to church, dressed in suit, walking bare-footed and holding his pair of shoes in his hand, a scene which took almost everybody, including the associate pastors by surprise because, they had no prior knowledge of the action of the pastor. In addition to that Rev. James Obeng was reported to have used a broom to sweep a portion of the platform and with a piece of chalk drew a circle on the ground after which he invited all members of the congregation who fitted a particular description he gave to come and stand in the circle. This was just before he preached the morning's sermon. Apparently, most members of the congregation with the exception of those who sang his praise, irrespective of whatever he did, were taken aback.

The source added that in church on that particular Sunday was a delegation of students and lecturers from the West African Advance School of

Theology (WAAST), an Assemblies of God Theological Institution in Lome, Togo. They had come to Ghana on an educational tour and the General Superintendent, who had boasted about ECAG to them, saying that it is the flagship congregation of Assemblies of God, Ghana and one of the best congregations in the country, recommended to the delegation to fellowship there on that fateful Sunday. Unfortunately for them, that was the day on which Rev. James Obeng did the unexpected and offered no explanation for his actions except to say that he was instructed by God to do it.

According to Pee Gyata, the delegation from WAAST was dissatisfied and disappointed at what they saw in church on that day and so reported their observations to the General Superintendent before their departure to Lome. Back on campus, the discussion continued about what they had observed. Consequently, the Ghanaian students at WAAST communicated the news, howbeit adulterated, back to Ghana. Not too long after that, letters started flooding the Assemblies of God, Ghana headquarters, enquiring about what had happened at Evangel Church.

Before the January 13, 2002 event, Evangelist Emeka Nwankpa was reported to have said openly in church, on a Sunday that an associate pastor had committed a grievous sin that required an open confession for him to be forgiven, and that if that associate pastor did not own up and confess openly, he would be stricken dead by God. This again was an utterance that took the associate pastors aback, more especially when the expected retribution did not happen. Subsequently, the associate pastors consulted among themselves and had a meeting with Rev. James Obeng where they protested against the unethical manner in which the said sin committed by an associate pastor had

been handled. At a later date when the expected retribution was not occurring Rev. James Obeng admitted that the pronouncement was a mistake.

Later on, it turned out that the said sin, purported to have been committed by one of the associate pastors was a streak of blood found on the chapel floor one morning leading to the suspicion that one of the associate pastors might have done that with an evil intention, probably to charm or a cast spell on the senior pastor. It was later concluded that the streak of blood might have been that of a wounded animal, probably a cat that might have been hit by a vehicle but managed to escape with bruises and later died in the chapel.

On the strength of the numerous reports the General Superintendent was receiving, especially the one from the WAAST delegation, he, in consultation with the Executive Presbytery, constituted a committee to investigate the issues and submit a report to the Executive Presbytery. This was in March 2002.

When the letter informing Rev. James Obeng of the committee's work got to him, he did not take kindly to it. He actually took offence with the General Superintendent, concluding that he was out to witch hunt him. On the strength of the committee's report, Rev. James Obeng was invited to the meeting of the Executive Presbytery and District leaders at Bunso in the Eastern Region where he was interrogated by a panel whose mandate was to get to the bottom of the doctrinal basis of the occurrences in his church.

When the committee was satisfied that the occurrences were not based on sound doctrinal tenets, as far as Assemblies of God is concerned, a one-year suspension of Rev. James Obeng was recommended. Consequently, the

Executive Presbytery suspended Rev. James Obeng for one year hoping that he would reform within that period. On his return from Bunso, Rev. James Obeng was counselled to apologize to the Executive Presbytery which he initially accepted to do. Not long after that, in consultation with his close confidants, he decided not to apologize again.

When his senior associate, who had been appointed the acting pastor by the Executive Presbytery, got to know of Rev. James Obeng's intention not to apologize but rather write a severe letter to the Executive Presbytery, he advised against it and even seized copies of the letter which were ready to be dispatched. The senior associate, in the company of some elderly church members went to the Assemblies of God, Ghana headquarters and verbally apologized to the General Superintendent, who was very pleased and immediately invited members of the Executive Presbytery to a meeting to review Rev. James Obeng's one-year long suspension.

However, when the Executive Presbytery members were preparing to move to Accra, they received a severe and nasty letter from Rev. James Obeng withdrawing the apology and literally insulting them. When word got to the acting pastor that the letter he had seized had eventually gotten to the members of the Executive Presbytery, he was shocked.

Earlier on, in May 2002, when Rev. James Obeng was suspended, the Executive Presbytery sent the then Assistant General Superintendent, the Regional Superintendent and other senior ministers to go and announce the decision to the ECAG congregation. The scene at the church on that Sunday morning was rowdy to the extent that the car tyres of the Assistant General Superintendent were deflated.

Consequently, it became clear that Rev. James Obeng was not repentant. So, when the Executive Presbytery met again, they took a decision to completely withdraw Rev. James Obeng's credentials and to dismiss him from Assemblies of God, Ghana. This decision was communicated to him on July 19, 2002. Thereafter, Evangel Church became clearly divided into two factions - "for" and "against" Rev. James Obeng. One Sunday morning, the Rev. James Obeng faction posted some of their members at each entrance of the chapel to prevent anybody they considered against Rev. James Obeng from entering the chapel. They would not allow even the acting pastor (the senior associate pastor) to enter the chapel. The District Pastor, Rev. Akwaka, whose church shares the same compound with ECAG, was therefore called in but his presence did not debar the Rev. James Obeng faction from carrying out their agenda.

They held that Sunday morning's church service without the acting pastor. The highlight of the church service was the reading of a resolution withdrawing ECAG from the denomination (Assemblies of God, Ghana) and the subsequent takeover of the Church properties. At this point the conflict was no longer limited to Rev. James Obeng (on one side) and Rev. Dr. Simon Asore and the Executive Presbytery (on the other side); it had now degenerated into an intra-church (factional) conflict.

The Rev. James Obeng faction moved quickly to confirm their resolution by erasing the name "Assemblies of God" from the church's signboard, leaving "Evangel Church" as the new name of the church. They also printed new letterheads bearing their new name. They started holding

church services in the chapel causing those who did not support them to withdraw to other Assemblies of God congregations within the district.

The head-office of Assemblies of God, Ghana reacted quickly by going to court to place an injunction on the use of the chapel by the Rev. James Obeng faction. To avoid violent clashes, the police, upon a tip off moved in to lock up the chapel pending the determination of the case in court. Thereafter, the Rev. Dr. Asore faction or the Assemblies of God faction continued to fellowship in sister churches while the Rev. James Obeng faction under his leadership started meeting in houses as house churches.

Since then, efforts were made to get Rev. James Obeng to apologize to the Executive Presbytery and to retract the nasty letter he circulated to the members of the Executive Presbytery but to no avail. In October 2002, the General Superintendent (Rev. Dr. Simon B. Asore) was voted out of office and Rev. James Obeng's friend and immediate boss was elected as the new General Superintendent. However, whatever hopes Rev. James Obeng and his followers had for re-integration into Assemblies of God, Ghana was dashed when the new General Superintendent asked Rev. James Obeng to repent and apologize to the Executive Presbytery before his credentials could be restored to him. Feeling disappointed and betrayed Rev. James Obeng remained adamant to all counsel (P. Gyata, personal communication, April 29, 2004).

The Account of Pastor Tuka Lelame

According to another senior pastor (let us call him Tuka Lelame) whose church is in one of the suburbs of Accra, the genesis of the conflict between Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and Rev. James Obeng should be traced back to

the days when Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore was the senior pastor of Evangel church at which time Rev. James Obeng (then Mr. James Obeng) was the church board secretary.

Then came a time when he (Mr. James Obeng) left Ghana to the U.S.A to pursue further education in communication. However, he took the opportunity, while he was in the U.S.A, to do a course in Biblical Studies. Around the same time a member of the church had enrolled at Southern Ghana Bible Institute and had been trained as a pastor. He had returned to the church as an associate pastor before Mr. James Obeng returned from the U.S.A. This means that in the scheme of things, this graduate of Southern Ghana Bible Institute, by name Pastor Anane, should be senior to Pastor James Obeng. Consequently, Pastor Anane should have been recommended for ordination first before Pastor James Obeng. That also presupposes that Pastor Anane should have succeeded Rev. Asore when he became the General Superintendent. However, Rev. Asore, for whatever reason, preferred and recommended Pastor James Obeng for ordination ahead of Pastor Anane and for that matter recommended him as his successor over Pastor Anane.

This turn of events obviously offended Pastor Anane who later left Ghana for the United Kingdom. When Rev. James Obeng took over as the senior pastor of ECAG, he distinguished himself among his peers. When he had established his credibility, he began to assert himself and with time severed his umbilical cord from Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore. He apparently did not return the favours he had received from Rev. Asore.

Before the events of January 13, 2002, Rev. James Obeng had gotten into a relationship with a Nigerian legal practitioner and Evangelist, Bro. Emeka Nwankpa. This relationship started before the year 2000. What was however worrying to many colleagues of Rev. James Obeng and some of his associates was that Bro. Emeka Nwankpa had all of a sudden become like a “Godfather” to Rev. James Obeng.

With the assistance of Evangelist Emeka Nwankpa, Rev. James Obeng established a School of Ministry where participants were taught the ministry and rudiments of deliverance. The director of this School of Ministry was the wife of Bro. Emeka, Mrs. Bade Nwankpa. She was also made a member of Rev. James Obeng’s Ministerial Team. Bro. Emeka and his wife’s activities and the status accorded them by Rev. James Obeng (recognizing them up and above his associates) made some of them (the associates) feel marginalized.

When the January 13, 2002 incident occurred and Rev. James Obeng got into conflict with the General Superintendent, it became obvious to most of his colleagues; from the way Rev. Asore was handling the case, that there was a clear manifestation of personal vendetta against Rev. James Obeng. Rev. James Obeng on the other hand did not see anything wrong with what he had done and so was obsessed with the fact that Rev. Asore was out to get at him. As a result of that, he refused to compromise.

It was reported that a couple of times, Rev. James Obeng looked and sounded sober when he was alone and the cards of the consequences of his action and intransigence were put on the table before him. However, each time he went away to meet or see Bro. Emeka, he came back more difficult and uncompromising. So was the case when a friend of his, by name Rev. Friday,

based in the United Kingdom flew in on his own volition to counsel with him to submit himself to the leadership of the church and to apologise. Rev. Friday was said to have flown back to the United Kingdom disappointed (T. Lelame, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

From Pastor Tuka Lelame's point of view, Rev. James Obeng had erred because his action on January 13, 2002 was against Assemblies of God's accepted practices. A simple apology would have ended the case. However, he (Pastor Tuka Lelame) also thinks that Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore's manner of handling the issue leaves much to be desired. He felt that because Rev. James Obeng did not return the favours Rev. Asore had accorded him earlier on, he (Rev. Asore) had an axe to grind with Rev. Obeng and so when this issue came up he saw it as the opportunity to show him (Rev. James Obeng) where power lies.

Lelame was confident about his convictions because he claimed Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore had become so powerful that he had resorted to victimizing and vilifying pastors who did not see eye to eye with him. He called those whom he had no problem with his sons and those he had problems with his brothers. He added that even though the committee Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore had set up to investigate Rev. James Obeng's January 13, 2002 action declared him not guilty, because it was a first time action, Rev. Asore put the committee's report aside and went ahead to persecute him since he was bent on dealing with Rev. James Obeng (T. Lelame, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

The account of the Late Rev. William W. Dontoh – General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana (2002-2009)

To know the position of the leadership of Assemblies of God, Ghana on this conflict, the General Superintendent of the church (at the time of this study) who was also the Greater Accra Regional Superintendent (when the conflict occurred), the Late Rev. William W. Dontoh, was interviewed. When asked how and when he got to know of the events that occurred at ECAG on January 13, 2002, referred to in question as “the conflict”, he answered that it was one of his (Rev. Obeng’s) associates who informed him of it three days after it had occurred. When asked what the District Committee did about the conflict in accordance with article 29 of the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana before he was officially informed, he answered saying that the District Committee did not play any role because the General Superintendent had taken over the issue and asked him (the Regional Superintendent) to investigate it and report back to him.

As to what he did in accordance with Article 29 of the church’s constitution when he got to know about the conflict, he said he went to the General Superintendent to inform him but it was the General Superintendent who rather told him about it without disclosing the source of his information. It was then that Rev. Asore asked him to investigate it and report back to him. Rev. Dontoh at this point revealed that it was he (Rev. Dontoh) who set up the investigation committee made up of Rev. George Annan, then the Greater Accra Regional Secretary of the Assemblies of God, Ghana, Rev. Attah and Rev. Kwodwo Nissi Diafo. When it was pointed out to Rev. Dontoh that the committee did not find Rev. James Obeng guilty of any wrong doing, he was not too sure of what the report had said because it had been a long time since;

an answer the researcher found difficult to accept because it was a little over two years since the incident in question occurred.

To the question why Rev. James Obeng was never given a copy of the report of the investigation committee when the charges were brought against him, until he (Rev. Dontoh) had come into office before a copy was given to him, he could not explain how that happened but conceded that it was wrong. When asked whether due process was followed in accordance with Article 29 of the church's constitution, which defines how disputes must be resolved, he answered saying, "No due process was followed" (W. W. Dontoh, personal communication, May 12, 2004). As to what the nature of the conflict was, he said it was doctrinal, an error in practice and in addition an error in ministerial ethics as spelt out in Article 28 and section 60 of the constitution of the church, which deals with discipline.

Answering the question why the conflict was not amicably resolved, resulting in the division in the church, Rev. Dontoh said Rev. James Obeng was not compromising because he (Rev. James Obeng) said, what he did was what he had heard from God and as such could not say he was wrong. Rev. Dontoh added that he personally asked Rev. James Obeng to submit to the General Superintendent and apologise for his actions, a counsel he initially accepted but rejected after three days. He also added that when the Ghana Pentecostal Council came in to mediate in the dispute, Rev. James Obeng agreed to sign a resolution, which required that he should write to the General Superintendent re-calling his earlier correspondences with him and the Executive Presbytery but he later refused to append his signature.

Finally, when Rev. Dontoh was asked to look back and say from hindsight what errors of omission and commission were committed in the resolution of the ECAG conflict, his answer was that the Executive Presbytery did not manage the case properly; “We rushed into reacting. If we had waited a bit, we would have had a better cause to discipline Rev. James Obeng” (W. W. Dontoh, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

The Account of Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, the Former General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana

Since it became clear that the ECAG conflict was essentially between Rev. James Obeng and the incumbent General Superintendent then, Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, it became necessary to interview Rev. Asore to hear his side of the story.

In his answer to the first question on major conflicts in Assemblies of God, Ghana, Rev. Asore said he does not remember any major conflict that has occurred in the church since its beginning. He said that the conflicts that have been occurring in Assemblies of God, Ghana are not comparable to what have been happening in other churches resulting in major splits. When specific incidents of intra-church conflicts that had occurred in his long tenure of office were pointed out to him, he said that they do not constitute major conflicts. Referring to the case of C.C.C. (Calvary Charismatic Centre) in Kumasi, where the Pastor had resigned from Assemblies of God, Ghana and attempted to take the property of the church away as well as the Takoradi and ECAG cases, he called them acts of indiscipline and not major conflicts. He said in all such cases, Assemblies of God, Ghana had to go to court to seek redress and

had always won such cases. To him, the main causes of what is being referred to as conflict are acts of indiscipline on the part of some pastors.

