Strategies Used to Minimize Conflicts in The Church in Bungoma

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Abstract- **Conflicts can be destructive in nature, every organization, from corporations to non-profits, from schools to churches; can be transformed by learning to embrace conflict and to develop innovative strategies for organizational transformation. The purpose of this study was to identify strategies used to minimize conflicts in PEFA church in Bungoma County. This study was guided by the instrumentalism and constructivism theory, which helped in identifying structural and institutional characteristics of PEFA church. The findings revealed that Pastors encourage their church members to attend special interdenominational meetings like crusades to demonstrate universality of the body of Christ, adherence to the great commission and fighting denominational mind-set. The study also found out from elders that PEFA churches have organized institutional means for conflict resolution such as board of elders basically on departmental levels such as women, men and youth, though sometimes these institutionalized strategies are never enforced equally. Formation of Home Cell Groups (HCGs) aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationship, spiritual growth and socio-economic welfare among members hence some of the conflicts are handled by the HCG leaders. Majority of bishops observed that the process of resolving doctrinal differences was based on Biblical principles. Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn in line with the study objectives. The study revealed that youth have established their own ways of minimizing conflicts through drawing programs that address potential and already existing issues that affect them and they are allowed by some of their pastors to invite other youths with good moral standing to give spiritual and motivational talks. Through formation of board of elders every church has empowered every departmental head to resolve conflicts without involving the pastoral team or board of elders. In addition, departmental heads are free to come up with need based programs to address emerging issues within their jurisdiction and such programs are fully supported by the church board. That the formation of Home Cell Groups (HCGs) was aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationship, spiritual growth and socio-economic welfare among members hence, some of the conflicts are handled by the HCG leaders. Finally the study established that the process of resolving doctrinal differences was based on Biblical principles. The study recommends that the church should form disciplinary committees to handle conflict at every level.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts can be destructive in nature, every organization, from corporations to non-profits, from schools to churches; can be transformed by learning to embrace conflict and to develop innovative strategies for organizational transformation. Transformation is not minor, linear or transitory. It means allowing what is stuck in the past to die in order that the present and future might live (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2005). There are innumerable techniques, methods, approaches and processes that can lead to transformation. Cloke and Goldsmith , authors of *Resolving Conflict at Work,* suggest eight strategies to transformation that are intentional in nature as outlined ; first, change the culture and context of conflict, second, listen actively, empathetically, and responsively, third, acknowledge and integrate emotions to solve problems, fourth, search beneath the surface for hidden meaning ,fifth, separate what matters from what gets in the way; sixth, stop rewarding and learn from difficult behaviors, seventh, solve problems creatively, plan strategically and negotiate collaboratively. And lastly, explore resistance, mediate and design systems for prevention and resolution.

In conflict, negotiation is important to openly negotiate for both quantities and qualities. If you care

about the people on the other side of your conflict you cannot afford to negotiate only for quantities (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2005). In negotiating quantities and qualities, there are two fundamentally differing negotiation styles. Aggressive negotiators will move against their opponents in a competitive struggle for power; and collaborative negotiators will adopt a learning orientation to problem solving and move towards their opponent in an effort at improvement and win-win outcomes (Cloke & Goldsmith, 2005).

Cloke & Goldsmith (2005), reference the following reasons for negotiating conflict: first, your goals are moderately important but can be satisfied by less than total agreement, second, your opponents have equal power, and you are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals, you need to achieve a temporary settlement of complex issues; third, you need a quick solution and the exact content does not matter as much as the speed with which it is reached; and fifth, your efforts at either competition or collaboration have failed, and you need a backup exit, voice and loyalty strategies.

When the performance of a firm or an organization is assumed to be subject to deterioration for unspecified, random causes, leadership finds out about the failings via two alternative routes as cited in Hirschman (1970): firstly, some customers stop buying the firm's products or some members leave the organization, this is the exit option. As a result, revenues drop, membership declines, and management is impelled to search for ways and means to correct whatever faults have led to exit. Secondly, the firm's customers or the organization's members express their dissatisfaction directly to management or to some other authority to which management is subordinate or through general protest addressed to anyone who cares to listen: this is the voice option. As a result, management once again engages in a search for the causes and possible cures of customers' and members' dissatisfaction.

Loyalty is a third key concept in the battle between exit and voice; members may be locked into their organizations a little longer and thus use the voice option with greater determination and resourcefulness than would otherwise be the case. While loyalty postpones exit, its very existence is predicated on the possibility of exit. A pastor is most often forced out of

ministry due to lack of success at resolving differences with other people within the church (Sande, 2004). The Christianity Today International study further revealed that forty five percent of pastors who were forced out of the church think they could have done more to avoid being forced out, resolving conflict was the primary action pastors wished they had taken sooner and pastors reported conflict management as the area of training most lacking in their seminary or Bible college education (Barfoot *et al.*, 1997).

Conflict can be the result of a violation of shared expectations, or conflict can result from the clash of two fundamentally different sets of expectations for behavior (Becker, 1999). Previous research shows that congregational conflicts arise over issues of congregational culture, leadership, and denomination (Becker, 1999; Chou, 2008); theology, purpose, and meaning (Hadden, 1970);liberalism versus conservatism (Becker, 1999; Haden, 1970); and beliefs and authority (Hoge, 1976). When any of one these factors are compromised by leadership, it plays a significant role as to why people feel their religious understandings are misaligned and conflict occurs.

Each year thousands of pastors leave their churches, leading to an astronomical cost of $684 million a year (Sande, 2004). According to him, most congregations have not been properly equipped to deal with conflict, so when a pastor who is equally unprepared in conflict management enters into such a church, the stage is set for agonizing conflict and disunity. The church cannot afford to let these losses continue. This study seeks to find a relationship between church conflict management style and positive energy growth for unity within the church.

De Gruchy and Martin (1994) in their book; *Religion d the Reconstruction of Civil Society,* say that there is the need to develop an approach to conflict mediation and such a perspective is reflected in their definition; which states that conflict resolution and peacemaking involves a restrict using of relationship, a transition from an order based on voluntarism from a relationship characterized by hierarchy to one marked by equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth (De Gruchy & Martin, 1994). They pointed out that this restriction of human relationship is the process of reconciliation which creates a new

community, a new social order. The social order is to be based on equal dignity, love, mutual respect, freedom and a radical sense of tolerance. They went on to say that one goal of conflict mediation is to promote collective problems solving especially in strife torn communities. They reckoned that the restoration of broken relationship is incomplete if it does not affirm the human rights agenda.

Horowitz & Bordens (1995) Social Psychology, record some scholars who dealt with how conflict could be resolved. They indicated (Rubin and Brown, 1975) to have said that to solve conflict through negotiation, the parties involved in a conflict must be ready to exchange views, clarify their positions and propose solutions. Each side presents its demands or proposals for evaluation by the other side, which in turn presents counter demands or counter proposals. Horowitz and Bordens again quoted Deutsch and Krauss (1962) by stating that one of the functions of negotiation is to get the parties to communicate. This implied that if the parties to a conflict can just start talking, they will be able to work out a solution.

Adeyemo (2006) in his article entitled *Conflict Management* writes that when conflicts are not well handled, they can seriously damage a relationship, divide a nation, destroy an organization and demoralize the people involved. Improper handling of the conflict between Barnabas and Paul in regard to John Mark led to the division of the missionary team (Acts 15:36-41). He goes on to say that in resolving any conflict, there should be honest communication, silence and isolation only deepen misunderstanding which fuels conflict. In Genesis 13:1-18, Abram did not gloss over the potential for quarrels between his herdsmen and those of Lot. He discussed it openly with Lot and developed an appropriate strategy to deal with it. For Adeyemo (2006), negotiation is the best way to find peace through a process of give and take in which neither party to the conflict insists on being the winner. The events of 1 Kings 12 in the Bible show the disastrous consequences of Rehoboam's unwillingness to negotiate. To unravel these mitigating factors within PEFA in Bungoma will be the major concern of this study. The proposed study will also seek to establish the mechanisms that PEFA will utilize in enhancing church conflict tolerance in

Bungoma County in addressing church conflict and unity on growth and development.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed Instrumentalism and constructivism theory. Instrumentalism is a pragmatic philosophical approach which regards an activity chiefly as an instrument or tool for some practical purpose, rather than in more absolute or ideal terms. This theory states that every truth has practical consequences that are the test of its truthfulness. The theory is associated with the American philosopher William James (1842). He defined the truth as "only the expedient in our way of thinking." In religious terms, what justifies a creed or ritual is its ability to satisfy psychological needs and generate useful values for society. Instrumentalism believes that identity is a fluid and a constantly changing phenomenon, and views group identification as a preference. The ideology for instrumentalism might be 'I do what I do because I know what I want'. This is an attractive way of understanding identity because it is consistent with liberalism and consumerism. It easily explains how conversion and assimilation work, and can allow for group of people to act in different ways when encountering different circumstances. Ideas are 'instruments used by people to guide them in reorganizing their environment and initiating new lines of action. Instrumentalism emphasizes ends or goals in social processes.