Answering the question on the conflict resolution and management mechanisms adopted to resolve the conflicts that occurred during his stewardship as General Superintendent, he said attempts were made at getting the faulting pastors to understand the consequences of their action and to reconcile with them. When asked if Article 29 of the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana that deals with dispute resolution is applied in the resolution of conflicts in the church, he answered in the affirmative saying that, the committee, the said article refers to is not a standing committee; it is only constituted when a conflict occurs in any local church. Making every effort to sound convincing but to no avail, he said conflict situations in Accra are different from what may pertain at Bolgatanga, hence the same committee would be handicapped when it comes to resolving conflicts in places several hundreds of kilometres away from Accra. He added that constituting the committee after the conflict had started helps to resolve and or manage the conflict.

As to when the ECAG conflict started, he said conflicts do not happen in a day, they evolve over a period of time. When asked to comment on the statement that ECAG is noted for doctrinal conflicts, he said that one or two cases of doctrinal errors in a church could not make that church noted for doctrinal conflicts. He then went on to say that ECAG had had an earlier conflict when Rev. Archibald Brown attempted in 1979/1980 to teach the doctrine of William Marion Branham to the congregation leading to his dismissal from the church. At the time Rev. James Obeng (then Mr. James

Obeng) was the church secretary. For that matter he said he finds it surprising that Rev. James would also commit a similar error for which he had, in the past, sat in judgment over Rev. Archibald Brown.

At this point, he made a very startling revelation, confirming partially what others had said already. He said that he (Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore) was the one who put Rev. James Obeng in the position of the senior pastor of ECAG even though he was not qualified to occupy that position. Asked why he said Rev. James Obeng was not qualified, he replied that he (Rev. James Obeng) did not go to Bible College even though he gave the impression that he had been to one. When he was reminded that Rev. James Obeng went to Evangel College in the U.S.A., his reaction was that Evangel College is an Assemblies of God University like the University of Ghana, Legon and that Rev. James Obeng went there to read Communication and Religious studies, courses that did not qualify him to be a pastor. He said that there are pastors in Assemblies of God, Ghana, who came into the ministry with second degrees from the University of Ghana, but had to go to the Assemblies of God Bible School to be trained as pastors. As to whether he has regretted putting Rev. James Obeng in a position he was not qualified to occupy, he answered in the negative. He said he (Rev. James Obeng) was good and a potential and so he used him in many capacities, even to the extent of sending him to places that only highly trusted people could be sent to. He added that in spite of the conflict he still prays for him that the Lord would restore him. He alleged that he met Rev. James Obeng recently and when he extended a hand of fellowship to him he gave him his fist instead.

Asked when and how he heard of the January 13, 2002 incident, he said that he heard it from Lome (the capital of the Republic of Togo) however he could not remember the date. When asked what he heard or was told happened on that day, he said it was a known story and so threw the question back to the interviewer. When he was told that it was reported that Rev. James Obeng came to church in a pair of socks holding his pair of shoes and then later in the service swept the platform with a broom and then drew a circle on the ground or according to another version, he waved the broom and drew a line on the ground and asked that those who were on the Lord's side should step across the line, Rev. Asore said that it was not exactly so. He said Rev. James Obeng came to church on that fateful day barefooted and not in a pair of socks. However, since it has resulted in a problem, he now claims he came in a pair of socks.

He then asked the interviewer if he had heard of the case of the "dead cat." When the interviewer responded in the affirmative he asked, "If a moving vehicle hits a cat causing it to ran into the chapel through the honey-comb designed wall, bleeding, what would one see if he went into the chapel later?" When the interviewer could not answer appropriately, he asked further, "What would you expect to see if you found the cat dead in a pool of blood?" The interviewer answered saying, "You should see a trace of blood in the track of the cat." He then said, "You should see blood on the honey-comb wall through which the cat entered the chapel, but that was not so. Instead, there was blood on the seats of some pastors and deacons." Then he quizzed, "How did the cat know the seats of specific pastors and deacons so that it could smear them with its blood before dying?" At this point, Rev. Asore concluded

that they (Rev. James Obeng and his people) have been practicing occultism. When he was reminded that Rev. James Obeng himself was informed of the incident of the dead cat by the janitor or the security man, Rev. Asore answered with a question, “If you were the senior pastor of a church and you came to the church premise in the middle of the night and you asked the security man to open the chapel, would he question you as to what you wanted to do in the chapel?” (S. B. Asore, personal communication, June 8, 2004)

Earlier on, the researcher told Rev. Asore that his investigations had shown that the ECAG conflict was indeed a conflict between Rev. James Obeng and him (Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore). Based on that, Rev. Asore was asked if the conflict went through the prescribed procedure for dispute resolution according to Article 29 of the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana before getting to him the General Superintendent. He answered saying that when he heard of the incident he did his home work after which he informed the Executive Presbytery. The Executive Presbytery in turn invited the Regional Superintendent (the Late Rev. William W. Dontoh) and quizzed him about the events at Evangel Church. Rev. Dontoh was then asked to investigate the incident and report back to the Executive Presbytery. At this point, Rev. Asore was informed that it was the Regional Superintendent who went to him to inform him of the incident when he, Rev. Asore, told him that he had heard of it already. To that, Rev. Asore said, “It is a lie!” He went on to say that when the Regional Superintendent was asked to investigate the incident, he went to Rev. James Obeng with one of their friends and he came back telling the Executive Presbytery that nothing had happened (Rev. James Obeng and Rev. W. W. Dontoh – then the Regional Superintendent were

friends). He (Rev. Asore) at this point alleged that the District Pastor had earlier informed the Regional Superintendent of the events of January 13, 2002 but he had kept it to himself in an attempt to shield his friend (S. B. Asore, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

At this juncture, Rev. Asore gave a litany of events supposed to be a conspiracy between Rev. Dontoh and Rev. James Obeng and their company to unseat him as the General Superintendent. He talked about how Rev. James Obeng was promised a restoration after he, Rev. Asore and his Executive officers, had been dethroned. Unfortunately however, he said, their plans did work to perfection. Consequently, even though he and his vice stepped down at a point during the 2002 General Council Elections, the General Secretary and General Treasurer retained their positions. That he said made it difficult for Rev. Dontoh and his group to implement their plans. When he was told that Rev. Dontoh, upon assumption of office offered Rev. James Obeng the opportunity to be restored on condition that he withdrew the letters he had written earlier on, but Rev. James Obeng declined to withdraw the letters, Rev. Asore again said “that one too is a lie!” Instead, he said it was the retained officers of the Executive Presbytery and some of the Regional Superintendents who prevented the new General Superintendent from carrying out his plans by reminding him that the dismissal of Rev. James Obeng was not an action by Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore but rather a collective decision taken by the Executive Presbytery.

When Rev. Asore was asked if due process was followed in the attempt to resolve the ECAG conflict in view of the developments he had enumerated, he said the General Superintendent could not take any action on

his own without following due process. He therefore went on to state that the Regional Superintendent was instructed to set up a committee to investigate the events of January 13, 2002 and he was given a deadline by which he must report back to the Executive Presbytery. According to him, when the committee's report was finally submitted after a couple of weeks, it had exonerated Rev. James Obeng from any wrong doing since the events of January 13, 2002 was not an on-going teaching or practice but a onetime occurrence. The Executive Presbytery, he said, felt that the committee's report fell short of expectations consequently, the report was shelved and Rev. James Obeng was summoned to meet the Executive Presbytery to explain his actions including the mystery surrounding the dead cat. To the question, if the dispute was referred to the dispute resolution board, Rev. Asore answered in the affirmative but added that the committee was constituted when the dispute arose, because the dispute resolution committee or board is not a standing one, it is only formed when there is a dispute.

On the issue of the role disciplinary action played in the resolution of that conflict, he said the Executive Presbytery, after interrogating Rev. James Obeng at Bunso in the Eastern Region, decided to suspend him for one year, to which he pleaded for leniency. Rev Asore then asked, "Why would he plead for leniency if he was not guilty?" In response to his plea the Executive Presbytery asked him to write to the General Superintendent apologizing for all that had happened. However, after sometime, Rev. James Obeng refused to apologize, rejecting the suspension imposed on him. The Executive Presbytery took a serious exception to his conduct and therefore decided to withdraw his credentials and dismiss him from the church. At this point, Rev. Asore was

asked if he was pleased with the outcome of the ECAG conflict to which he said he was not happy, “but the good news is that they are out.” He added that he saw the way the conflict ended as a divine intervention, because Rev. James Obeng was unrepentant. Asked what he considered was not done properly in the resolution of the conflict, Rev. Asore said that after he (Asore) had left office the youth of the Assemblies of God churches in the Adabraka District, including at least two pastors went to the premises of the ECAG with the aim of taking over the church. This was when they got to know that Rev. James Obeng and his group were meeting in the chapel and had deleted the name “Assemblies of God” from the church’s signboard, thereby effectively changing the name from “Evangel Church Assemblies of God, Ghana” to “Evangel Church, Ghana.” Rev. Asore pointed out that that occurrence is as a result of the fact that his successor, Rev. W. W. Dontoh, was not consistent in handling the conflict. He added that such a thing never occurred throughout his administration.

As to what he would do differently should he have another chance to supervise the resolution of the ECAG conflict, he said that since he had no regret for the role he played, there was nothing he would do differently should he oversee the resolution of the same conflict again. When asked to identify what, in the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana (which is not dated) or in the administrative structure of the church is a major recipe for intra-church conflict, he answered “Nothing.” He added that the constitution is okay without a date of promulgation. Regarding the system of administration, he said it is American and a combination of the Presbyterian and Congregational

systems of church governments hence it would be difficult to change it. (S. B. Asore, personal communication, June 8, 2004)

Finally, regarding what he thinks about the transfer of pastors as a conflict resolution mechanism, taking into consideration the fact that he once attempted transferring pastors, Rev. Asore explained that what he and the Executive Presbytery at that time (in the last quarter of the 1990s) attempted doing was not the transfer of pastors but rather an administrative measure to ensure that all Regional Superintendents were located in the Regional Capitals, an action the pastors misunderstood and for that matter rejected it. He therefore thinks that the transfer of pastors is not necessary. He also added that it would not necessarily solve the financial challenges of the head-office. He believed that if all local churches paid their twenty percent levies to the head office faithfully there should be no financial problems at the head-office.

Rev. Asore concluded his response to the researcher's questions by saying that he had elaborate plans to build a new head office complex cum press (the Assemblies of God Literature Centre), which would generate enough money for the church. Though he did not agree fully with the suggestion that Assemblies of God ministers need to be sponsored by the headquarters for further education or training, he said he had personally sought sponsorship for further training for pastors but those who had the first opportunities abused them by messing up morally when they travelled outside (S. B. Asore, personal communication, June 8, 2004).

The Account of Rev. James Obeng

Having heard the account of people who are still members of Assemblies of God (who were either observers or insiders) and from Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore himself, one of the key players in the ECAG conflict, it is imperative, for the sake of fair play and informed judgment, to hear from Rev. James Obeng and his followers, who, because of this conflict, are no longer members of Assemblies of God, Ghana but are now members of Evangel Church, Ghana.

Without waiting for the questions to be put to him, Rev. James Obeng began to narrate his side of the story of the ECAG conflict, after taking a quick glance at the synopsis of questions. He confirmed that Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore was his predecessor at ECAG and that he took over from him as the senior pastor in 1986 after he (Rev. Dr. Asore) had served in that capacity from 1979 to 1986. He said prior to his assumption of office as the senior pastor of ECAG, he had trained at Evangel College in the United States of America majoring in Biblical Studies and Communication. He said he is a true believer in the doctrines of Assemblies of God.

Shifting to the events of January 13, 2002, that started the conflict, he said what he did on that day was a “Prophetic Action.” He spent time to explain why it was a prophetic action quoting copiously and extensively from the Bible. Some of the examples he cited include the Prophet Ezekiel’s prophetic actions that God specifically instructed him to do as can be found in Ezekiel chapters 4-6 and 12. At this point, he said that, “whether anybody accepts it or not, the people we associate ourselves with and the schools we went to influence us” (J. Obeng, personal communication, May 7, 2004).

He continued that, based on what he had heard from the Lord, he came to church on that fateful day, January 13, 2002, wearing his pair of shoes. However, before he got out of his car he removed the pair of shoes and held them in his hand and walked in his pair of socks through the aisle to his seat. When it came to his turn to speak, he got a broom and waved it after which he got a piece of chalk, drew a line on the ground and asked that all who are on the Lord's side should walk across the line to the side he had pointed. Many people obeyed the instruction and with them he prayed a prayer of rededication. Little did he know that that action was going to generate into a conflict.

On March 7, 2002, he received a letter from and signed by the General Superintendent, accusing him of openly declaring his change of doctrinal position. At this point, he revealed that by the time he was dismissed from Assemblies of God, Ghana he had been charged three times with different offences over the same issue. The second was "Error in Practice" and the third, "Violation of Pastoral Ethics." The General Superintendent, on March 11, sent another letter, this time, to the church board asking them to cooperate with an investigation committee that has been set up to investigate the events of January 13, 2002. No copy of the said letter was served him.

He said when the committee came to do its work; he cooperated with its members, just as the church board did. However, he was never served with a copy of the committee's report. He said he later received another letter inviting him to a meeting of the Executive Presbytery of Assemblies of God, Ghana at Bunso on May 9 to explain his actions and other charges levelled against him. Complying with the directive, he went to Bunso on the said date

where he was interrogated on the events of January 13 and the issue of a dead cat found in the ECAG Chapel, to which he gave credible answers. Then he was asked to produce his Diploma, a request that had nothing to do with the charges levelled against him. After the interrogation, he was handed a one-year suspension during which his Senior Associate would act in his stead. At this point he pleaded with the Executive Presbytery to reconsider the action taken against him since it was too harsh and undeserving. To this, he was told to put his appeal into writing and addressed to the General Superintendent.

When he was asked at this point if he followed due process to seek redress since he felt he was victimized, he answered in the affirmative saying that he petitioned the Executive Presbytery about addressing his petition to the General Superintendent since he had become his accuser, judge and prosecutor at the same time.

Rev. James Obeng then said that, later on, the Ghana Pentecostal Council offered to mediate in the conflict. After meeting both parties, it ruled that he should write to the Executive Presbytery revoking all the letters he had written. After careful consideration he objected to the signing of the memoranda of understanding, because he feared to disobey God instead of man since the actions for which he was being vilified were divinely inspired (J. Obeng, personal communication, May 7, 2004).

At this point, he asked the interviewer to talk to his lieutenants – Pastor Samuel Amartey Armah and Mr. Samuel Turkson, who were then with him. He also asked that the interviewer could talk to Mr. Ignatius Asare, whom he described as their chronicler. Before he excused the interviewer to attend another meeting, he revealed that thugs were hired to attack worshippers in the

chapel leading to the closure of the church by the police. Regarding the breakaway of a section of the church which he now heads as the senior pastor, Rev. James Obeng said, in obedience to the ruling of the Executive Presbytery, he stopped going to church when he was suspended before he was later dismissed. He was therefore not at post when the members of the congregation broke away from Assemblies of God, Ghana. He however said he was later invited by the breakaway group to be their pastor. It was then that he assumed duty as the senior pastor of the breakaway group – “Evangel Church, Ghana.”

When he was asked why the conflict was not resolved amicably, he said it was because Rev. Dr. Asore did not understand the move of God in the present times. As to whether he had any regrets for the way things went, he answered in the negative. When he was finally asked about the possibility of reconciliation and coming back into the fellowship of Assemblies of God, Ghana, he said going back is out of the question. He added that there was no need for reconciliation because there was no fight in the first place (J. Obeng, personal communication, May 7, 2004).