Social constructs are generally understood to be the by-products of countless human choices rather than laws resulting from divine will or nature. Social constructionism (also called constructivism) is opposed to primordialism, which instead defines specific phenomena in terms of inherent and trans-historical essences independent of conscious beings that determine the categorical structure of reality. Constructivism is a theory founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. A major focus of social constructionism is to uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena are created, institutionalized, known and made into tradition by humans. The social construction of reality

is an on-going, dynamic process that is (and must be) reproduced by people acting on their interpretations and their knowledge of it. Constructivists deem that individual preferences extend beyond material interests to encompass spiritual and collective goods. Groups arise, crystallize, decay and even disappear as identifiable units under certain historical conditions (Chandra, 2006). Although the theory of constructivism is quite relevant in explaining the rise of Church identities, it does not give enough information about conflict in the church thus giving room for the theory of instrumentalism to be applied. Pentecostal Church Leaders foment conflict to build support; this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favour more conflict (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Members of marginalized categories or individual dissidents may quietly subvert or loudly protest common assumptions about particular categories. Their actions may then result in construction of new or altered identities, which themselves give rise to new groups as stated by Miguel (2009).

The instrumentalist theory of knowledge states that 'the activities of thinking and knowing occur when an organism experiences conflict within a specific situation'. As such, ideas are something of an action plan which themselves function as instruments by seeking to resolve or negotiate contingencies. Church Leaders select and frame aspects of existing cultural repertoire to differentiate one group from another and build internal cohesion within a group. These cultural aspects can then be called upon to create a spiritual identity used to assert and acquire spiritual power, economic benefits and social status for members of the group or the group as a whole, this mighty be a recipe for conflict in Pentecostal Churches. Even when church identity is preferred, an individual may, within limits, change from one church category to another. In everyday social interaction, church often appears in an instrumental guise, as a group weapon in the pursuit of material advantage; thus its activation is contingent, situational and circumstantial (Chandra, 2006). However, many of the properties commonly associated with Pentecostal church identities in our explanatory theories do not characterize the identities that we classify as Pentecostals in general, although they may apply to particular subsets of these identities. These properties include common constitution,

common church structure, common church practices, common culture (Chandra, 2006).

Under the theory of constructionism, membership's criteria are contingent upon the participating members themselves who create and develop ideas conducive to group formation in relation to others. Constructivism and instrumentalism emphasizes mutability, freedom and goals in the formation of group identities (Laitin, 2001). Shared interests and shared identities promote group solidarity and thereby provide the basis for organization and mobilization (Hempel, 2004). This theory is relevant to the current study; it explores conflict and unity in the church specifically PEFA, where groups disharmony undermines growth and development.

III. THE STRATEGIES

The study sought to find out existing strategies used to resolve conflict in PEFA church. Majority of bishops said that PEFA church has put in place ways of identifying conflicts such as formation of disciplinary committee, subcommittees and procedures to handle conflict from the National to the district level also known as PEFA cathedral as indicated in the reviewed constitution (2018):

> *Each PEFA cathedral shall, subject to sub Article 2.1 have the mandate, as will deem necessary to take any disciplinary action against any of their members or group of individuals in accordance to this constitution and as laid down in Article11 of the PEFA bylaws 2018.*

From the above constitutional mandate, it implies that in the event that the PEFA cathedral shall fail to settle a dispute, the matter would then be referred to the Regional Executive Board for mediation. The bishops further explained that should the Regional Executive Board fail to mediate the dispute, the same shall be referred to the National Executive Council, whose decision shall be final. Particular conflict management strategies have their advantages and disadvantages and are more or less effective depending on the type of conflict and the situation or context in which the conflict occurs (Lewicki et al, 2003, Sande et al, 2006) cited by(Brockman et al,2010).Thus, if conflicts are not resolved promptly in marriages, churches,

communities and nations, informal groups may develop to handle the situation, which may escalate the crises to the extent that the institution may be adversely affected. Hence, in the interest of social harmony, there is need to suppress conflict (Adebayo, 2000).This study established that PEFA as one of the Pentecostal churches in Bungoma County participates in a wide range of conflict strategies within its confines.

In addition, closely knit fellowship among the believers and different partnerships with other churches was cited by most bishops and pastors as exemplified below:

> The PEFA fraternity is a member of Bungoma bishops and pastors Fellowship for all evangelical and Pentecostal churches which operates as duly registered organization with elected officials (source; O.I Bishop, Bungoma PEFA church).

From the excerpt it is clear that PEFA church is completely devoted to the invisible unity that exists among the believers through the Holy Spirit. Bungoma pastors and bishops of Pentecostal churches formed a fellowship in 1990s with an aim of finding diverse ways of conflict management and resolution. This was because the frequency of wrangles and divisions in PEFA Churches had escalated to the detriment of its growth and development. s

From FGD with women leaders, it was reported Pentecostal churches are faced with a common enemy stemming from leadership struggles, doctrinal differences, management problems and theological challenges. Hence there are efforts made through activities that are conducted quarterly or annually such as workshops, youth camps, pastors and leaders seminars, to enhance strategies for conflict management as exemplified below:

> During workshops we are taught life skills-negotiation ,decision making forgiveness, and the importance of recncilation.Women retreats empower women through biblical teachings such as obeying authority and submission to God and our husbands, praying for families, church and those in authority.

Based on this understanding, the initiatives on regular meetings, retreats and seminars were helping to minimize divisions and disagreements within PEFA because of the diverse teachings provided by Christian experts from different fields. However, one Woman leader reported that lasting peace and unity could be achieved through being filled with the Holy Spirit, being prayerful, submission to God and balancing between spiritual matters and psycho-social issues not through ritual meetings and gatherings.

Youth leaders reported that most pastors encourage their church members to attend special interdenominational meetings like crusades to demonstrate universality of the body of Christ, adherence to the great commission and fighting denominational mind-set. Such programs are organized quarterly and they help church leaders to understand their common goal of reaching the unreached and empowering one another spiritually rather than washing dirty linen before the flock as shown below:

> Problems faced by the youths are generational and contemporary issues hence, too complex to handle. Mentorship programs are non-existent in almost all our local churches. Though we have a lot of potential, knowledge and experience, we lack proper guidance on how to link our abilities with spiritual maturity. In fact a good number of us leave with our expertise, knowledge and experience to churches that are flexible and ready to assist us to acquire more relevant skills for survival. In most cases we draw programs to address issues and through our pastors. (FGD/005 voices/Bgm/Wby/Lug/Tongaren).

From the above response the study revealed that youths have established their own ways of minimizing conflicts through drawing programs that address potential and already existing issues that affect them. They are allowed by some of their pastors to invite other youths with good moral standing to give spiritual and motivational talks.

This study also found out from elders that PEFA churches have organized institutional means for conflict resolution such as board of elders basically on departmental levels such as women, men and youth, though sometimes these institutionalized strategies are

never enforced equally. Through formation of board of elders every church has empowered every departmental head to resolve conflicts without involving the pastoral team or board of elders. In addition, departmental heads are free to come up with need based programs to address emerging issues within their jurisdiction and such programs are fully supported by the church board. From pastors, deacons and women leadership, it was established that each local church had resident local board of elders whose mandate was to address concerns of church members. Formation of Home Cell Groups (HCGs) aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationship, spiritual growth and socio-economic welfare among members hence, some of the conflicts are handled by the HCG leaders.

It was evident that at Sinoko PEFA church, they had established vibrant welfare programs such as income generating activities (IGAs), micro finance for the church to save and borrow loans. There is a kitty for the needy that include unemployed youths, widows, and orphans. Most respondents from this congregation were highly satisfied with issues concerning the organizational structure, leadership, doctrinal issues, theological and policy problems that were not affecting the stability of the church. This implies that an empowered congregation was less divisive and issues that could fuel conflicts were not common.

A majority of the bishops, pastors, deacons/elders, women leaders, youth leaders as well as Sunday school teachers from urban, peri-urban and rural areas indicated that they deal with welfare issues when need arises but they did not have an initiative for income generation activities(IGAs) and micro-finance activities in their respective churches. This is in agreement with a study carried out by World Bank (2018) under Global Religious Organizations, asserted that religious organizations have a tremendous capacity for doing good, with most religious groups being known for their programs to address poverty and/or care for the poor. From this study, it is inferred that socio-economic conflicts that stem from misappropriation of funds, underpayment of pastors, preaching for money and prosperity, planting a seed, competition among churches would easily be addressed if other Pentecostal churches particularly PEFA embraced mechanisms of poverty alleviation.