Clarifying some of the specific facts that Rev. James Obeng had touched on, Pastor Samuel Armah and Mr. Samuel Turkson said that there was no sweeping by Rev. James Obeng on January 13, rather, he waved a broom in the air; similarly, he did not draw a circle but a line. They felt that the issue at stake was nothing that required the action taken by Rev. Dr. Asore (then General Superintendent) instead, he could have addressed his concerns informally with Rev. James Obeng since they were friends. Regarding the

issue of the dead cat, they said that it was a misinformation by those who had suspicion that the prophetic action was occultism.

Regarding a remark purported to have been made by Bro. Emeka Nwankpa about a pastor who had sinned against God, Pastor Armah and Bro. Turkson revealed that a lady member who wanted to be delivered from a situation saw a student pastor who counselled her on an alternative to the deliverance. However, she took it that the student pastor was preventing her from being delivered and so she reported it to Bro. Emeka Nwankpa that an associate pastor had prevented her from being delivered from her bondage (S. A. Armah & S. Turkson, personal communication, May 7, 2004).

The Account of Mr. Ignatius Asare

When the interviewer caught up with Mr. Ignatius Asare, he gave the most detailed account of the conflict befitting his label as the chronicler of the breakaway group. Confirming the account of Rev. James Obeng, he said that when they (the Church Board of ECAG) received the letter from the General Superintendent requesting them to cooperate with the investigation committee, they wrote back to the General Superintendent asking to know the ways in which their senior pastor (Rev. James Obeng) had violated Assemblies of God doctrine for which they must cooperate with the investigation committee. Even though there was no further clarification from the General Superintendent, they cooperated with the committee. When the committee completed its work it submitted a report to the General Superintendent, but neither Rev. James Obeng nor they the church board was given a copy of that report. When they wrote to the General Superintendent requesting for the

committee's report, he insulted them. Early in May 2002, Rev. James Obeng received a letter inviting him to meet the Executive Presbytery to explain his actions. On May 5, 2002, the church board again wrote to the Executive Presbytery asking them to use circumspection in managing the conflict.

At Bunso, however, Rev. James Obeng was informed of a one-year suspension imposed on him because Assemblies of God, Ghana frowns upon his practices. Thereafter, the church board received a letter dated May 5, 2002, inviting it to a meeting with the Executive Presbytery on May 11. Present at the said meeting (representing the Executive Presbytery) were Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore – General Superintendent, his assistant Rev. Harry Insaidoo, Pastor Sylvanus Elorm, the Administrator at the head office, Rev. William W. Dontoh, the Regional Superintendent and Rev. A. Y. Akwaka – the District Pastor. The church board was informed of the suspension of Rev. James Obeng for one year and that an official announcement to that effect would be made to the congregation on May 12. At this point again, the board members requested for the investigation committee's report but, once again, the response was an insult. The board members then requested that the planned official announcement to the congregation on May 12, should be suspended until the tension that was building up in the church had abated, but it was turned down with the excuse that they, the representatives of the Executive Presbytery, were experienced in handling such situations.

Also mentioned at the May 11, meeting was the name of Bro. Emeka Nwankpa who was tagged as a "troublemaker" saying that he caused confusion in Sure Way Fellowship in London. Another issue that was

mentioned by the representatives of the Executive Presbytery was that of the dead cat.

On May 12 (a Sunday), the Executive Presbytery delegation went to ECAG as they had indicated the previous day. Initially, the congregation was calm but charged and expectant. However, when the Regional Superintendent, Rev. Donto mounted the podium to make the announcement, one man in the congregation shouted “MEN!” and there was the usual response “ACTION!!” Immediately, there was an uproar and commotion in the chapel preventing Rev. Donto from making the announcement. Later on, when the delegation was leaving they were heckled and when they got out of the chapel it was discovered that the tyres of the Assistant General Superintendent’s car had been deflated.

Earlier, on May 10, Rev. James Obeng had written an appeal letter against his suspension, to the Executive Presbytery but it was rejected on the grounds that it was not addressed to the General Superintendent. Based on that, he was ordered to appear before the General Superintendent on May 16, 2002. Rev. Obeng then wrote to the Executive Presbytery to postpone the meeting with the General Superintendent on May 16 for him to consider the matter again. This was because Rev. Asore had become his accuser, prosecutor and judge. Thereafter, he wrote another letter appealing against the Executive Presbytery’s decision that he should appear before the General Superintendent but he received no response. The church board also wrote a similar appeal to the Executive Presbytery, which also did not receive any response.

In the meantime, Rev. Dr S. B. Asore was alleged to be telling other pastors that Rev. James Obeng was involved in occultism. On that basis Rev. James Obeng wrote again to the Executive Presbytery protesting Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore's behaviour, calling it a smear campaign. According to Bro. Asare, in early June 2002, Rev. James Obeng wrote to the Executive Presbytery again rejecting the disciplinary action against him. His reason was that certain prominent members of the Executive Presbytery had committed serious violations of the Assemblies of God doctrine and disciplinary code but no action had been taken against them. He cited specifically Rev. Harry Insaideo the Assistant General Superintendent and Rev. Appiah Boachie, the General Secretary. He therefore did not understand how such members of the Executive Presbytery could sit in judgment over him.

On June 24, he said, the Executive Presbytery received a letter from Sure Way Fellowship, a copy of which was sent to the church board. The letter signed by Rev. Ronald Eske praised the ministry of Bro. Emeka Nwankpa, saying, that his ministry at Sure Way left a wholesome effect on the church. Based on that testimony Bro. Emeka Nwankpa has since been invited to Sure Way Fellowship at least two times.

He revealed further that on July 11, 2002, Rev. Asore invited the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Board again for another meeting at the Church of Pentecost transit quarters at which the board was informed of the dismissal of Rev. James Obeng from Assemblies of God, Ghana. At this point one of the deacons, Dr. Ofori Addo asked a simple question, "What is this man's sin?" The answer was, "He has broken ministerial ethics." Dr. Ofori Addo then told the Executive Presbytery that because they wanted to score a

goal by all means they have shifted the goal post three times. Rev. Samuel Bunnah, the senior associate pastor to Rev. James Obeng was then appointed acting senior pastor of Evangel Church, a decision that the church board rejected, because they considered Rev. Samuel Bunnah as a treacherous person. Rev. Samuel Bunnah was accused of misinforming the General Superintendent on the events at ECAG.

At this point Mr. Ignatius Asare was asked where Rev. Samuel Bunnah had been all this while. He answered that he had been around and present at all board meetings since the beginning of the conflict. He went on to cite an example of a falsehood Rev. Samuel Bunnah is purported to have told Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore about Rev. James Obeng when he (Rev. James Obeng) was speaking at a programme at GIMPA. He also pointed out that when the news of Rev. James Obeng's suspension eventually got to the congregation, 581 signatories of the members of the congregation were collected within five to ten minutes in protest of the disciplinary action.

Continuing his account, Mr. Ignatius Asare said that on July 21, 2002, a Sunday morning, the congregation passed a resolution breaking away from Assemblies of God, Ghana. Before then, all associate pastors who had come to church were prevented from entering the chapel. A Sunday school teacher read out the resolution during which the new name of the church was announced and the change was later effected on the church's signboards. Consequent to that, a member of the church who did not agree with the action of some of the members of the congregation filed a writ at the high court against Evangel Church, Ghana. This was followed by a second writ, this time from Assemblies of God, Ghana, against Evangel Church, Ghana. Both writs were

meant to place an injunction on Evangel Church, Ghana, preventing its leaders and members from using the chapel and the properties of the church since they belong to Assemblies of God, Ghana. In August the Evangel Church, Ghana congregation formally invited Rev. James Obeng to come and be their senior pastor.

On assumption of office as the General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana, Rev. W. W. Dontoh put together an arbitration committee under the chairmanship of Rev. Moses Sumaila, the new Assistant General Superintendent with the mandate to resolve the impasse between Rev. James Obeng and the Executive Presbytery. At the first meeting of that committee, the Evangel Church, Ghana team requested a copy of the report of the investigation committee, without which they would not be able to take part in the arbitration. An assurance was given that their request would be granted. The report was however not given until February 20, after the second meeting of the committee. When the Evangel Church, Ghana team read the report it was shocked to notice that the committee had exonerated Rev. James Obeng from any wrong doing because it did not find one. It however recommended that Rev. James Obeng should be invited and cautioned. The question then was, if he was not found guilty of any wrongdoing then why the interrogation at Bunso and the subsequent suspension and the eventual dismissal?

The arbitration committee, according to Bro. Asare, met again on March 14. However, on June 1, 2003 a hired mob led by Rev. A. Y. Akwaka, the District Pastor, Pastor Ablorh and Mr. Tublu, the ECAG choirmaster, attacked the congregation of Evangel Church, Ghana, during church service, destroying properties worth millions of Cedis. They then barricaded the doors.

During a second attack five days later (on Thursday June 5), the mob came wielding cutlasses and clubs, resulting in injuries to a security man on duty. Due to the severity of the mob action the Ghana Pentecostal Council, whose officials or representatives happened to be present on the church premise before the second attack, immediately ordered the police to close down the church. Subsequently, the police arrested some of the ringleaders of the mob action and arraigned them before court. The church was however re-opened in September 2003, by which time the Evangel Church, Ghana congregation had decided to start meeting in homes (house churches) and hold Sunday Services at Apra House in Accra.

When asked who could be behind all that had happened, Mr. Ignatius Asare named Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, Rev. Samuel Bunnah, Rev Isaac Benyin, and Rev. Justice E. Darkwah as the conspirators in this whole drama. When asked whether there was any conflict between his senior pastor and his associates or any disaffection in the associates against the senior pastor, Mr. Asare said that there was no such thing. However, he pointed out that earlier on, Rev. Benyin and Darkwah had been asked by the senior pastor to go on a pastoral retreat for committing acts of indiscretion but he did not think that was any sufficient grounds for conflict between them and the senior pastor.

When asked if he did not think that because Bro. Emeka Nwankpa was given more attention and recognition than the associate pastors, and as a result they felt peeved and for that matter resentful, lending themselves to acts of betrayal, Mr. Asare said that it was not all the associate pastors who were involved in the conspiracy. He added that the few pastors who were involved in the conspiracy were not worth the attention and recognition given to Bro.

Emeka Nwankpa and they could not compare themselves to him (I. Asare, personal communication, May 12, 2004).

During a second visit to Mr. Ignatius Asare’s office, he showed to the researcher twenty-one correspondences between Rev. James Obeng, Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, the Executive Presbytery, the Evangel Church Board, Sure Way Fellowship and the Ghana Pentecostal Council. Though he would not give out copies of the letters, he allowed the researcher to read them to buttress the story he had told him. He also showed to the researcher the investigation committee’s report that declared Rev. James Obeng not guilty of any offence.

The Population Sample’s Perception of the ECAG Conflict: A Graphical Analysis of the Data Collected

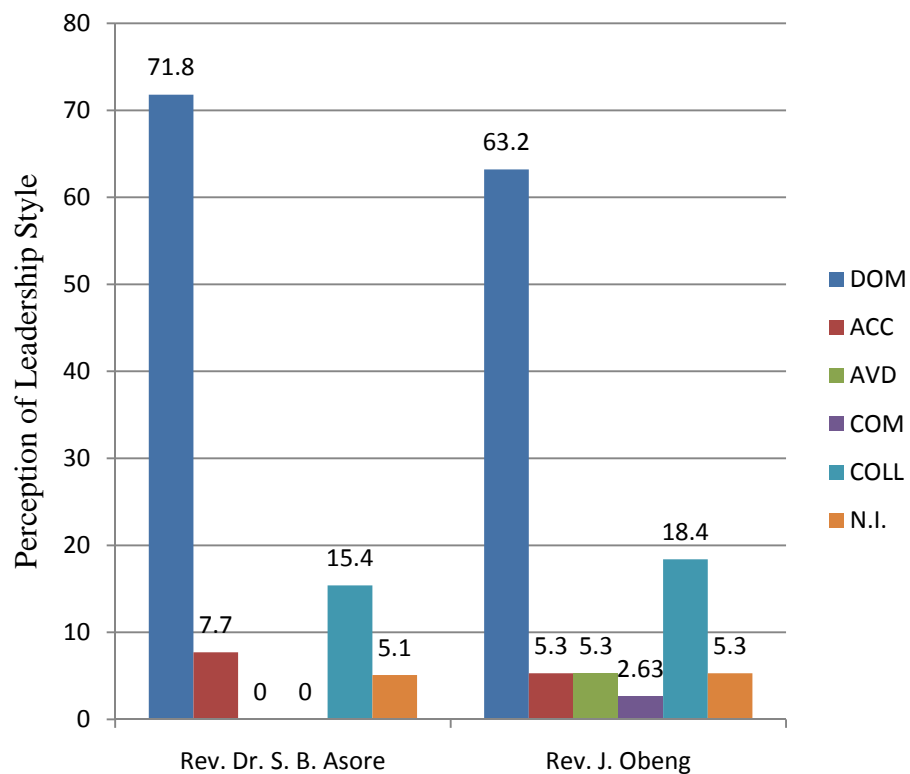


Figure 4. Respondents’ Ratings of Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and Rev. James Obeng’s Conflict Resolution and Management Skills

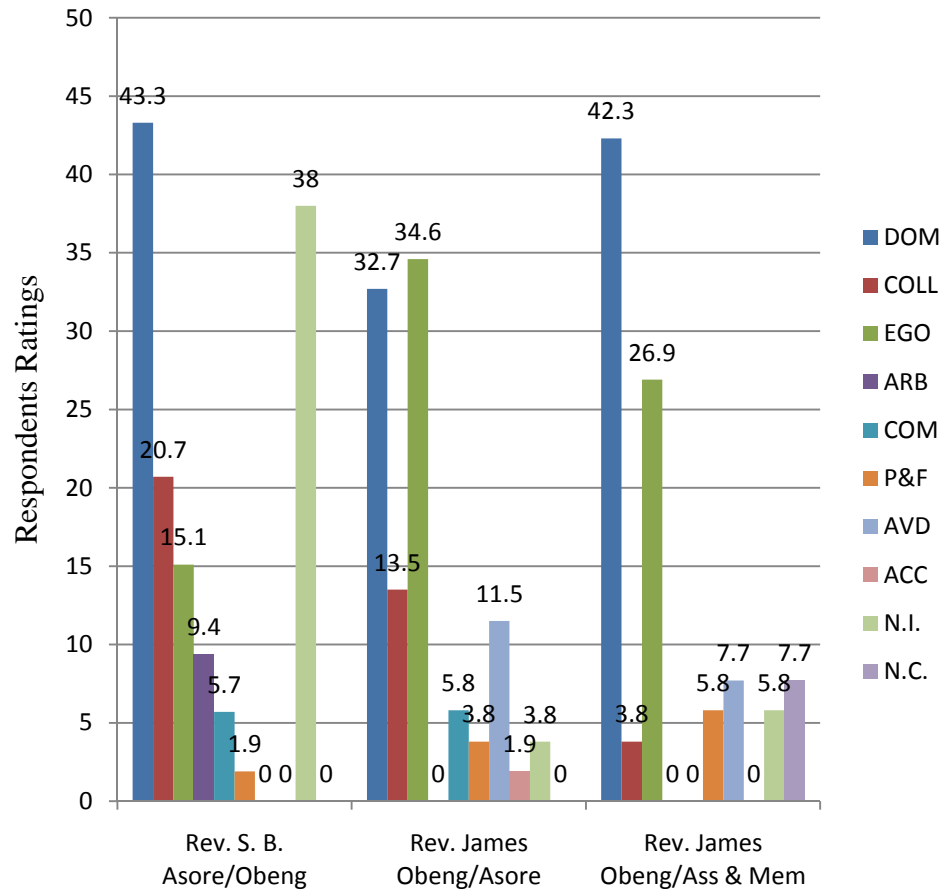


Figure 5. Respondents' Perception of Disputants' Leadership Styles

The analysis of the population sample's perception of ECAG conflict with particular reference to the conflict resolution and management skills of the key disputants and their leadership skills are presented graphically (in bars charts) in figures four and five:

By way of explanation, the respondents have observed that with respect to conflict resolution and management skills, both Rev. Dr. Asore and Rev. Obeng are highly dominating, but whereas Rev. Asore is more collaborative, Rev. Obeng is more egoistic and both of them are very low on compromising and negotiation.

This observation is reflected in their leadership styles as well with Rev. Asore slight ahead of Rev. Obeng in dominating Re. Obeng is slight ahead of Rev. Dr. Asore in Collaborating even though both of them scored low marks for collaborating as against the high marks they scored for dominating. This certainly explains why they could not resolve their conflict amicably.

Analyses of Observations and Findings

The evidences above have clearly established the fact that the ECAG conflict was not between two factions within the church but rather between the then senior pastor of the church (Rev. James Obeng) and the then General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana (Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore). Other observations made include the following facts:

1. Rev. James Obeng and Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore were one time very intimate and bosom friends to the extent that the General Superintendent over looked and side-stepped principles in the administration of the church to make Rev. James Obeng senior pastor of ECAG, when he was not duly qualified, by the order of succession, to occupy that position.
2. There were informants of the General Superintendent in ECAG who told him things he wanted to hear and whom he also used “to do his home work.” These informants were largely associate pastors. That was one of the recipes for this conflict.
3. The weaknesses in the administrative structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana gives the senior pastors too much room to operate without being held accountable or in check by the church board which does not have

the authority to do so because he is also its chairman. Consequently, when a pastor is involved in anything contrary to the expectation of the church, the board members do practically nothing to bring him to order. As a result, differences between pastors and their associates, deacons, and members, which could have been discussed and resolved amicably, are allowed to simmer until they explode out of control. Unfortunately, this phenomenon does not occur only between the local church pastor and his associates, deacons and members, it is worse between senior pastors and their juniors, as well as between the Executive Presbytery, Regional Executive and District Executive members and their subordinates. Simply put, if a General Superintendent could “shout” down the whole Principal of the Southern Ghana Bible College and other senior ministers at General Council meetings then the administrative structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana lends itself to authoritarianism and dictatorship, which are recipes for conflict.

4. There is mistrust and suspicion between pastors and their superiors.
5. The uncountable number of terms of office the General Superintendent, Regional Superintendent, District Pastor and other officers of Assemblies of God, Ghana serve as another contributor to the ECAG conflict. Principles of leadership teaches that when a leader stays at one position for a long time, no matter how great that leader is a time comes when the same subordinates or followers who hailed that leader would reject him (D'Souza, 1994). This basic truth however

seems to be lost on the pastors and leaders of Assemblies of God, Ghana.

6. The unclear and undefined boundary between perceived errors or acts of indiscipline and conflict: It appears that wherever indiscipline occurs (whether perceived or real) there is conflict. The difficulty therefore in managing such situations is whether to apply disciplinary measures or conflict resolution mechanisms. A disciplinary measure could double as a conflict resolution mechanism but not all conflict resolution mechanisms are disciplinary measures. However, when there is conflict (which is not an act of indiscipline) between a junior officer and his boss who has the power to discipline him/her, how can fairness and justice be ensured in the resolution of that conflict? This therefore is one of the weaknesses in the conflict resolution mechanism of Assemblies of God, Ghana and many other human institutions.
7. A dead cat was found in the Chapel of ECAG, but what Rev. James Obeng knows about it and what the informants of Rev. Asore said about it influenced the direction and extent of the ECAG conflict. To the extent that the informants were apparently believed to the hilt, but the report of the investigation committee set up by the Regional Superintendent was doubted on the basis that “the committee members and the appointing authorities were friends of the accused” is mind-boggling. Who should be believed, a committee of pastors, or faceless informants, be they pastors or laymen? Apart from the faceless informants who else saw the blood of the dead animal on the seats of specific deacons and pastors?

8. An important difficulty or weakness in the conflict resolution mechanism of Assemblies of God, Ghana is the fact that the Dispute Resolution Board which, according to Article 29 of the church's constitution, should be a standing commission is not (according to the former General Superintendent – Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore); members of the commission are appointed only when there is a conflict. Who guarantees fairness in the appointment of the members of the board, especially when the appointing authority has a vested interest in the outcome of that particular conflict or is a disputant in that particular conflict?
9. When it became clear that there was no cause for disciplinary action against Rev. James Obeng, it should also have been clear to the members of the Executive Presbytery that the conflict is actually between the General Superintendent and his subordinate, Rev. James Obeng; and members of the Executive Presbytery should have stepped in to restrain the General Superintendent from pursuing the matter any further. It however appeared that members of the Executive Presbytery were just disabled or weak and could not call the General Superintendent to order. The only occasion that they issued a statement was in response to Rev. James Obeng's appeal to them, when they asked him to address the letter to the General Superintendent. The only member among them who appeared to be sympathetic to Rev. James Obeng was Rev. W.W. Dontoh, who had been blacklisted by the General Superintendent as a friend of Rev. James Obeng and was trying to shield him.

10. At this point it is appropriate to point out that the SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat) analysis of the Conflict Resolution Mechanism of Assemblies of God, Ghana, is nothing to write home about. Strength-wise, Article 29 of the church's constitution appears to be non-existent. Weakness-wise, it is very weak to the extent that it is manipulated by the powers that be. Opportunity-wise, it does not present any opportunities for pastors of the church, let alone members to seek justice. Threat-wise, the absolute powers of the leaders of the church does not only threaten the very spirit and letter of that provision in the constitution it violates it with impunity.
11. It also appears that there is an issue of selective justice. It is clear from the accounts above that one of the root causes of the conflict between Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and Rev. James Obeng is the latter's association with Bro. Emeka Nwankpa. However, one wonders when the Assemblies of God, Ghana leadership woke up from its slumber. Long before Rev. James Obeng got associated with Bro. Emeka Nwankpa, many Assemblies of God pastors had invited Nigerian swindlers and fraudsters who claimed to be men of God, who in broad day light, with their connivance and before their very eyes robbed the members of their congregations of millions of Cedis under the guise of running revival services. Some of them, in an attempt to prove their spiritual abilities did despicable things that passed without anybody raising a finger. Some of the pastors who invited and hosted these so-called men of God were and are members of the Executive Presbytery.

12. Rev. James Obeng's shortcoming was in his acceptance of the invitation from the breakaway group to become their senior pastor. That single act compromised his sincerity. A resignation from Assemblies of God, Ghana before his dismissal and a rejection of the invitation from the breakaway group to be their senior pastor would have been the best option. As it is now, it appears he was working behind the scene to take the church for himself. When the breakaway group decided to seize the ECAG Chapel and properties, he should have advised them against it or condemned the action openly. Had he done all that he would have totally exonerated himself from any liabilities as far as the conflict is concerned.
13. The hiring of a mob to attack the Evangel Church, Ghana congregation under the leadership of pastors who got arrested and charged by the Police is the most unchristian conflict resolution mechanism. One wonders if those pastors and the youthful Christians and non-Christians they led to commit such acts of violence and vandalism could claim that they were led by God. Comparing and contrasting the actions of those pastors to that of Rev. James Obeng, which one of them were likely to have been led by the Holy Spirit?
14. Finally, the fact that both Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore and Rev. James Obeng have adopted entrenched stands against the possibility of reconciliation is unchristian and does not show the spirit of forgiveness and love. Irrespective of how sinful we were, God pursued us until he offered the greatest sacrifice to reconcile us back unto himself.

The account of the origin of the ECAG conflict and its escalation as revealed above brings to the fore several questions like:

1. What constitutes a conflict?
2. What is the difference between acts of indiscipline and conflict?
3. When does indiscipline become a conflict?
4. Is it possible to differentiate indiscipline from conflict?
5. What is the difference between checking indiscipline and conflict resolution?
6. Who checks indiscipline when leadership is embroiled in conflict with staffs that are perceived to be undisciplined?
7. How can justice be guaranteed when leadership whose responsibility it is to instil discipline is involved in conflict with those to be disciplined?
8. What are the root causes of the conflicts in the Assemblies of God local congregations, most of which have not come into the open like that of ECAG even though they are affecting the growth of the church?
9. Why is it that the Pastors of Assemblies of God, Ghana are so depraved and poor in matters of administration and management, communication skills and financial solvency resulting in a poor administrative structure and for that matter administrative and financial impropriety in the church?
10. Why is it that the senior pastor in a local congregation in Assemblies of God, Ghana is so powerful, autocratic and dictatorial and in many cases financially undisciplined?

To answer some of the questions arising from the data collected so far, it became imperative to go far back into history, to the very genesis of the Pentecostal movement which gave birth to the Assemblies of God denomination, since it is believed (arguably though) that Assemblies of God is the first Pentecostal denomination.

The Genesis of the Pentecostal Movement and Related Conflicts

The beginning of the Pentecostal Movement and later the Azusa Street Revival was not without conflicts. As revealed by Liardon (1996) and Cairns (1981), the ministry of Charles F. Parham, popularly referred to as “The Father of Pentecost” and the William J. Seymour (the catalyst of Pentecost) were fraught with several controversies, ranging from doctrinal to administrative conflicts.

Seymour, who was a black student of Parham, allowed practices in his Azusa Street Revival that were reminiscent of the practices that occurred in the Biblical Corinthian church; an occurrence that offended Charles Parham who openly criticised his former student who subsequently locked him out of the event of which he was a guest speaker.

Talking about the Azusa Street Revival and its attendant spiritual manifestations brings to the fore William J. Seymour, who some Assemblies of God leaders falsely claim is the founder of their denomination; falsely because the historical facts, as has been discovered do not support that position. The ministry of William J. Seymour (the Catalyst of Pentecost) however, enhanced the development of the Pentecostal Movement.

William Seymour was so much dependent on the Holy Spirit that everything done in the church was spontaneous, impromptu and without a pre-planned programme. This included music (without instruments and hymn books), testimonies and preaching. Any of them was done at anytime and no preacher was assigned; anybody who felt led by the Holy Spirit got up to bring forth the word of God. The message could be either in English or in tongues without interpretation and sometime one service could run continuously for ten to twelve hours. There were times that single services ran for several days and nights without the participants getting tired or worn out because of the power of the Holy Spirit (as is the belief of Pentecostals). Intellectual sermons were not entertained at Azusa; the preachers of such sermons were intimidated and made to run out of the pulpit by a woman called “Mother Jones” (Liardon, 1996).

At the peak of William Seymour and the Azusa Street Mission’s popularity, things began to decline. The cause of the decline was not from without but it was a conflict from within the mission or the fellowship.

Another source of conflict at Azusa Street was over the issue of sanctification. Seymour’s belief and teachings on this subject varied from that of his role model, and in this respect - John Wesley. Directly opposite to the belief of John Wesley, Seymour believed and taught that sanctification or sinless perfection is a separate work of grace apart from salvation. He believed that once a person became sanctified, he must forever remain sanctified. As soon as he commits any sin he loses the sanctified status and for that matter salvation. Consequently, Seymour in a bid to maintain his sanctified status forever never reacted against his accusers and persecutors.

The teaching however created a lot of problems in the Azusa Street fellowship. Many overzealous members, who believed they were maintaining their sanctified status, pointed fingers at those they thought were not living sanctified lives thereby judging them. The result was clashes, splits and controversies.

The conflicts and splits at Azusa Street Mission resulted in the formation of a multiplicity of independent Pentecostal fellowships that later metamorphosed into independent Pentecostal churches. Some of them came together later to form the Assemblies of God denomination on April 14, 1914.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the phenomenon that gave birth to the Assemblies of God denomination was one of conflicts over issues relating to doctrine, theology, ministerial practice, relationship, marriage and organization. A concise objective analysis of the events that took place at 312 Azusa Street Mission reveals the following:

1. Positively, there was
 - a. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit
 - b. The genuine speaking in other tongues
 - c. A zeal for evangelism and missions
 - d. Healings and miracles
 - e. Modesty in logistics
 - f. Non-racial fellowship
 - g. Salvation and sanctification were encouraged
2. Negatively however, there was
 - a. Carnality

- b. Lack of orderliness in the fellowship in contravention of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 14.
- c. Intolerance
- d. Unbalanced and inadequate biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit, His personality, gifts and manifestations
- e. No interest in scholarship (higher education) as exhibited in the intolerance for the ministry of intellectuals
- f. There was intimidation of those who did not share the same view or disagreed with popular views
- g. Bitterness and hatred
- h. There was the manipulation of seekers of the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- i. False manifestations of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues were prevalent
- j. Numerous conflicts

In summary, it can be said that what happened at 312 Azusa Street Mission is reminiscent of what happened in the biblical Corinthian church just as it is happening in many Assemblies of God, Ghana congregations and other Pentecostal/Charismatic churches today. It is however disappointing that the leaders of the Azusa Street revival, like some of our Pentecostal/Charismatic Pastors today, did not learn any lesson from the New Testament books of first and second Corinthians.

The Genesis of the Assemblies of God Denomination and related Conflicts

Before the collapse of the Azusa street revival led by William Seymour, the Pentecostal movement that had started under the leadership of Charles Parham in the late 19th Century had developed and spread across the American continent and beyond but outside the major denominations who were opposed to it (Brumback, 1961), (Cairns, 1981).

The earliest opposition to the Pentecostal movement came from independent holiness teachers. Later in 1907, notable evangelical figures like A. B. Simpson, A. T. Pierson, R. A. Torrey and Harry Ironside publicly cautioned the Pentecostal Movement about its excesses (Blumhofer, 1989). Though members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance led by A. B. Simpson, also experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the alliance disagreed with the extreme teachings of the Pentecostals as far as speaking in tongues was concerned and as such branded it as an inaccurate view of scripture, a position it articulated at the April 2–14, 1914 meeting at Hot Springs, Arkansas, at which the Assemblies of God denomination was unexpectedly born (given that the formation of a denomination was not a goal of that meeting) (Blumhofer, 1989).

By 1914, serious cracks began to develop in the Pentecostal movement over doctrinal differences. Some members of the movement, in spite of their belief in speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, also agreed with the Christian and Missionary Alliance that there were excesses and extremities in their activities and doctrines (Blumhofer, 1989).

The disagreement in the Pentecostal movement over doctrinal issues like sanctification, and the formula for water baptism and others pointed to the

need for an organization that would ensure unity of purpose, doctrine and practice. There were also reports of indiscipline on the part of some Pentecostal ministers in respect of the laws of America. That position notwithstanding, the Pentecostals were vehemently opposed to being organized (Blumhofer, 1989). Getting organized was considered to be ungodly and unscriptural because to form a denomination, in their opinion, was not biblical (Brumback, 1961). To forestall the Pentecostal revival, two ministers, M. M. Pinson and E. N. Bell, secretly decided to organize a conference of all Pentecostal Ministers to deliberate on the differences between them as well as the issue of forming an organization (Blumhofer, 1989).