The study also sought to establish the emerging and contemporary issues and how they were being addressed by the pastors and leadership of the church. A majority of the bishops, pastors, elders as well women leaders pointed out some of the issues such as preference by members for tele-preaching as opposed to attending church service and meetings, preference for using Bible apps rather than carrying printed Bibles, use of gospel music on CDs than singing practically, use of music equipment to make the church lively and attract the youth. Most respondents noted that this was affecting consistency of church attendance by most of the members especially the youths; yet there is virtually no follow up by church leaders of the chronic absentees. There is lack of continuous capacity building, refresher courses and sensitization for all church leaders to effectively deliver in their work. According to the researcher such laxity is one of the causes and escalation of conflicts in PEFA church in Bungoma County. Therefore this warranted this study to be carried out in order to identify possible solutions to ceaseless conflicts and counter divisions experienced here.

When youth leaders were asked about this challenge and how it was tackled, one of them responded as stated below:

> Harvest Preparation International Ministries had diverse projects for all members of their congregation for example, transition for young children, U-turn project for youth which is an initiative in a church to address issues of human growth and reproductive health problems, HIV and AIDS/STIs, unemployment, self-employment, entrepreneurship and computer skills and young parents. The elderly and leaders have their own programs which attract commitment and participation in church. Our PEFA churches can learn and borrow from this great church…BGM/007.

The youth's sentiments above imply that effective methods of conflict management and reconciliation with regard to emerging and contemporary issues are minimal in almost all PEFA churches, hence the escalation of conflicts in this church. Therefore, the church should look for alternative ways of enhancing church active ties in order to fully occupy the minds of

the youth. This will help in retention of church membership and foster growth and development.

The study sought to understand whether the respondents as leaders felt their contribution towards resolving conflicts bore fruits. Most of the respondents unanimously agreed that they play a major role in resolving conflicts though they were not always consulted in certain cases. However, they noted that the Bible emphasizes forgiveness and reconciliation which they consider as the most important contribution. This concurs with Sande (2004), who states that a conflict provides Christians with an opportunity to develop virtues such as discipline, patience, forgiveness, forbearance and gentleness.

IV. RESOLVING OF DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES BASED ON BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

The study further inquired whether doctrinal differences were solved based on Biblical principles. Majority of bishops observed that the process of resolving doctrinal differences was based on Biblical principles. This was confirmed by Clark (2006), who said that the Bible describes conflict throughout its pages, yet interestingly enough the word conflict is never to be found. Words such as dispute, division, quarrel, strife, and contention are used in the Scripture to describe interpersonal conflicts. He said that in the first pages of the Bible, conflict is depicted between God and His creation, as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience (Genesis 3). Adam immediately blames his wife for their precarious dilemma, and the "blaming others syndrome" enters into human history. He further noted that interpersonal conflict that Adam and Eve felt as they were forced to leave paradise behind and begin a new existence in a life marked by turmoil and pain, was unknown in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve's two sons must also have confronted intense interpersonal conflict. Due to Cain's incessant jealousy, Cain puts his brother Abel to death (Genesis 4). Clark observed that throughout the Old Testament God's chosen leaders faced one conflict after another, and more often than not, they did not always make the best choices. A superficial overview of the Kings of Israel highlights this perhaps a few exceptions, the ineptness and often spiritual deficits of leaders who were incapable of bringing about conflict resolution.

In the Gospels of the New Testament we are especially aware of the intense conflict that escalates between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem. This conflict finally reaches its climax as the Jewish Sanhedrin encouraged Pilate to crucify Jesus instead of Barabas (John 18 & 19) Clark, 2006).

In addition, Peterson (2005) and Mayor (2006), observed various conflict situations in the beginning of the early church in Acts 6:1-4. There was much unrest amongst the Hellenistic Jewish widows, because they were being overlooked by the apostles as they waited on tables. In this conflict situation after prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit intervened and granted wisdom to the church so that deacons were appointed to oversee this ministry and the apostles would have more time to spend in prayer and preparation for teaching. Out of this conflict situation a resolution did evolve that positively helped the early church to grow and mature.