Their hope was to conserve and direct the spiritual fervour of the revival into meaningful channels while providing the guidelines necessary for the elimination of excesses (Brumback, 1961). The purpose of the meeting included the following:

1. To have a better understanding of what God wants to teach them so as to do away with the numerous doctrinal and sectarian conflicts
2. To know how to conserve the work that has already been done (the achievements of the Pentecostal Movement)
3. To get a better understanding of the needs of each foreign field so as to give them the necessary support instead of wasting money on unproductive ventures
4. To do the wishes of the saints; chartering the Pentecostal assemblies legally under one biblical name
5. To discuss the setting up of a Bible Training School with a literacy department (Blumhofer, 1989)

Consequently, the first General Council of what later came to be known as the Assemblies of God was called to order on Monday April 6, 1914 under the acting chairmanship of E. N. Bell. He was later unanimously affirmed as chairman of the first General Council with J. R. Flower as his secretary. Since the meeting had no agenda, E. N. Bell appointed a committee to draft an agenda (“reports and resolutions”) suitable for the meeting. While this committee went to work, a self-appointed committee under the leadership of T. K. Leonard also met to draft its own suitable “reports and resolutions.” They represented those who were suspicious of the formation of an organisation (Blumhofer, 1989).

Eventually, the self-appointed committee made a very important input, which became the first preamble and resolution of the first Assemblies of God constitution. Thomas K. Leonard, who was the leader of the self-appointed committee, happened to be the editor of the preamble and the first resolution of the constitution, which read as follows:

Be it resolved that we recognise ourselves as a “General Council” of Pentecostal (Holy Spirit baptized) saints from local Churches of God in Christ, Assemblies of God and various Apostolic Faith Missions and Churches, Full Gospel Pentecostal Missions, and Assemblies of like faith in the United States of America, Canada and foreign Lands, whose purpose is neither to legislate laws of government, nor usurp authority over the said various Assemblies of God, nor deprive them of their scriptural and local rights and privileges, but to recognize scriptural methods and order for worship, unity, fellowship, work, business for God and to disapprove of all un-scriptural truth and

conduct, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and to walk accordingly, as recorded in Eph. 4:17 – 32 and to consider the five purposes announced in the convention (Brumback, 1961).

Later, the convention voted to adopt a system of government, which was a departure from absolute congregationalism by electing four men in addition to the founders to form what came to be known as the Executive Presbytery.

Ultimately, the newly formed Assemblies of God denomination adopted a system of church government, which is a hybrid of John Knox's Presbyterian system, the Methodist's District Superintendent system, as well as the Baptist's Congregational system (Brumback, 1961).

The Earliest Incidence of Conflict in the Assemblies of God

The earliest indication of the development of conflict within the new organization (Assemblies of God), occurred in October 1914, when "The Christian Evangel", a publication of the organization published a letter from an anonymous figure who, identifying himself as a friend of the Pentecostal movement, cautioned the fragile but optimistic fellowship against conflicts from within and not from without (Brumback, 1961). They include:

1. The nature of sanctification and the practical meaning of holiness
2. The formula for baptism

3. The doctrine of the Trinity and the understanding of the process for salvation.

Also of concern was the relationship between revelation and doctrine as well as the issue of tongues as a “uniform initial evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Blumhofer, 1989).

Two years after the resolution of the above conflict, another controversy struck at the church. This new controversy was over the authenticity of tongues as the initial evidence for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and for that matter the question of whether all should speak in tongues. At the end of it, a resolution was passed that specifically rejected the position of Bosworth and his colleagues. However, Bosworth quit from the church and pitched camp with Christian and Missionary Alliance (Brumback, 1961).

Reviewing the Resolution and Management of Conflicts in the Early Days of Assemblies of God

It is evidently clear from the above accounts that intra-church conflicts in the early days of Assemblies of God were resolved through collaboration (confrontation) and compromise (negotiation). The bones of contention were addressed openly at General Council meetings. For the purpose of fair play, when committees were set up to investigate conflicts or draft documents or resolutions the opposition groups were adequately represented. In both cases mentioned above however, when the conflict resolution mechanisms were applied and the conflicts were resolved the offending or dissenting parties broke away from the parent group.

The breaking away of the opposition groups from their parent group had been necessitated by their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the

resolution of the conflicts and as such they chose to become independent of their parent group so as to feel free to practise their new found faith or doctrine. That does not mean that the conflicts were not properly resolved nor the processes followed were not fair. It however appears that those who broke away from their parent group did so because of their personal ambitions, which were not realized through the resolution of the conflict. This means that if their positions had been endorsed, they would not have parted company with Assemblies of God. This is exemplary of the entrenched positions some people in conflict take even when it is clear that their positions are wrong and they are expected to back down on them.

Even in cases where part of their positions were accepted and incorporated into the doctrine and practices of the church, some of them still took entrenched positions, giving credence to the view that, most people involved in conflicts do so for other ulterior motives other than the given reasons.

That notwithstanding, the historical facts presented above clearly show the origin of the administrative and doctrinal deficiencies in the Assemblies of God, Ghana and many Pentecostal/Charismatic churches. What is required now is how conflicts emanating from such deficiencies should be solved.

The next chapter therefore presents the suggested solutions based on the findings of the research into the resolution and management of intra-church conflicts and its implication for church and state.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Having gathered all the required data on the topic under investigation and having carefully analysed them with particular reference to the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict, it is imperative at this point to draw the conclusion and for that matter determine the thesis.

However, it is important at this point to note that the hypothesis of this research is that “Major conflicts continue to rock and divide the church (the body of Christ), because proper (effective and efficient) conflict resolution and management mechanisms are not being adopted in addressing them.”

Also, it is important to call to mind the purpose of this research on the topic – “The Resolution and Management of Intra-church Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State – A Case Study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict”:

1. To find out the root-causes of intra-church conflicts - both historical and current, with specific reference to the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict.
2. To find out the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used successfully or unsuccessfully in the history of the church.
3. To critique the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used in the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict, in the light of

biblical examples and current trends in conflict resolution and management.

4. To identify the deficiencies in the church's conflict resolution and management mechanisms and recommend to her, especially the church in Ghana, the most result-oriented mechanisms for the resolution and management of intra-church conflicts.

Summary

From the literature review and all the data gathered and analysed, this study has arrived at the conclusion that “Major conflicts continue to rock and divide the church (the body of Christ) because proper (effective and efficient) conflict resolution and management mechanisms have not been adopted in addressing them.”

A typical example of the adoption of improper (ineffective and inefficient) conflict resolution and management mechanisms in addressing conflicts in the church is the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict. This phenomenon is not only peculiar to Assemblies of God, but in almost all Christian churches and other religious organizations as well as political and social institutions. The result is the never ending civil wars, the protracted land litigations, the senseless chieftaincy disputes, and many more.

In addition to the mechanisms proposed by Rothman, Weeks, D'Souza, Sande, Halverstadt, Larom, Lee, Goldthorpe, and many others, it is clear from this study that the first step in the effective and efficient resolution of all intra-church, and all other intra-organizational conflicts is the writing of a good

governance framework called “constitution,” that should serve as the guiding principle for any group of people with a common vision and destiny.”

A well thought out and written constitution, when not skewed in favour of one of the parties in the relationship, automatically prevents conflicts. It also helps to resolve and manage conflicts when they should occur because it always provides the channels for redress. A good constitution is not a document cast in gold and so it allows for amendments from time to time when the conditions under which it was first written begin to change. Good examples are the constitutions of nations like the USA, the U.K., Germany, France, Italy, etc.

A good constitution must set out the following unambiguously:

1. The administrative structure of the organization, and in this case the church.
2. The financial administration of the organization.
3. The doctrinal and ideological directions of the organization (in the case of the church and political groupings respectively).
4. The procedure for the election of officers of the organization and for that matter the church; a procedure that must be free and fair and free from fear.

When in spite of a good constitution that has all the above tenets, a group is plagued with numerous conflicts, then it means the constitution has become obsolete (outlived its usefulness) and it is time to amend, review, revise or fine-tune it to make it more relevant to the members of the group.

The conflicts in Assemblies of God, Ghana and many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are the result of poorly written constitutions or the non-existence of a credible constitution. In Assemblies of God, Ghana the constitution is skewed in favour of the pastors (who are in the minority) making them demagogues or demigods that are served and worshipped by the members on whom they feed fat.

The second step in the effective and efficient resolution of conflicts, (that is when they do occur), as derived from this study is “the confession of the truth.” What that means is that the offender must have come to the point of realization that “I am wrong and I am sorry for offending the other party.” That is what is known as “Repentance” – a change of mind leading to a change of conduct and character and of direction’ (Wood, 1953, p. 9). It also means that the truth about a situation must be told just as it is; without watering down its import.

The Apostle Paul, emphasizing the importance of repentance in conflict resolution in 2Cor.7:8-16, said that true repentance emanates from godly sorrow and leads to salvation. Therefore, for the repentance and confession of the offender to be considered genuine, the offender must confess to the offended (face to face), either between the two of them alone or in the presence of witnesses (Matt.5:23; 18:15-17). This is because for as long as the true cause of the conflict is not known (told or confessed by the offender), the offended will never be able to forgive absolutely and where there is no genuine or absolute forgiveness there can be no true reconciliation (resolution). This is why in places where conflicts have occurred on a large scale, as part of the resolution there have been what has come to be known as

the “Truth and Reconciliation Commissions”, like it was done in South Africa, Ghana, Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia.

Many conflicts in marriages, families, clans and tribes, churches, political parties, industries and companies, nations and regional blocks have remained unresolved because the truth has not been told; repentance and confession have not taken place. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the Catholics-Protestants Conflict in Northern Ireland, the La Cote D’Ivoire Conflict, the Dagbon (Abudu-Andani) Conflict, the Kokomba-Nanumba Conflict, and the Bawku (Mamprusi-Kusasi) Conflict, are all examples of conflicts that are either still on-going or simmering and waiting to explode violently because the truth has not been told. In our country Ghana for example, the truth about our economic woes has never been told in its entirety. In most cases the blame has been laid at the door steps of military adventurers and rulers.

Valid as that point is and the fact that coup d’états are not the legal means of changing democratically elected governments, they however have occurred because of administrative and financial impropriety at all levels of our political and economic life as a nation since independence. Currently, even though we have agreed as a nation to make coup d’états things of the past, we could slum back into a more serious conflict like a civil war in the future if we do not tell the whole truth about the causes of military interventions in our politics.

Turning to the results of the case study presented in chapter four, the critical analysis shows that the respondents could not distinctively decide the primary and secondary causes of most intra-church conflicts because some of

the options they had to choose from (administrative structures, effective communication, policies and procedures and financial solvency) are all components of administrative structures. Therefore, whereas poor administrative structures was cited by 33.3% of the respondents as the primary cause of most intra-church conflicts, lack of effective communication was cited by 28.8% of them as the secondary cause. The remaining 39.9% of the respondents cited doctrinal differences, spiritual and demonic attacks, unfulfilled needs and expectations of both leaders and members, disagreements over policies and procedures and financial ineptitude of leaders as the primary causes of intra-church conflicts. The fact that none of the suggested causes made the 50% mark is instructive of the fact that all the options are perceived to be primary causes of intra-church conflicts. That notwithstanding, it is true that the primary cause of intra-church conflicts is “Poor church administrative structures.” This common but very serious deficiency automatically manifests or reflects in what has been identified as the secondary cause of intra-church conflict - “Ineffective or lack of effective communication.”

Administratively, Assemblies of God, Ghana has a structure, which is incongruous with present day church (institutional) administration. It is a system that gives pastors almost absolute authority in the running of the local church which is also independent of the national headquarters financially. As the chief executive officer of the local church, the pastor is also the chairman of the local church board. Consequently, he wields excessive power to the extent that he can dissolve the board at will and call for fresh elections or appoint new members onto the board, especially when he finds the members

uncompromising. The local church pastor is therefore very manipulative. The local church pastor runs the church like his personal property and is virtually not accountable to his congregation. Though the church constitution stipulates that a properly constituted business meeting of all members of the local congregation be held, at least once every year, many pastors deliberately refuse to hold such meetings and nobody calls them to order.

The current constitution of the church itself has a couple of serious deficiencies in it though it is accepted by an overwhelming majority of the church: it is not dated and has no seal of promulgation. Technically speaking, it can therefore not be said to be a legal document. It is a document that is evidently skewed in favour of the pastors.

Historically, the founding fathers of the church did not encourage the building or development of administrative structures. Consequently, the church's administrative set up is nothing to write home about. The administrative staffs of the church are at the mercy of the employing authorities (the pastor and local church board or the regional or national offices). There is virtually no provision in the church's constitution on the engagement of administrative staff.

In Assemblies of God, Ghana, the General Council meeting, which is organised once every two years is more of a pastors' conferences rather than a church synod as it is done in other denominations; during which the clergy and representatives of the laity meet to dialogue on the progress and the future of the church.

The difficulty with communication and the dissemination of information in Assemblies of God, Ghana is so bad that even at the church's

General Council meetings; the non-ordained ministers and junior pastors do not have a voice while principals of Bible Colleges are shouted down when they rise to make meaningful proposals that appear to question leadership on its performance. They go to the meetings virtually as spectators. Similarly, the few representatives of the laity who dare to go to the General Council only go to add onto the numbers.

To a suggestion that the inadequacies in the administrative structure of the church are a recipe for intra-church conflicts, 69% of the respondents said it is true but 28.6% said it is false. 2.3% of them, however, said they do not know.

To another suggestion that the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana should be revised to conform to current trends in church administration as a mechanism to finding lasting solutions to intra-church conflicts, 79.1% of the respondents agreed with it as against 11.6% who disagreed. 9.3% however, were indifferent.

As to whether the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana has any efficient in-built intra-church conflict resolution mechanism, 31.8% of the respondents said “YES”, but 45.2% of them said “NO”, whilst 16.7% said they do not know.

On the issue of revising the administrative structures of Assemblies of God, Ghana from the local church autonomy system to a centralized system, so as to reduce conflicts within the church to the barest minimum, 55.8% of the respondents agreed that it should be done but 39.5% disagreed whilst 4.7% were indifferent.

Again, the decision by almost all the respondents in respect of the fact that a church without a well written and generally accepted constitution does experience numerous conflicts as concluded above is very instructive because churches without well-written and generally accepted constitutions are very small churches. Therefore, for big churches like Assemblies of God, Ghana to be content in the “constitutional suit” of a small church is like sitting on an explosive or a very dangerous time bomb. Any church that behaves like that is like a fifteen year old who tries to fit into a six-year-old kid’s garment.

The decision by the majority (76.1%) of the respondents that all the three reasons given for which a small and harmless conflict in a local church could become very destructive is right. The reasons are:

1. When there are no laid down procedures for resolving conflicts in the church
2. When leaders take sides
3. When the disputing parties take entrenched positions

Unfortunately however, in most churches today, the leaders have little or no knowledge in conflict resolution and management mechanisms, hence they often resort to the “trial and error mechanisms” in the face of conflicts just as is done by politicians. For a church to harness conflicts, when they occur, for the benefit of its membership, she must develop conflict resolution and management experts in addition to the preventive mechanisms.

There is however no doubt that, intra-church conflicts are normal challenges every church face. This is confirmed by 97.7% of the respondents; but as to whether intra-church conflicts are good or bad, it was a decision too close to call (50% against 45% in favour of “good”). Indeed, whether an intra-

church conflict is good or bad is left to the judgement or perception of each individual observer. On the question of when intra-church conflicts become good or bad, none of the given reasons scored 50% or more. These again imply that all the suggested answers whether for good or bad are relevant. They include:

1. When they end up in a split or division of the church
2. When they are resolved amicably
3. When they bring hidden problems in the church to the fore
4. When they result in the growth of the church
5. When they drag on for many years
6. When they result in the gradual death of the church

The respondents' decision that intra-church conflicts are good when they bring hidden problems to the fore is true. It is also true that intra-church conflicts are bad when they lead to splits or divisions in the church and result in her gradual death.

The respondents' choice of arbitration and prayer as the conflict resolution and management mechanisms used in most churches today is in no doubt a true reflection of what really prevails even though only 26.7% of them chose it. When it came to the issue of what was the best conflict resolution and management mechanism for the church, majority of the respondents chose compromise and negotiation as against collaboration (confrontation), which was chosen by 24.5% of the respondents.

Further to that, out of the ten most commonly used conflict resolution and management mechanisms in the church, respondents chose Arbitration and Prayer as the most effective of the ten with an average score of 8.02%,

Prayer and Fasting as the second most effective with a score of 7.32%. Compromise (Negotiation), was identified as the third most effective mechanism with a score of 6.54% and Collaboration (Confrontation) coming fourth with a score of 5.61%.

It is however not surprising that the respondents chose arbitration and prayer, prayer and fasting, compromise and negotiation over collaboration (confrontation) because they are the easier options and that is what they know and are used to. From the literature review, we learnt from D'Souza and confirmed by Rothman, Weeks and Sande that collaboration (confrontation), which is "being high on both assertiveness and responsiveness" (D'Souza, 1994), is about the best mechanism in the resolution and management of conflicts.

The teachings of Jesus Christ confirm this position. In Matthew 5:23-24, Jesus Christ taught that when anyone is offering his gift on the altar (worshipping God) and remembers that his or her brother has sinned against him (not that he has sinned against his or her brother), he, the person offering the sacrifice or gift (the offended person), should leave the gift in front of the altar and first go and reconcile with the offending brother before returning to offer his sacrifice. That is an act of confronting the offending brother. It is neither compromise nor negotiation. So also in Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus taught that if your brother sins against you go and show him his fault just between the two of you. To go to an offending party and to look him straight in the face and to point out what he has done wrong to him is confrontation (collaboration). It is a bitter pill but it is the best conflict resolution and management mechanism. He went on to outline what to do when the offender

remains adamant. That is arbitration, negotiation and compromise. Finally, he taught that should the offending party continue to be adamant he should be treated like a pagan (an infidel). That is when the mechanism of avoidance (withdrawal) comes to play.

Collaboration (confrontation) enables the offended party to pour out his heart, and relieve himself of every bitterness and pain. It prevents him from fellowshiping with God when he has not been able to reconcile with his offending brother. It is between him and his offending brother alone. It also gives him the opportunity to forgive his brother so that his heavenly father could also forgive him his sins. This excellent method of conflict resolution and management has been abandoned for cheaper options that do not give the best results.

Suggesting that to prevent the recurring of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict in other local churches senior pastors should be transferred every three to four years, 42% of the respondents agreed with the suggestion, 35% however disagreed with it. 22% of the respondents were indifferent. Truly, an Assemblies of God pastor is not obliged to go on transfer even when he is directed to do so because the church does not believe in the policy of transferring pastors.

The transfer of pastors is a proactive conflict resolution and management mechanism. Even though the senior pastors in Assemblies of God, Ghana do not favour it, majority of the respondents chose it. It is common knowledge that familiarity breeds contempt and that the longer a pastor or public official (servant) stays at one station, the more he loses respect and credibility. It is therefore true that churches that practise the transfer of

pastors experience fewer conflicts between pastors and the congregants than those who do not.

The transfer of pastors is even more useful for churches where pastors do not have high academic training. By the time such a pastor becomes bereft of all the ideas and skills he had acquired, aside the gift of God in him, he is transferred and with a new congregation he has the opportunity to repeat what he did in the previous churches plus the experience he had acquired from them. He invariably becomes a better pastor as he moves from one congregation to another because he does not deal with the same group of people, in the same environment always; he deals with a new group of people every three or four years who help him to develop his ministry to diverse groups of people in different environments.

The Church of Pentecost, the Apostolic Church of Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist Church of Ghana and several other churches are very good examples of the positive use of the transfer of pastors as a proactive mechanism for conflict resolution and management.

The reasons why a good number of intra-church conflicts end up in splits and divisions are numerous and varied as confirmed by the respondents with 48.3%. Prominent among them are the facts that:

1. Many young pastors are self-seeking
2. Many young churches do not have well written constitutions
3. Many of those who end up breaking away have ulterior motives
4. Many of those who break away feel they are not given the opportunity to practise their calling satisfactorily.

Unresolved conflicts leave bitterness and revengeful feelings in the heart of disputants, especially the offended. They have the potential of growing into sectarian, inter-church, tribal, racial and national religious conflicts. Examples of such conflicts are: -

1. The Northern Ireland religious/political conflict between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants
2. The Dagbon conflict of Northern Ghana where descendants of two siblings, who are heirs to the same throne have continued in occasional violence against each other; a condition that has assumed a national dimension
3. The conflicts that occurred in Liberia, Sierra Leone, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and now in La Cote D'Ivoire are all examples of small conflicts that were not properly and satisfactorily resolved.

There is no doubt about the fact that intra-church conflicts and for that matter any conflict has negative impacts on its immediate and distant environments. A cursory look at the table of the impact of intra-church conflict on the local church, the denomination, the body of Christ and on the nation's socio-economic development (in chapter three) shows that the impact on the immediate environment is more devastating than the distant environment, which is a natural fact. It is for these reasons that the writer of Hebrews admonished that we should make every effort to live at peace with all men – Hebrews 12:14a. It is also for these same reasons that the Lord Jesus Christ prayed in John 17:20-23 thus, “that they all may be one.” It however appears that that prayer is far from being fulfilled.

As we conclude the critical look at the data from the questionnaires in comparison to those from the interviews, it is instructive to note that 87% of the respondents blame the conflict on Rev. James Obeng, his elders and the so called “Non-Assemblies of God doctrinal practices.” It is not surprising because as it were, most of them did not have first hand information on the events at ECAG and the information they got later on were obviously coloured, especially when it also got to them after the breakaway had happened. However, a small but significant 7.5% of the respondents got it correct that the conflict was really a small misunderstanding between the local church leadership and the organizational leadership led by Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore (the General Superintendent at that time).

Though only 7.5% of the respondents got this one correct; it is true that at the time of the conflict, all was not well between the senior pastor and some of his associates. Many might not be privy to this information, but the researcher got wind of this as he went about his work. It is a fact that not all of Rev. James Obeng’s associates were in agreement with him over his practices and he and his deacons who broke away knew those associates who did not only differ in opinions but who are believed to be informants of the General Superintendent.

Even though 63.8% of the respondents think the conflict was doctrinal, evidence from the interviews showed that it was a view held invariably by only one person (the General Superintendent); due to the information his informants had given him, he had a very strong suspicion that occultism was being practised. He believed the allegation to the extent that when an investigative committee, set up by the Regional Superintendent, absolved Rev.

James Obeng of any wrong doing but recommended that he should be cautioned against extremities, he shelved it and pursued his personal agenda of disciplinary action against the accused.

In fact, there was indeed no (open) factional conflict in ECAG until some members of the congregation declared that the local congregation had become independent of Assemblies of God, Ghana. The nature of the conflict was administrative and a personality clash. Consequently, the General Superintendent did not follow due process in the resolution of the conflict because there was no conflict to be resolved in the first place. There was rather a perceived act of doctrinal error, which rolled out finally as an act of indiscipline. The General Superintendent therefore, in an attempt to instil discipline and enforce correct doctrinal practices, began to flex his muscles to the extent that he believed what he had heard from an informant, who invariably had an axe to grind with his senior pastor, over and above a properly constituted investigative committee. He was therefore dominating (he was assertive but not responsive) and intimidating.

With regard to Rev. James Obeng 32.7% and 34.6% of the respondents indicated that he was also dominating and egoistic respectively. This was so because, having worked under Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore, Rev. James Obeng appeared to have known him too well to the extent that he had lost respect for him, more especially when, as his public relations officer, Rev. James Obeng was privy to certain lapses constituting the weaknesses of Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore. Consequently, he began to oppose his continuous re-election bids when it became a general perception that he (the General Superintendent) had run out of new ideas in the running of the affairs of the Church. Those occurrences

certainly began to create friction between Rev. James Obeng and Rev. Dr. Asore, who apparently began to keep an eye on Rev. James Obeng and his activities. Since he could not be at all places all the time, he needed extra eyes to do the surveillance for him hence the informants.

Those developments gave Rev. James Obeng the inkling that he was being watched and that it was just a matter of time for the unimaginable to happen. Consequently, he also became highly assertive and non-responsive (dominating; the readiness to defend himself to the hilt). As he defended and projected his style of ministry, he earned for himself more enemies as he unknowingly began to exhibit egoistic tendencies.

Having read almost all the correspondences between him and the General Superintendent, it is clear that he was not fairly treated. However, that was no good ground for Rev. James Obeng to accept the invitation from the breakaway faction of Evangel Church Assemblies of God, to become their senior pastor. That action of his confirmed whatever suspicions his opponents had about him and his activities. Rev. James Obeng does not look a dominating nor egoistic character on first contact but it would be naïve for anyone to suggest that he did not or does not exhibit those tendencies. Those tendencies are certainly the contributory factors to the failure of the resolution of the conflict between him and the General Superintendent.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is a fact that “Major conflicts have continued to rock and divide the church (the body of Christ) because; proper (effective and efficient) conflict resolution and management mechanisms have not been

adopted in addressing such conflicts.” Such proper or effective and efficient conflict resolution and management mechanism must necessarily include the following:

1. A very good governance framework – A well written constitution, which to a large extent prevents conflicts
2. The confession of the truth – the admission of wrong doing by the offender to facilitate genuine forgiveness and reconciliation by the offended.

In this regard, the entire Assemblies of God, Ghana denomination need to do an inward search and must call a spade a spade and not a big spoon. The cloak of pride need to be put aside and the church must be allowed to go through a complete reformation exercise perhaps over a period of five years.

The population sample and for that matter Christians all over the world believe that the conflicts we see in the church today would definitely cease one day and the body of Christ would be “one.” Whether that “one-day” is when Christ comes again or another does not matter much. The consoling fact, however, is that because it is the will of Christ, we are confident that the intra-church conflicts we see today, we shall one day see no more.

In the meantime, efforts need to be made to reduce drastically or if possible, to totally eliminate intra-church conflicts. That however cannot be done without what we may call pre-emptive mechanisms like:

1. Transparent church administration
2. Effective communication, education and information dissemination between leaders and members

3. Effective prayer and fasting programmes; because the church is a spiritual organisation
4. Effective and instructive Christian Education programmes
5. Small group or cell-based or house churches
6. Adequate remuneration, fringe benefits and end-of-service benefits for ministers and church workers
7. The identification and mentorship (discipleship) of young potential leaders in the church, who must be given all the support to develop their ministerial gifts to the highest level possible so that they can serve the church and humanity better when they assume leadership positions.
8. Regular reviews and revisions of church doctrines, traditions and constitutions to bring them into conformity with scripture.

The respondents believe that the pre-emptive conflict resolution and management mechanisms that must be employed first and foremost are effective communication (information dissemination between leaders and members) and for that matter transparent church administration, the reviewing and revision of the constitutions, doctrines and traditions of the church and education.

The respondents appear to be perfectly right in their determination of the pre-emptive mechanisms, especially, as far as Assemblies of God, Ghana is concerned. The bane of the problem in Assemblies of God, Ghana is a church administrative structure that is obsolete and evidently difficult to operate, coupled with the poor communication skills of its ministers, some doctrines and traditions that have become irrelevant and constitutional provisions of the church that have outlived their usefulness. This, however, is

the point of departure between the clergy and the laity in the church. It is instructive to note that whereas the clergy agree with the laity that the greatest challenges facing the church are the issues of communication (dissemination of information), transparent administration, and education, they do not agree that some doctrines, traditions and constitutional provisions of the church are obsolete and need to be reviewed and revised. The clergy rather believes that instead of tampering with the untouchable doctrines and traditions, the church must resort to effective prayer and fasting to resolve conflicts.

With regard to doctrines and traditions, it is sufficient to say that it is the deficiency in these doctrines and traditions that have caused the rise of the charismatic churches. The conflicts over doctrines and practice resulting in the breakaways that occurred in the formative years of the Assemblies of God denomination, as captured in chapter four are proof of this assertion and it is a phenomenon that continues to hunt the church today. Additionally, even though some senior pastors are strongly opposed to the review of the church's doctrines and traditions, the history of the church gives credence to the need for the review.

Rev. Dr. S. B. Asore need not give up on the push towards forgiveness and reconciliation with Rev. James Obeng and all others like him. Where necessary, an apology must be rendered to Rev. James Obeng and on the other hand Rev. James Obeng also needs to back down on his entrenched stand and allow a window of opportunity for reconciliation. He must also be able to apologize to the other side for endorsing the decision by his supporters to breakaway leading to the acceptance of the invitation to be their pastor.

To reactivate the conflict resolution mechanism of the church, its leaders need to admit their failure in properly resolving the ECAG conflict, after which steps must be taken to reconstitute the “Dispute Resolution Board” as an impartial, permanently functional and independent commission.

The “Dispute Resolution Board”, as it is currently enshrined in the church’s constitution is supposed to be an in-built intra-church conflict resolution and management mechanism but only 31.8% of the respondents know that the constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana has such an in-built mechanism. Unfortunately however, it does not pass the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threat) analysis test because:

1. It lacks strength: The strength of the mechanism lies in its activation. The activation of the mechanism is the institution of the committee or board as stipulated by the constitution. The information gathered during the interview indicated that that the committee or board has never been formed. However, whenever there is a conflict an ad-hoc arbitration committee is formed to mediate between the disputants.
2. It is very weak: This is due to the fact that the conflict resolution committee or board as stipulated by the constitution has never been put together and as such it does not exist as an independent functional body irrespective of who the General Superintendent is. The appointment of an arbitration committee, only when a conflict occurs makes it dependent on and loyal to the appointing authority that chooses and determines its members.
3. It has no opportunities: The mechanism has no opportunities to be tested because whenever there is a conflict the Executive Presbytery or

the General Superintendent invariably hijacks its resolution and management instead of referring it to the committee or board that does not exist anyway

4. It is threatened: The future of the mechanism is under threat because it only exists on paper. The very administrative system that created it is the threat to its existence. For as long as the administrative system of the church remains un-reformed, the conflict resolution and management mechanism of the church as enshrined in the church's constitution, would forever remain a dream.

One of the greatest miracles in the history of the body of Christ would be to see a breakaway group going back to reconcile and re-unite with the group it broke away from. That indeed remains a dream that may only become a reality when Jesus Christ returns – Ephesians 4:13-16. The effort to bring back the Evangel Church, Ghana into the fold of Assemblies of God, Ghana may continue but there is no known example in church history of such an occurrence.