The bishops also cited church conflict in Acts 15 which led to the convening of the Council of Jerusalem. The early church leaders wrestled with a major conflict that could have easily divided the infant church if left unchecked. Peterson (2005) and Mayor (2006), further explained that the question for debate centered on the question whether Gentile converts in other parts of the Roman Empire would also have to observe Jewish rituals particularly circumcision, before they could be considered true Christians. Once again, the ministry of the Holy Spirit intervened in this heated matter and a resolution was found. The decision of the Jerusalem Council was put in writing and was received with jubilation by the Gentile churches as shown below;

> Therefore, we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell. (Acts 15:27-29).

The above advice given to the early church by the Jerusalem council should be emulated by the current

church leadership in order to help minimize conflicts and foster unity. These views correspond with Peterson (2005), who notes that as the first conflict is resolved in Acts 15, the interpersonal conflict between Paul and Barnabas reaches its climax at the end of the same chapter. Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company as shown below:

Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord (Acts 15: 37-40).

However, from the above dispute, a wise decision was arrived at by the brethren in Antioch who tried to intervene as mediators in this dispute amongst two of their most highly esteemed spiritual leaders. Although the dispute could not be resolved, still the brethren committed the two separate missionary teams to the grace of the Lord (Acts 15:40). Over the years Paul's opinion of John Mark must have changed radically, as he requests Timothy to bring him to Rome since Mark has proven to be a help to Paul's ministry (2 Timothy 4:11). Sande ,(2004) and Peterson,(2005) document that the epistles of Paul are often written because of conflicts in teaching matters, moral questions, and interpersonal quarrelling that are taking place in the local church. Paul's letters are in themselves a type of conflict management excurse directed by the Holy Spirit to help the churches get past the different conflict that are holding the church back from spiritual maturity as 1 Corinthians points out:

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says," I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another,"I follow Cephas"; still another," I follow Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:10-12)

Based on Paul's admonitions above, it is clear that the church has been rocked with conflicts since it inception. It is important therefore, for church leaders to allow the Holy Spirit to help them to resolve their differences that hold back the church from spiritual growth. This is in agreement with Pegues, (2009) who sheds light on different leadership styles and communication styles employed during conflict management which vary when dealing with issues that arise. He pointed out that a dictator engages in win-lose confrontations, his power or anger to win is at the expense of the other person. In many circumstances, this style reflects emotional and professional immaturity; the accommodator wants to maintain the relationship at all costs, even at the cost of one's beliefs, values, peace of mind, personal time, or resources. Often accommodators have a low self-esteem and do not feel that they bring anything of real value to the relationship. The abdicator avoids confrontation at any cost. They will withdraw from a situation rather than confront. They rob themselves of the opportunity to experience the growth that results from working through issues. Lastly, a collaborator deals with conflicts by cooperating, joining forces, uniting, pulling together and participating. Those who work together toward a common purpose demonstrate spiritual maturity.

V. SUMMARY

Pastors encourage their church members to attend special interdenominational meetings like crusades to demonstrate universality of the body of Christ, adherence to the great commission and fighting denominational mind-set. The study also found out from elders that PEFA churches have organized institutional means for conflict resolution such as board of elders basically on departmental levels such as women, men and youth, though sometimes these institutionalized strategies are never enforced equally. Formation of Home Cell Groups (HCGs) aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationship, spiritual growth and socio-economic welfare among members hence some of the conflicts are handled by the HCG leaders. Majority of bishops observed that the process of resolving doctrinal differences was based on Biblical principles.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that youth have established their own ways of minimizing conflicts through drawing programs that address potential and already existing issues that affect them and they are allowed by some of their pastors to invite other youths with good moral standing to give spiritual and motivational talks. Through formation of board of elders every church has empowered every departmental head to resolve conflicts without involving the pastoral team or board of elders. In addition, departmental heads are free to come up with need based programs to address emerging issues within their jurisdiction and such programs are fully supported by the church board. That the formation of Home Cell Groups (HCGs) was aimed at enhancing interpersonal relationship, spiritual growth and socio-economic welfare among members hence, some of the conflicts are handled by the HCG leaders. It was found out that the youth at Sinoko PEFA church, had established vibrant welfare programs such as income generating activities (IGAs), micro finance for the church to save and borrow loans. There is a kitty for the needy that include unemployed youths, widows, and orphans all aimed at minimizing conflict in the church. Finally the study established that the process of resolving doctrinal differences was based on Biblical principles. The study recommends that the church should form disciplinary committees to handle conflict at every level.

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