In recent times, the church in Ghana has experienced several intra-church conflicts resulting in corresponding breakaways. In 1990, a doctrinal and constitutional conflict erupted in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana. The failure of the leaders of the church to resolve and manage that conflict properly resulted in the breakaway of a large chunk of pastors and members to form the “Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana.” After over ten years of several attempts to resolve the conflict, which included several court actions and counter court actions, the split in the church was deepened and finally sealed in August 2003, when the new church changed its name,

“Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana” and its logo, which was the same as that of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana to “Global Evangelical Church” with a new Logo to match it. This was after the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana had secured a court ruling restraining the breakaway group from using its name “Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana” in any form, no matter the re-arrangement or combination of the constituting words.

In the year 2003 the Christ Apostolic Church which had been grappling with a leadership crisis over a period of years experienced a major split when the outgoing General Secretary and acting Chairman of the Church, Rev. Dr. Annor-Yeboah immediately formed a new church called “Christian Praise International Centre” (Praise Chapel) and took with him a large chunk of the membership who were loyal to him and his ideals. This apparently was the result of a conflict between him and the leadership of the church headed by his successor – Rev. Michael Nimo.

In the months of June and July 2004, the Winners Chapel, which originated from Nigeria, was rocked by a very serious controversy that was played in the open. When the dust settled the church had split into two. The new or breakaway church, which incidentally had possession of the headquarters of the church in Ghana, is now under a new name – “Living Faith World Outreach Centre, Ghana (The Champions).”

The frequent occurrence of these conflicts in the church is a pointer to the fact that the church does not have effective and efficient conflict resolution and management mechanisms. They all resort to second rate mechanisms of arbitration (compromise and negotiation) and prayer instead of the first rate

mechanisms of a good administrative structure facilitated by a well written constitution, collaboration (confrontation), the confession of truth and good communication skills, which Jesus Christ taught and encouraged. Until the churches and for that matter the umbrella bodies of the various churches sit down to take the bull by the horn and make sure that every church adheres to the biblical standards for conflict resolution and management then the conflicts would be with us for a very long time.

All said and done, any conflict resolution and management mechanism without the blessing of God and the infusion of Godly principles has always failed. This therefore means that due to our limitation as human beings, we are not very good peacemakers and we need God in all our peacemaking efforts if we should succeed. He is the greatest peacemaker and reconciler – Ephesians 4:11-22, and 2Corinthians 5:17-21.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research that has confirmed the fact that churches in general do not have nor follow the appropriate conflict resolution and management mechanisms in addressing intra-church conflicts which has subsequently created the conditions necessary for more intra-church conflicts, it is important and necessary to make the following recommendations for the purpose of bringing the result of this research work to those whom it matter most and for further research.

1. The umbrella organizations of the various denominations need to institute further studies into the incidents of intra-church conflicts, their causes and solutions. That study must cover many more local churches

and denominations under the same umbrella organization. The results of such a study must be widely publicised and discussed with and in all local churches and denominations with the aim of sensitising them on conflicts in the church. The opportunity could also be used to train and equip selected members of the churches in conflict resolution and management.

2. Biblical and Theological Institutions also need to consider introducing courses in conflict resolution and management like it has been done by Central University College. It would enable young pastor trainees to either specialize in Conflict Resolution and Management or acquire basic knowledge in it, equipping them with the ability to deal with conflict situations in their own churches, denominations and in their communities.
3. With the increasing rate of conflicts in all human institutions like marriages, political parties, educational institution, work places, leadership teams, military installations, religious bodies, etc., it is just prudent for governmental and non-governmental agencies, national governments, regional and international bodies like the ECOWAS, African Union and the United Nations to sponsor the development of curricula on conflict resolution and management to be taught at all levels of education to enable every educated person to know the A, B, C, of conflict resolution and management.

Finally, having known the causes of and the solutions to intra-church conflicts, it would be just appropriate for a study to be conducted into why mega/meta churches in general remain united despite their large numerical

strength, but smaller churches whose numerical strengths are manageable are rather plagued by internal conflicts that almost always end up in break ups. Could it be that those so called meta/mega churches practise the principle of good governance that Jethro taught Moses in Exodus chapter 18?

REFERENCES

- Assemblies of God, Ghana - Head Office. (2004). *22nd Biennial General Council Meeting, 2002-2004 - Report and Programmes [Brochure]*. Accra: Assemblies of God Literature Centre.
- Assemblies of God, Ghana. (n.d.). *The Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accra, Ghana: Assemblies of God Literature Centre.
- Avorgah, J. K. (1988). *The history of Assemblies of God Church in Ghana - a research paper presented to the Department of History of Ghana Christian College & Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the course H3403-Church History*. Accra, Ghana.
- Baker, K. L. (Ed.). (2002). *NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Blumhofer, E. W. (1989). *Assemblies of God - a chapter in the story of American Pentecostalism - 1914 to 1941*. Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House.
- Brumbach, C. (1961). *Suddenly from heaven*. Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House.
- Cairns, E. E. (1981). *Christianity through the centuries - a history of the Christian church*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House.
- D'Souza, A. (1994). *Developing the leader within you*. Singapore: Haggai Centre for Advance Leadership Studies.

- Durkheim, E. (1974). *De la division du travail social*. (G. Simpson, Trans.)
Glencoe: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Evangel Church Assemblies of God. (2000). Dedication of new ECAG
sanctuary [Bochure]. Accra, Ghana: Assemblies of God Literature
Centre.
- Fernald, J. C. (Ed.). (1946). *The desk standard dictionary of English*. New
York and London: LHD Funk and Wagnalls Company.
- Franche, M. & Ebata, M. (2004). *Conflict prevention thematic guidance notes
- NHCR occasional paper 3*. New York: Human Development Unit.
- Goldthorpe, J. E. (1986). *An introduction to Sociology*. London: Cambridge
University Press.
- Halverstadt, H. F. (1991). *Managing church conflict*. Louisville: Westminster,
John Knox Press.
- Harkavy, M. (Ed.). (1996). *The webster's new encyclopedic dictionary*.
Kulturtrade.
- Heidel, A. (1949). *The gilgamesh epic and the Old Testament parallels*.
Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Larom, P. (1989). *A practical guide for Christian leaders*. Accra: African
Christian Press.
- Lee, P. K. (1993). *Add to your faith, excellence*. Hyderabad: Haggai Institute.
- Liardon, R. (1996). *God's generals*. Tulsa, Oklahoma: Albury Publishing.

- Murphy, Jim & Murphy, Carolyn. (2000). *An international ministers' manual*.
San Diego: Hundredfold Press.
- Parsons, T. (1966). *Societies: Evolutionary and comparative perspectives*.
Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Procter, P. (Ed.). (1995). *The Cambridge international dictionary of English*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rothman, J. (1997). *Resolving identity-based conflicts in nations,
organizations and communities*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Boss
Publishers.
- Salim, A. S. (1992). Resolving conflicts in Africa: Proposals for action - an
extract from the introductory remarks on the question of conflict
prevention, management and resolution in Africa. *OAU Secretary
General's Introductory Remarks During the 28th Ordinary Session of
the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments*. Darkar: OAU
Secretariat.
- Sande, K. (2004). *Peacemaker - a biblical guide to resolving personal
conflicts*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- Shaw, M. E. (1979). *Assertive-responsive management*. Reading, MA:
Addison-Wesley.
- Unger, M. F. (1966). *Unger's Bible handbook*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Voelkel, J. (1974). *Student evangelism in a world of revolution*. Michigan:
Zondervan Publishing House.

Webster, C. &. (Ed.). (1998). *The D. K. illustrated Oxford dictionary of English*. Oxford-London: Faber and Faber.

Weeks, D. (1992). *The eight essential steps to conflict resolution*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarczer/Putman.

Wilmington, H. L. (1981). *Wilmington's giude to the Bible*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers.

Wood, G. R. (1953). *Learning and living the Christian life*. London & Worthing: Henry E. Walter Ltd.

APPENDIX A

Main Research Questionnaire

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

M. PHIL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church
Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State -
A Case Study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of
God Conflict.

RESEARCHER: **JOHN KOFI AVORGAH (STM/GRS/01/003)**

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. You do not need to write your name on this questionnaire, hence no space is provided for it
2. Please answer the questions carefully and to the best of your ability (knowledge)
3. Please be objective as much as possible
4. This questionnaire is in two parts; I and II
 - a) Part I is on general issues related to Intra-church conflicts, their resolution and management
 - b) Part II is on the specific issue of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict, which is the subject of the case study of this research work

5. Please note the following definitions of certain key terms used in this questionnaire: -
- a) **Assertiveness:** - It is the attitude of standing up for personal rights through the expression of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in an open, direct, honest and appropriate ways that do not violate or infringe upon the rights of others
 - b) **Responsiveness:** - It is the opposite of assertiveness, an attitude of active and emphatic listening that asks for more information or feelings about the other person's needs, beliefs and viewpoints and showing the willingness to understand
 - c) **Dominating (Competing):** - It is the style of being high on assertiveness and low on responsiveness, exerting or using force to press home one's viewpoint at the expense of one's competitor.
 - d) **Accommodating (Smoothing):** - It is the style of being low on assertiveness but high on responsiveness. It is the opposite of dominating.
 - e) **Avoiding (Withdrawing):** - It is the style that is low on both assertiveness and responsiveness, withdrawing from and avoiding conflict situations.
 - f) **Compromising (Negotiating):** - It is the attitude that is mid-way between assertiveness and responsiveness.
 - g) **Collaborating (Confronting):** - It is the style that employs high assertiveness and high responsiveness to confront conflicting issues. It permits the conflicting parties to confront each other in the light of

the conflicting issue in order to reach a mutually satisfying solution.

Thank you.

John Kofi Avorgah

PART ONE

1. **The primary cause of most intra-church conflicts is (tick only one)**
 - a) Lack of effective communication
 - b) Doctrinal Differences
 - c) Spiritual/Demonic Attacks
 - d) Poor church administrative structures
 - e) Un-met needs and expectations of both leaders and members
 - f) Disagreements over policies and procedures
 - g) Financial ineptitude of leaders
 - h)

2. **The secondary cause of most intra-church conflicts is (tick only one)**
 - a) Lack of effective communication
 - b) Doctrinal differences
 - c) Spiritual/Demonic Attacks
 - d) Poor Church Administrative Structures
 - e) Un-met needs and expectations of both leaders and members
 - f) Disagreements over procedures
 - g) Financial ineptitude of leaders
 - h)

3. **Intra-church conflicts are normal challenges every church is bound to face.** a True b. False

4. **Intra-church conflicts are good** a. True b. False

5. **Intra-church conflicts are good when {tick one}**
 - a) They end up in a split or division of the church
 - b) They are resolved amicably

- c) They bring hidden problems in the church to the fore
 - d) They result in the growth of the church
6. **Intra-church conflicts are bad when {tick one}**
- a) They end up in a split or division of the church
 - b) They drag on for many years
 - c) They result in the gradual death of the church
 - d) They are resolved amicably
7. **A small and harmless conflict in a local church could become very destructive when {tick one}**
- a) There are no laid down procedures for resolving conflicts in the church
 - b) Leaders take sides
 - c) The disputing parties take entrenched stands
 - d) All of the above
8. **A church without a well written and generally accepted Constitution does experience numerous conflicts**
- a. True b. False
9. **For a Church to harness conflicts for the benefit of its membership she must develop conflict resolution and management experts who would always be called upon whenever there is a conflict.**
- a. True b. False
10. **In most churches today the leaders have little or no knowledge of conflict resolution and management mechanisms.** a. True b. False

11. **The conflict resolution and management mechanisms used in most churches today include the following {tick one or more}**

- a) Prayer alone
- b) Prayer and Fasting
- c) Compromise
- d) Collaboration/Confrontation
- e) Arbitration and Prayer
- f) Separation (Avoiding/Withdrawal)
- g) Public courts
- h) All of the above
- i)

12. **The best conflict resolution and management mechanism for the church is (tick only one)**

- a) Dominating
- b) Avoiding (Withdrawal)
- c) Collaborating (Confronting)
- d) Accommodating (Smoothing)
- e) Compromising or Negotiating (where disputants make concessions and back down half way on both their assertiveness and responsiveness)
- f) Going to the public courts
- g) Resorting to prayer and fasting for divine intervention

13. **Churches in which Pastors are not transferred do experience more conflicts between Pastors and congregants than churches that practice the transfer of Pastors. a. True b. False**

14. **Churches that practice the transfer of Pastors after a maximum of three to four years' stay at one station have fewer conflicts between Pastors and congregants.** a. True b. False
15. **The transfer of Pastors is a conflict resolution and management mechanism** a. True b. False
16. **Quite a good number of intra-church conflicts end up in splits and divisions because {tick one or more}**
- h) Many young pastors are self-seeking
 - i) Many young churches do not have well written constitutions
 - j) Many of those who end up breaking away have ulterior motives
 - k) Many of those who break away feel they are not given the opportunity to practice their calling satisfactorily
 - l) All of the above
 - m)
17. **The Lord's (Jesus Christ) prayer in John 17 "that they all may be one" {tick one}**
- a) Would be fulfilled one day.
 - b) Would never be fulfilled.
 - c) Would only be fulfilled when Christ comes again.
 - d) Has been fulfilled already
18. **The following conflict resolution and management mechanisms have been used in addressing several intra-church conflicts in the past. Please rate these mechanisms on the scale of one (1) to ten (10), where one means very weak or ineffective and ten means very strong or effective. (Circle only one number per roll)**

- a) Prayer and Fasting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- b) Public Law court 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- c) Arbitration and prayer 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- d) Separation (Break away) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- e) Collaboration (confronting the issues) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- f) Accommodation (Smoothing) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- g) Compromising (Negotiating) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- h) Avoiding (withdrawing) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- i) Dominating (Competing) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- j) Intimidating opponents 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

19. **Unresolved intra-church conflicts can escalate into a National Religious Conflict** a. True b. False
20. **Any conflict resolution and management mechanism without the blessing of God and the infusion of Godly principles is bound to fail.** a. True b. False
21. **Which of the following is the most significant impact of intra-church conflict on a (1) Local church congregation (2) Denomination (3) The body of Christ in a nation (4) The socio-economic development of a nation?** (Use numbers 0–10 to indicate the intensity of the impact).

NO:	THE IMPACT OF INTRA-CHURCH CONFLICTS	ON THE LOCAL CHURCH	ON THE DENOMINATION	ON THE BODY OF CHRIST IN A NATION	A NATION'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEV.
1.	Indiscipline				
2	Non-forgiveness				
3.	Division				
4.	Rebellion				
5.	Immorality (Social vices)				
6.	Mushrooming of Churches				
7.	False Doctrines				
8.	Church Growth				
9.	Unity				
10	Religious conflicts				
11.	Mistrusts				
12.	Respect for Authority				

22. **To reduce or totally eliminate intra-church conflicts, which of the following mechanisms must be employed?**

- a) Transparent church administration
- b) Effective communication, education and information dissemination between leadership and members
- c) Effective Prayer and Fasting programmes
- d) Effective and productive Christian Education programmes should be run

- e) Small Group or cell-based or house churches should be encouraged
- f) Church leaders should be properly remunerated
- g) Young leaders should be identified and mentored and when mature enough, new (branch) churches must be opened for them
- h) Church doctrines and traditions must be reviewed from time to time to accommodate new ideas and views

PART TWO

1. **How old are you Sir/Madam?**
2. **What is your sex? a. Male b. Female**
3. **Which of the following Christian denominational blocks do you belong to? a. Catholic b. Protestant c. Pentecostal d. Charismatic e. Any other.....**
4. **How long have you been a Christian?**
5. **Do you know of Assemblies of God, Ghana? a. Yes b. No**
6. **Are you a member of Assemblies of God, Ghana? a. Yes b. No**
7. **Are you still a member of Assemblies of God, Ghana? a. Yes b. No**
8. **Do/Did you hold a leadership position in Assemblies of God, either at the Local Congregation, District, Regional, or National level a. Yes b. No**
9. **Where do you live?**
10. **Do you know of Evangel Church Assemblies of God (it used to be located at Adabraka near Avenida Hotel, Accra)? a. Yes b. No**

11. **Have you ever worshipped in the above Church?** a. Yes b. No
12. **Were you ever a member of Evangel Church Assemblies of God?**
a. Yes b. No
13. **Were you a leader in that Church?** a. Yes b. No
14. **Do you know of the conflict, which rocked the church in the recent past, leaving the church currently divided?** a. Yes b. No
15. **When (year and Month) did the conflict start? (Be as accurate as your memory can help you).**
16. **In your independent opinion what or who was the original cause of the conflict?**.....
(Not more than ten words)
17. **Do you think the leaders of Evangel Church Assemblies of God managed the conflict properly?** a. Yes b. No
18. **Was the conflict brought before the District Pastor before it went to the General Superintendent of Assemblies of God, Ghana?**
a. Yes b. No. c. I do not know
19. **Did the District Pastor, Rev. Akwaka and the District Executives make any attempt to mediate in the conflict?** a. Yes b. No
c. I do not know
20. **Did the District Pastor officially inform the Regional Superintendent of the conflict before the General Superintendent was officially informed?** a. Yes b. No c. I do not know

21. **Was it the then Regional Superintendent, Rev. William W. Dontoh, who officially informed the General Superintendent of the conflict?**
a. Yes b. No c. I do not know
22. **Did the then General Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Simon B. Asore, consult with the Regional Superintendent to ascertain the facts of the report on the conflict in the Evangel Church Assemblies of God, when it came to him?** a. Yes b. No c. I do not know
23. **Did the General Superintendent in the resolution and management of the conflict follow due process; where due process means he ensuring that the conflict had gone before the District Pastor and the Regional Superintendent before coming to him?** a. Yes b. No
c. I do not know
24. **How many associate/assistant Pastors did the Pastor of Evangel Church have at the time of the conflict, if any at all?** a. 1 b. 2 c. 3
d. 4 e. 5 f. 6 g. 7 h. 8 i. 9 j.10
25. **Was the relationship between the Senior Pastor and his associates good at the time of the conflict?** a. Yes b. No c. I do not know
26. **What was the nature of the conflict that occurred in Evangel Church? {Tick one or more}**
- a) Doctrinal
 - b) Administrative
 - c) Financial issues
 - d) Constitutional
 - e) Ministerial
 - f) Personality

g)

27. **What conflict resolution and management mechanisms did the General Superintendent employ in addressing the conflict? (Tick any point that is applicable)**

- a) Prayer and Fasting
- b) Arbitration
- c) Dominating (asserting his authority as General Superintendent; not ready to listen to any explanation)
- d) Collaborating (confronting the person at the centre of the conflict and the substance of the conflict - being both assertive and responsive)
- e) Avoiding (withdrawing from the issue - neither being assertive nor responsive).
- f) Accommodating (Being responsive - ready to listen to the other person's explanations)
- g) Compromising (Negotiating with the disputing parties for an amicable settlement)

28. **How did the Senior Pastor of Evangel Church contribute to the failure of the resolution and management of the conflict? (Tick every point that is applicable)**

- a) He prayed and fasted
- b) He was Dominating (Competing) - assertive but not responsive
- c) He was collaborative (assertive and responsive)
- d) He was avoiding (withdrawing and evasive)
- e) He was accommodating (responsive but not assertive)

- f) He was compromising (partially assertive and partially responsive)
 - g) He was egoistic
29. **What conflict resolution and management mechanism did the Senior Pastor of Evangel church himself use to address the conflict between himself and members of his congregation and his associate pastors who disagreed with him? (Tick every point that is applicable)**
- a) He prayed and fasted for them
 - b) He was dominating and uncompromising
 - c) He was collaborative (assertive but responsive)
 - d) He was avoiding (withdrawing, evasive)
 - e) Has was accommodating
 - f) He was compromising
 - g) He was egoistic
30. **How did the factions in the Evangel Church contribute to the escalation of the conflict (Tick every point that is applicable)**
- a) They prayed and fasted
 - b) They were dominating and uncompromising
 - c) They were collaborative (assertive but responsive)
 - d) They were avoiding, withdrawing and evasive
 - e) They were accommodating
 - f) They were compromising
 - g) They were egoistic

31. **How would you categorize the leadership style of Rev. Dr. Simon B. Asore? (Tick only one)**
- a) Dominating
 - b) Accommodating
 - c) Avoiding
 - d) Compromising
 - e) Collaborating
32. **How would you categorize the leadership style of Rev. James Obeng? (Tick only one)**
- a) Dominating
 - b) Accommodating
 - c) Avoiding
 - d) Compromising
 - e) Collaborating
33. **Does the Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana have any efficient in-built intra-church conflict resolution mechanism?**
- a. Yes b. No c. I do not know
34. **The inadequacies in the administrative structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana are recipes for intra-church conflicts.** a. True b. False
35. **To prevent the Evangel Church conflict from recurring in other congregations again, Senior Pastors in the Assemblies of God congregations should be transferred every 3 to 4 years.**
- a. Agreed b. Disagreed c. Indifferent

36. **As a lasting solution to the intra-church conflicts, the Assemblies of God, Ghana constitution must be revised to conform to the current trends in church administration.** a. Agreed b. Disagreed
c. Indifferent

37. **In your opinion should the effort to bring the breakaway group, under the leadership of Rev. James Obeng, back into the fold of Assemblies of God, Ghana continue?** a. Yes b. No

38. **What lessons have you personally learnt from the Evangel Church Assemblies of God conflict and its implications for intra-church conflict resolution and management?**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

APPENDIX B

Interview Synopsis B1

Interview with Rev. Dr. Simon B. Asore

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

M. PHIL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church
Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State -
A case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of
God Conflict.

RESEARCHER: **JOHN KOFI AVORGAH (STM/GRS/01/003)**

1. What are the major intra-church conflicts that have occurred in Assemblies of God, Ghana since its beginning?
2. How many of those conflicts happened during your tenure of office as General Superintendent?
3. What has been the single most common cause of all the conflicts in Assemblies of God, Ghana and why?
4. What has been the outcome of those conflicts, especially the major ones?
5. What conflict resolution mechanisms were adopted to resolve those conflicts especially those that occurred during your stewardship as General Superintendent?

6. I have discovered that Article 29 of the 2000 Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana, deals with conflict or dispute resolution. Please has that mechanism been used in the resolution of conflicts in the church and in which cases if yes?
7. When did the last Evangel Church conflict start?
8. I understand that Evangel Church Assemblies of God is noted for doctrinal conflicts. If it is true what is your comment?
9. When and how did you get to know of the last conflict?
10. What were the causes of the conflict (the remote and immediate causes)?
11. Did the conflict go through the prescribed procedure for dispute resolution (according to article 29 of the 2000 Constitution) before getting to you?
12. When the information about the conflict got to you, what did you do?
13. Did you follow due process in your attempt to resolve the conflict?
14. Did you refer the dispute to the dispute resolution board? If no why?
15. What role did disciplinary action play in your effort to resolve the conflict?
16. Are you Sir, pleased with the outcome of the Evangel Church conflict? Why?
17. What went wrong or was not done properly in resolving the conflict?
18. If you had another chance to oversee the resolution of the Evangel Church conflict, what would you do differently?
19. What in the Assemblies of God, Ghana Constitution and or system of Administration is a major recipe for intra-church conflict?

20. If you had your way what would you do or advise your successor(s) to do to eliminate or reduce to the barest minimum conflicts within the church?
21. What do you think about the transfer of pastors as a conflict resolution mechanism?

Thank you Sir and God richly bless you.

John K. Avorgah

Interview Synopsis B2

Interview with Rev. W. W. Dontoh

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

M. PHIL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church
Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State -
A case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of
God Conflict.

RESEARCHER: **JOHN KOFI AVORGAH (STM/GRS/01/003)**

-
1. Could you please mention some major conflicts that have occurred in the history of Assemblies of God, Ghana, since you joined the church?
 2. How did those conflicts affect the church?
 3. How were they resolved?
 4. What was the single most common cause of those conflicts?
 5. During your tenure of office as the Greater Accra Regional superintendent what were the major conflicts that occurred in the church?
 6. Which churches in the region are the most conflict prone churches and why?
 7. Article 29 of the 2000 Constitution is the church's only conflict resolution mechanism. Has it been fully operational?

8. You were the Greater Accra Regional superintendent when the Evangel Church conflict began. When and how did you get to know of it?
9. How did the District Committee, according to article 29 of the constitution mediate in the conflict before you were informed?
10. When you got to know of the conflict, what did you, as the Regional Superintendent do about it in accordance with article 29?
11. Who first informed the General Superintendent and the Executive Presbytery of the Evangel Church conflict?
12. In the effort to resolve the conflict was due process followed in accordance with article 29 of the constitution?
13. What was the nature of the conflict? (Was it doctrinal, personality clash, financial, administrative, etc?).
14. Why was the conflict not amicably resolved, resulting in the division of the church?
15. Looking back, what was done which should not have been done and what was not done which should have been done?
16. As the incumbent General Superintendent, what policies have you put in place or you plan to put in place to dispassionately, impartially and amicably resolve conflicts so as to avoid divisions and breakaways?
17. What do you think about the transfer of pastors as a conflict resolution mechanism?
18. Do you not think that the current administrative structure of Assemblies of God, Ghana, is a recipe for intra-church conflicts? Explain.

Thank you and God bless you Sir.

John K. Avorgah

Interview Synopsis B3

Interview with Rev. James Obeng

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

M. PHIL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church
Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State -
A case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of
God Conflict.

RESEARCHER: **JOHN KOFI AVORGAH (STM/GRS/01/003)**

1. When did you assume duty as the resident pastor of Evangel Church Assemblies of God?
2. Who was your immediate predecessor?
3. How long did your predecessor serve as the resident pastor of Evangel Church before you succeeded him?
4. Was your predecessor a member of Evangel Church before he became a pastor?
5. Were you a member of Evangel Church before you became a pastor?
6. Where did you train as a pastor or minister of the Gospel?
7. Did you and do you still believe in all that Assemblies of God, Ghana believes in?
8. For how many years were you an Assemblies of God Minister?

9. Was Evangel Church your first and only station? If “No” why?
10. Before the last conflict at Evangel Church had you encountered any conflict like that?
11. When did the last conflict at Evangel Church start?
12. What type of conflict was it and what were the bones of contention?
13. As the Senior Pastor of the church what did you do to resolve the conflict?
14. Since you were at the centre of the conflict, did you follow due process (in accordance with article 29 of the 2000 Constitution of Assemblies of God, Ghana) to resolve the conflict?
15. Was the district pastor duly informed about the conflict and if yes who informed him?
16. What did the district pastor do about the conflict when he heard of it?
17. Between the district pastor, the Regional Superintendent, and the General Superintendent who was informed first and by whom?
18. Which of the three officers mentioned above acted first in relation to the conflict?
19. Was due process followed in the entire effort to resolve the conflict?
20. Was the Dispute Resolution Board, according article 29 of the Constitution, tasked with the responsibility of discharging its constitutionally mandated task of resolving the Evangel Church conflict?
21. Why was the conflict not resolved amicably?
22. At the end of the day what or who was responsible for the division in the church? (Was it the original intra-church conflict at Evangel Church or

the conflict between you and the leadership of Assemblies of God, Ghana?)

23. From hindsight is there, at least one thing you can point out that you did not do well in the build up to the conflict, and the effort to resolve it?
24. Would you accept full responsibility for the break-up of Evangel Church? Explain.
25. At whose doorstep should the blame be laid?
26. What is your greatest regret as far as the Evangel Church conflict is concerned?
27. Would you at anytime consider reconciliation and re-union with Assemblies of God, Ghana?

Thank you Sir and God bless you.

John K. Avorgah

Interview Synopsis B4

Interview with Rev. Gaylord Aidoo-Dadzie

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

M. PHIL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church
Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State -
A case study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of
God Conflict.

RESEARCHER: **JOHN KOFI AVORGAH (STM/GRS/01/003)**

1. Sir, I believe you have a fair idea of the major conflicts that have occurred in Assemblies of God, Ghana since 1931. About how many are they in all?
2. In which churches did they occur and what were the natures of those conflicts?
3. How were they resolved and what was the outcome in each of those cases?
4. What accounts for the frequency of such conflicts in Assemblies of God, Ghana?
5. To what extent has those conflicts hindered or slowed down the growth of the church?

6. Sir, many people within and without Assemblies of God, Ghana, including pastors, deacons, and members who have been following developments in the church over the years believe that the bane of the Church's troubles including conflicts is its administrative or governing structure. What do you have to say to that?
7. The history of Assemblies of God shows that it was not founded by one particular individual but independent Pentecostal churches came together in April 1914 to form the church hence its semi-autonomous, loose-affiliate structure. After ninety years in the history of the church, when it is no longer independent churches coming together to form its new branches, but it is rather local congregations and district churches who are planting and opening new branches, is the church's semi-autonomous and loose-affiliate structure still relevant? Please explain.
8. Sir, it is observed that the decentralized financial administration of the church has made the local churches, especially those located in cities and towns, very rich, while the headquarters and churches located in the rural area are poor. Why?

Thank you and God bless you.

John K. Avorgah

APPENDIX C

Letters Requesting Interview

Letter C1

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW YOU
AS PART OF MY RESEARCH WORK**

I am a graduate student of Central University College with student's I. D. number STM/GRS/01/003, reading the Master of Philosophy Degree in Religious Studies.

I am also the Youth Pastor of Assemblies of God, Ghana, Tema Christian Centre (behind the Valco Flats – Community 12, Tema).

For my thesis, I am researching on the topic “The Resolution and Management of Intra-Church Conflicts and its Implications for Church and State – A Case Study of the Evangel Church Assemblies of God Conflict’.

I wish therefore to interview you generally on the resolution and management of intra-church conflicts in Assemblies of God, Ghana and specifically on the Evangel Church Conflict.

Please find attached the synopsis of the key questions I intend to ask you. I may also ask you subsidiary questions that may arise on the spur of the moment and out of the answers you may give to the major questions. The interview would be tape-recorded and later transcribed. The duration of the interview would be about one hour.

Thank you for accepting to assist me.

God richly bless you.

Yours sincerely,

John Kofi Avorgah

Letter C2

Dear Sir,

RE: INTERVIEW ON THE MAJOR CONFLICTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, GHANA SINCE 1931

Following the last discussion I had with you, it has become imperative for me to come back to you for more information on the major conflicts that have occurred in Assemblies of God, Ghana since there is no documentation on them.

Attached is the synopsis of the questions I intend to put to you. I may also ask supplementary questions emanating from some of the answers you would give.

I am proposing two possible dates for the interview, for your consideration so that you could choose the most suitable one. The dates are:

1. Monday, May 10 (in your residence-Tema at 10.00 a.m.)
2. Wednesday, May 12 (in your office at the head-office, after my interview with the General Superintendent at 11.00 a.m.)

I will call you on Sunday, May 9, in the evening to confirm the appointment as well as the exact date you have chosen.

Thank you and God bless you for the assistance you are giving me.

Yours sincerely,

John Kofi Avorgah